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ABSTRACT Pierre-Sylvain Regis, once a well-known defender of Cartesianism, offers an unusually rich and innovative refutation of Spinoza. While many of his early modern contemporaries raised narrower objections to particular claims in Spinoza's *Ethics*, Regis develops a broader anti-Spinozistic position, one that threatens the very core of Spinoza's metaphysical ambitions and offers a philosophically robust alternative. However, as with any far-reaching philosophical commitment, Regis's gambit comes with substantive costs of its own, including creating instabilities within the core of his own philosophical system. Far from diminishing the significance of Regis's anti-Spinozism, this critical appraisal helps us better appreciate both the conceptual pull of Spinozism within early modern metaphysics and one sweeping, albeit costly way of escaping its orbit.

KEYWORDS Regis, Spinoza, Spinozism, Descartes, causation, eminent, containment, equivocity, univocity, early modern, scholastics

Refuting Spinoza became something of a cottage industry during the first half of the eighteenth century. Some of these efforts were earnest, as Spinoza was widely seen as advocating false, dangerous, and corrupting views in nearly every philosophical and theological domain. In a less noble spirit, it became increasingly important to demonstrate one's anti-Spinozistic credentials, often in response to accusations of Spinozism by rivals and ideally by demonstrating that one's accusers were, in fact, *the real Spinozists*.

Pierre-Sylvain Regis (1632–1707) attempts an especially rich and innovative refutation of Spinoza, in terms of both its philosophical content and its underlying strategy. Regis is no longer well known today, but he was once dubbed "the prince of the Cartesians"—though this was intended to be as laudatory as calling someone "the prince of darkness."[1] Educated by Jesuits, Regis had gone to Paris in 1655 to pursue theology, but he became captivated by the new Cartesian physics and devoted himself to studying Cartesianism instead. He eventually became a kind

[1]The label comes from the virulent anti-Cartesian Pierre-Daniel Huet, as cited in Schmaltz, *Radical Cartesianism*, 101 (among many others).

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of ambassador for Cartesianism outside of Paris, offering public lectures and private tutorials around France to great acclaim. He returned to Paris in 1680 to continue his lectures and pursue publication of a full, systematic presentation of Cartesianism.[2]

Regis had a remarkable run in the 1690s, beginning with the much-delayed publication of his multivolume *Système de Philosophie* in 1690. This solidified Regis's reputation as a leading systematizer of Cartesianism in France, just as Descartes's philosophy was about to be formally denounced in Paris. In the ensuing scrum, Regis was criticized by all sides, including by the likes of Malebranche, Huet, and Leibniz. Regis responded, as one does, by publishing book-length broadsides of his own.[3]

In this fraught context, it was only a matter of time before Regis was accused of Spinozism. That honor fell to the Malebranchian Henri de Lelevel, who claimed that Regis "cannot avoid the excesses of Spinoza, who imagined that the substance of the universe was no different from God's" (*V* 87).[4] Although being publicly accused of Spinozism was a sign of being taken seriously, it could not pass unchallenged, and Regis appended a substantive "Refutation of the Opinion of Spinoza" to his final book, *L'usage de la raison et de la foi* in 1704.[5]

Like many who were swept up in this refutational fervor, Regis offers various objections to particular claims in Spinoza's *Ethics*. But behind these narrower criticisms is a much broader and more interesting anti-Spinozistic position, one that threatens the very core of Spinoza's metaphysical ambitions and offers a philosophically robust alternative. In fact, Regis's alternative is so sweeping that it would undermine not only Spinozism, but also one of the most popular ways of avoiding a conclusion that came to be associated with Spinozism, an avoidance strategy that Descartes himself had endorsed.

As with any far-reaching philosophical commitment, Regis's gambit comes with substantive costs of its own, including creating instabilities within the core of his own philosophical system. But far from diminishing the significance of Regis's anti-Spinozism, this critical appraisal will help us better appreciate both the conceptual pull of Spinozism within early modern metaphysics and one sweeping, albeit costly way of escaping its orbit.

To unpack Regis's strategy, we first need to understand what constituted the central Spinozistic threat that Regis sought to defeat (section 1). We will see that far from resting on Spinoza's own idiosyncratic ontology or demonstrations, this form of Spinozism can be reached using traditional theistic claims about efficient

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[2]This brief sketch is drawn from Del Prete, "Prince," 374–76; Schmaltz, *Radical Cartesianism*, 6–7; Spink, *French Free-Thought*, 207–8; and Vernière, *Spinoza*, 253–54. The main primary source of Regis's biography is Fontenelle's eulogy for the Académie des sciences, to which Regis was admitted in 1699 (Fontenelle, *Éloges*, 145–59).

[3]For an outstanding account of many of these exchanges, see Schmaltz, *Radical Cartesianism*, 215–60. For more on Leibniz's role in particular, see Laerke, *Les Lumières*, 285–333. For a recent, more sweeping account of seventeenth-century refutation efforts in France, see Benigni, *Itinerari dell'antispinozismo*.

[4]My translation; see also Lelevel, *V* 74.

[5]All quotations from Regis are my own translations; where I give the original French, I have modernized it. Quotations from Latin scholastic texts other than Aquinas are also my own translations. See bibliography for abbreviations.

causation endorsed by the likes of Aquinas, Suárez, Descartes, and many others (section 2). But the traditional way of blocking this route faces steep problems of its own, which sets the stage for Regis's far-reaching alternative, one that turns on a very different account of the relationship between divine and finite properties (section 3). In the final section, I present a series of escalating costs that Regis's strategy incurs, which amounts to a joint Spinozistic and Cartesian reply.

1. SPINOZISTIC THREATS

Early moderns disagreed about exactly what constituted the core of Spinozism, though it was widely agreed that whatever Spinozism was, *it was really bad*. Candidates included materialism, atheism, pantheism, fatalism, naturalism, and amoralism.[6] One especially vexing strand of Spinoza's metaphysics concerned the relationship between God and everything else, epitomized in his substance monism. "Except God, no substance can be or be conceived" (*E* Ip14).[7] "Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be or be conceived without God" (*E* Ip15). Spinoza sometimes expresses this in numerical terms: "in Nature, there is only one substance" (*E* Ip14c1).

In this spirit, Bayle characterizes the "foundations of Spinozism" as the view "that God is the only substance that there is in the universe and that all other beings are only modifications of that substance" (*Dictionary*, 302–4). Henry More describes substance monism as one of the two main "columns" of Spinoza's "mind-destroying" atheism, the second being the thesis that existence pertains to substance (*Refutation*, 69). Spinoza's critics often targeted this monistic foundation in order to topple the rest of his dastardly system. As François Lamy puts it in his lengthy *Le nouvel athéisme renversé*, "to overthrow Spinoza's system, it is enough to ruin the first part of what he calls his *Ethics* . . . [which contains] the foundation of the system of this miserable philosopher; we can assure ourselves that the destruction of this first part will lead to the ruin of the entire work" (*R* 235–36).[8]

Regis also targets Spinoza's substance monism in his "Refutation." He begins, "In the first part of his *Ethics*, Spinoza tries to prove that there is only a single substance in nature, that God is this substance, and that everything in the world is only an attribute or mode of this substance" (*U* 901). He concludes by making his opposition abundantly clear. "That one cannot conceive a substance different from God—*I absolutely deny this proposition*" (*U* 932).[9]

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[6]For examples, see Bayle, *Dictionary*, 301–13; Conway, *Principles*, 64–66; Jaquelot, *Dissertations*, 414, 430, and 687; Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, 277; and More, *Refutation*, 70–71 and 78. Perhaps most impressively, Samuel Clarke accuses Spinoza of atheism, naturalism, materialism, pantheism, and monism in the space of a single, rambunctious sentence (*Demonstration*, 20).

[7]In citing from Spinoza's texts, I use *E* for *Ethics*, followed by the standard PartNumberType abbreviation (here *Ethics*, Part 1, Proposition 14). I use *Ep* for *Letters*, followed by the letter number given in Curley's *Collected Works of Spinoza*, from which all English translations of Spinoza's texts are taken.

[8]Regis concludes his own refutation (*U* 934) by encouraging readers to consult Lamy's *Le nouvel athéisme renversé*, which had appeared eight years earlier. For an excellent discussion of Lamy's refutation efforts, see Stetter, "Lamy's Cartesian Refutation," from which I draw both citations and translations.

[9]Although it is a typographical error, the modern reprint accidentally highlights Regis's emphasis: "je nie absolument absolument cette proposition" (*U* 932).

Spinoza's attempted proof of his monism was especially threatening, as it used the metaphysical machinery of his fellow early moderns. That is, the ontological building blocks of Spinoza's *Ethics*—substance, modes, attributes, causation, God, perfection—were not strange new categories. Spinoza's axioms about metaphysical priority, causation, and other forms of dependence had an air of familiarity, perhaps even philosophical orthodoxy about them. So, if monism is nevertheless false, Spinoza must have been wrong either in the details of his definitions and principles or in his use of them.

This led to the most common refutation tactic: undermine Spinoza's monistic foundations by disputing his opening definitions and principles. In an extreme example, Samuel Clarke suggests that Spinozism hinges on a single bad definition. "That which led Spinoza into his foolish and destructive opinion, and on which alone all his argumentation is entirely built, is that absurd definition of substance" (*Demonstration*, 37). Lamy targets a slightly broader range. "In combatting Spinozism, we will only make use of the very arms that Spinoza has used and only of the method of the geometers of which he served himself to build his system. . . . We will only need Spinoza's definitions of substance, attribute, and mode" (*R* 236–37).

Regis certainly deploys this tactic as well. He quotes almost every definition, axiom, and proposition of Part One up through *E* Ip15, each followed by a short, mostly critical response.[10] Regis's overarching complaint, issued over and over, is that Spinoza's claims are "obscure or equivocal" (*U* 902). Compared to the hyperbolic rhetoric of his contemporaries, Regis's surgical style is refreshing, even if it becomes a bit tedious by the thirtieth page.[11] But as we will see, behind Regis's catalogue of narrow objections is a more original and broader rebuttal.

Having a broader rejoinder to Spinozism is important because the standard refutation strategy presupposes that Spinoza's own concepts and arguments are the primary way to reach his conclusions. But what if Spinoza's conclusions could be reached in ways that differ from his expressed route? Even more worrisome, what if they could be reached using more orthodox-friendly definitions and principles? If so, successfully challenging Spinozism will require more than casting doubt on a definition or axiom.

To appreciate this possibility, let us step back from Spinoza's own definitions and demonstrations and formulate his monistic conclusion more generically as the claim that *everything is in God*. This treats Spinoza's monism as a form of

[10]There was no French translation of Spinoza's *Ethics* in circulation at the end of the seventeenth century, and Lamy faced pushback in part for including so much of Spinoza's unvarnished text in the original draft of his *Refutation* (Stetter, "Cartesian Refutation," 4). Regis received no such resistance in 1704, even though he used Lamy's idiosyncratic translations of the *Ethics*. (Regis does not cite the source of his French translations, but comparing passages like *E* Id5 in Lamy [*R* 247] and Regis [*U* 906] makes the dependence pretty clear, since Lamy adds to Spinoza's *E* Id5 the claim that modes are "accidental dispositions of substance, that is to say, they are what attaches to a subject," which Regis repeats verbatim.)

[11]More's tone is more typical: "Can there be said anything more unlearned and ignorant and can there be an argument of a more disturbed and confused mind . . . than [what Spinoza] boldly and foolishly prattles here?" (*Refutation*, 73). Thomas M. Lennon rightly draws attention to Regis's more measured tone, but he does so while discussing how some of Regis's views "invite" or even make "patent" the charge of Spinozism ("Cartesian Dialectic," 361–62). This might suggest that Regis's lack of vitriol hints at his secret sympathies with Spinozism, which, for reasons we will see, I do not think was the case.

panentheism, according to which everything finite is somehow contained in God. According to this version of Spinozistic monism, not only are finite *things* somehow contained in God, but the properties of finite things are also contained in God. I will give this thesis about property containment a simple label and generic formulation to help us keep track of the core points of dispute in what is to come:

> Universal Divine Containment (UDC): God contains every property of every finite thing.

Universal Divine Containment is meant to be as theoretically neutral about both *properties* and *containment* as one can be at the outset. We will encounter possible precisifications as the discussion unfolds. But even at this early juncture, we should note that UDC is not equivalent to full-blown substance monism. One would also need to show, for instance, that God's containing every property of every finite thing undermines the existence of finite substances, perhaps on grounds that finite substances would introduce a problematic redundancy in property-bearers that the monistic version of UDC avoids.[12]

Even if it falls short of full substance monism, Universal Divine Containment might seem like the kind of thesis that classical theists should resist. However, UDC has robust support among historically prominent theists. To give one weighty example to whom Regis frequently appeals, Aquinas affirms UDC as an implication of God's own perfection. "The perfections of everything are in God . . . because he does not lack any excellence which may be found in any genus" (*ST* I, q. 4, a. 2, resp).[13] One consideration Aquinas offers here in favor of universal containment is that God is *being* [*esse*] itself, and since a thing has properties only insofar as they "have *esse* in some way," God must contain those properties. This reasoning involves some loaded claims about *being* that we will return to in section 3.

Happily, Aquinas offers early modern aficionados a more familiar defense of divine containment based on God's causal role in creating the world, since "whatever perfections there are in an effect must be found in its efficient cause" (*ST* I, q. 4, a. 2, resp). As Aquinas explains, "For it is obvious that an effect pre-exists virtually in its agent cause. . . . Therefore, as God is the first efficient cause of things, the perfections of all things must pre-exist in God in a more eminent way." In the next section, we will explore this causal containment requirement and its connection to divine containment.[14]

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[12]See Newlands, "From Theism to Idealism to Monism," for an example of such a supplemental argument.

[13]See also Aquinas, *SCG*, book I, chapters 28–31. This might sound like Aquinas restricts divine property containment only to *perfections*, but in this tradition, speaking strictly, perfections or positive properties are the only genuine properties that there are (Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 4, a. 2, resp). Predications of lacks, limitations, and imperfections are made true by incompatibilities among proper subsets of all the positive properties that there are. To use the stock medieval example, being blind is not a genuine accident or property of anything, but blindness is truly predicated of a finite thing that is apt to see insofar as that thing has positive accidents that are incompatible with being sighted (Aquinas, *De Malo* q. 1, a. 1; q. 2, a. 2, resp; q. 2, a. 4, ad. 8; and q. 3, a. 2, resp). Of course, scholastics all agreed that imperfections and limitations are not truly predicable of God, but that is because of the *ways* in which God contains every positive property (Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 4, a. 2, ad. 1; Suárez, *DM*, disputation XXX, section I, paragraphs 8–9), not because there are some real but imperfect properties had by creatures but not God (*DM* XXX.i.11).

[14]At the other end of the Scholastic timeline, Suárez also affirms Universal Divine Containment (*DM* XXX.i.3) and Aquinas's motivations for it (*DM* XXX.i.4–6), as well as a general efficient causal

Independent of the motivations, Aquinas's claims make clear that Universal Divine Containment is neutral on exactly *how* God contains the properties of everything else. Aquinas appeals to one such way, "more eminent," which becomes the standard way of avoiding any untoward implications of UDC, a qualification that Regis will ultimately reject.

In the next section, we will see that there are indeed good reasons to be concerned about the standard appeal to eminence in this context. But before turning there, it will be helpful to have a more explicitly Spinozistic version of Universal Divine Containment, a benchmark that scholastics and early moderns alike wanted to avoid. The simplest version specifies the precise way in which God contains every creaturely property, namely by actually exemplifying or instantiating it. I will use the traditional label of 'formal' to indicate property containment via actual instantiation.

> Spinozistic Divine Containment (SDC): God formally contains every property of every finite thing.

Spinoza himself accepts Spinozistic Divine Containment when, for example, he writes to Henry Oldenburg, "As for your contention that God has nothing formally in common with created things, etc., I have maintained the complete opposite of this in my definition. For I have said that God is a being consisting of infinite attributes" (*Ep* 4). I take the "complete opposite" of no formal containment to be universal formal containment, and Spinoza's appeal to "infinite attributes" to encompass all possible ways of being.

One immediate worry about Spinozistic Divine Containment is that it generates an incoherent account of God. For it does not seem that a single substance, even a divine one, could consistently exemplify all the world's diverse properties. As Lamy objects, "It is much more outrageous to maintain, like Spinoza, that the idea of God includes formally all that is real. This is to turn God into the most extravagant animal, the most terrible monster, the most bizarre chimera imaginable" (*R* 255). Certainly, monists need show how the rich array of actual properties—being divisible and not being divisible, being square-shaped and being a mental state, being a prime number and being a prime minister—can all be consistently exemplified by a single substance.[15] However, our focus here is not on the internal coherence of Spinozism; it is on an early modern route to it. If this road leads to incoherence, it will remain open to us to conclude, *so much the worse for that starting point.*

In the next section, we will consider one path in Descartes from Universal Divine Containment to Spinozistic Divine Containment via efficient causation, as well as the most common way to block it, alluded to above by Aquinas. Seeing concerns with that blocking maneuver will then set the stage for Regis's alternative anti-Spinozism strategy.

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containment requirement (*DM* XXVI.i.2). The scholastic inference to UDC from divine causation was repeated throughout the seventeenth century: for examples (cited in chronological order), see Eustachius, *Summa Philosophiae*, part IV, treatise iv, disputation 3, question 1; Goclenius, *Lexicon*, 146, 818; Smiglecius, *Logica*, disputation VII, question 1, page 527; Burgersdijk, *Metaphysicarum*, book II, chapter iv, paragraph 9; Heereboord, *Disputation*, volume II, disputation 29, thesis ii, paragraph 3; II.32.vii.5; Clauberg, *De Cognitione*, exercise XV, paragraph 10; and Chauvin, *Lexicon*, 96.

[15]For my own account of Spinoza's strategy for avoiding incoherence, see Newlands, *Reconceiving Spinoza*, 42–56.

2. A CARTESIAN PATH TO SPINOZISTIC DIVINE CONTAINMENT

In the Third Meditation, Descartes offers necessary conditions on efficient causation. As with everything related to Descartes, a great deal has been written about these causal requirements. Because our main focus is Regis, I will move quickly in this section, as it will be less important to fully defend a particular reading of Descartes than to understand what Regis tries to avoid.[16]

The salient requirement on efficient causation involves property containment, which Descartes initially expresses as the requirement that an effect's total efficient cause must contain at least as much reality or perfection as is contained in the effect itself.[17] "Now it is manifest by the natural light that there must be at least as much <reality>[18] in the efficient and total cause as in the effect of that cause" (AT VII.40/CSM II.28). Descartes claims that this requirement is known "by the natural light" and is "a primary notion which is as clear as any we have" (AT VII.135/CSM II.97).

Descartes argues that causation without such containment would be unintelligible. "For where, I ask, could the effect get its reality from, if not from the cause? And how could the cause give it to the effect unless it possessed it?" (AT VII.40/CSM II.28). Descartes appeals here to the fact that a thing cannot give what it does not already have.[19] Giving presupposes having, which I take to be a basic conceptual truth for Descartes. To ask why a thing cannot give what it does not have would be to misunderstand the very concepts of giving and having, akin to asking why triangles must have three sides.

If efficient causation involves a cause transferring something to its effect, then it follows from this basic conceptual truth that causes must have what they give to their effects, lest causation become unintelligible. Descartes extends this reasoning to the source of representational content as well, an extension that will become important later. "And this is transparently true not only in the case of effects which possess actual or formal reality, but also in the case of ideas where one is considering only objective reality" (AT VII.41/CSM II.28). In other words, the containment requirement on efficient causation applies equally and for the same intelligibility reason to both representational and nonrepresentational cases.

Descartes's initial formulation focuses on giving "reality," which sounds like some sort of generic mass noun. But in the same paragraph, Descartes makes

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[16]For a fuller presentation of the primary and secondary landscape, see Schmaltz, *Descartes on Causation*, 49–86. For additional defense of my own preferred reading, see Newlands, "Backing," 516–20.

[17]Descartes regularly uses 'reality' and 'perfection' interchangeably, including here in the Third Meditation (AT VII.40/CSM II.28; AT VII.42/CSM II.29). For ease, I will drop the label 'efficient,' as that will be the only kind of cause we will be considering in this section. I will also set aside Descartes's "total" qualifier for now, as it will ultimately be irrelevant for Regis's alternative, though it will crop up again in section 3. There has been some interpretative debate about whether Descartes has a single causal containment requirement or two somewhat distinct requirements; Schmaltz provides what I regard as decisive considerations in favor of the single-requirement reading (*Descartes on Causation*, 52–55).

[18]Materials in angled brackets are interpolations added to the 1647 French translation of the *Meditations* that was approved by Descartes; see CSM II.1–2 for further explanation.

[19]Suárez offers a similar consideration: "For no one can give what they do not have in themselves in some way" (*DM* XVIII.ix.8; see also *DM* XVIII.ii.2). See also (cited in chronological order) Goclenius, *Lexicon*, 157; Burgersdijk, *Metaphysicarum*, II.viii.2; and Chauvin, *Lexicon*, 96, 139.

clear that his causal containment requirement is more fine-grained than this.[20] Causes must contain specific properties in order to bring about certain effects. Sometimes Descartes ties containment to basic *kinds* of things, where basic kinds are individuated by principal attributes. "Heat cannot be produced in an object which was not previously hot, except by something of at least the same order <or degree or kind> of perfection as heat, and so on" (AT VII.41/CSM II.28).

But Descartes also offers extremely fine-grained versions. Just before the heat example, he gives an example of a stone. "A stone, for example, which previously did not exist, cannot begin to exist unless it is produced by something which contains, either formally or eminently, everything [*totum*] to be found in the stone" (AT VII.41/CSM II.28). The French edition adds in elaboration, "that is to say, [the cause of the stone] contains in itself the same things [*choses*] or other, more excellent things as that which is in the stone" (AT IX.32, my translation). I take the referent of the 'things . . . in the stone' to be the properties of the stone, in which case Descartes is claiming that the cause of the stone must contain, in some form, each of the properties of the stone. He makes a similarly unqualified point in the Fifth Replies, that "there is nothing in the effect which did not previously exist in the cause, either formally or eminently" (AT VII.367/CSM II.253).[21]

It is easy to see how Descartes reaches this very demanding version of his causal containment requirement. That *giving* presupposes *having* applies to any case of giving. Hence, whatever a cause gives to its effect must already be had by the cause. If causes give only reality or being to their effects, then a more coarse-grained containment requirement might suffice. But insofar as efficient causes are also responsible for more specific properties of their effects, such as a particular motion or sensation, then by the same reasoning, those causes must somehow contain versions of all the properties that they give.

There are many critical questions we might want to raise about this framework, including about property containment itself and whether efficient causation involves transferring anything—reality, motion, energy, etc.—in the first place.[22] Historical and contemporary readers of Descartes have also objected that his containment requirement, even the coarser-grained *kind* version, generates problems when combined with his interactive dualism.[23] For example, Descartes thinks that bodies cause minds to have sensations, but lowly bodies do not seem to contain mental properties in any way for Descartes.

Rather than getting bogged down here, let us formulate a general version of the causal containment principle that Descartes and others could plausibly be read as endorsing.

Causal Containment (CC): Every efficient cause contains the properties of its effects.

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[20]For an example of a reading that defends a reality-only containment requirement, see Chávez-Arvizo, "Descartes's Interactionism," but I take the texts cited in this paragraph to be sufficient counterevidence to such coarser-grained accounts.

[21]See also Descartes, AT VII.79/CSM II.55; AT VII.105/CSM II.76; AT VII.135/CSM II.97; AT III.274/CSMK 166; AT III.428/CSMK 192.

[22]As later early moderns point out, this is especially problematic in a substance-mode ontology in which the identity of a mode is tied to its substance in such a way that no mode can ever be numerically identical to a mode of any other substance (Flattery, "Leibniz's Lost Argument").

[23]See esp. Broughton, "Adequate Causes"; Radner, "Problem"; and Watson, *Breakdown*.

As stated, Causal Containment applies to any efficient cause, including God. As we saw in the previous section, Aquinas and many others claim that the truth of CC leads to Universal Divine Containment.[24] To explicitly reach UDC from CC, we need a thesis about God's causal activity.

What all is God causally responsible for? Descartes sometimes gives the formulaic answer, "God created the heavens and the earth and everything in them" (AT VII.169/CSM II.119). This sidesteps huge, century-spanning debates about, among other things, the relationship between God's initial creative role and the subsequent causal roles of God and finite things. In unpacking Regis's strategy, we will be able to sidestep most of those debates as well. But it will help to have a minimal, albeit clunky description of God's effects that Descartes, Regis, and Spinoza could all endorse, even though they disagree over further details.

Divine Causation (DC): God is the efficient cause of finite mental and extended things.

Strictly speaking, these versions of Causal Containment and Divine Causation do not together entail Universal Divine Containment. They leave open various possibilities, such as that there are finite things that are neither mental nor physical for which God is not causally responsible or that there are finite things of whose existence God is not the *total* efficient cause. Likewise, Spinozistic Divine Containment will be unnecessarily strong, but the ways that Descartes and Regis propose to avoid it will not involve carving out exceptions.[25]

We can still sense the worrisome bite of combining Causal Containment and Divine Causation by considering some spatially extended body of which God is the total efficient cause, perhaps at creation. By CC, God must contain extended properties. According to the Spinozistic version, God contains those extended properties by formally exemplifying them and therefore by actually being extended. In order to avoid this Spinozistic consequence while still affirming CC and DC for some extended thing, God must somehow contain extended properties without actually exemplifying them.

The main avoidance strategy, pursued by the likes of Aquinas, Descartes, and many others, was to distinguish two different forms of containment. "Therefore, as God is the first efficient cause of things, the perfections of all things must pre-exist in God in a more eminent way" (Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 4, a. 2, resp). "Whatever reality or perfection there is in a thing is present either formally or eminently in its first and adequate cause" (Descartes, AT VII.165/CSM II.116).[26] Spinozistic Containment is restricted to *formal* containment, but if God contains the properties of God's effects in some other way that still satisfies Causal Containment, then

[24]Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 4, a. 2, resp; see note 14 for examples of other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century affirmations.

[25]For evidence of Spinoza's own acceptance of Causal Containment, note how he defends what becomes *E* Ip3 to Oldenburg (*Ep* 4); for his acceptance of Divine Causation, see *E* Ip25. For standard scholastic versions of Divine Causation, see Aquinas, *SCG* II.15; and Suárez, *DM* XX.i.15–21.

[26]This distinction among forms of divine containment was commonplace in seventeenth-century philosophical lexicons and textbooks; for century-spanning examples (cited in chronological order), see Goclenius, *Lexicon*, 146–47; Smiglecius, *Logica*, VIII.iv.572; Burgersdijk, *Metaphysicarum*, I.xxvi.1; Heereboord, *Disputation*, II.26.ii; Arnauld and Nicole, *Logic*, 250; Clauberg, *Disputationes Physicae*, disputation X, paragraph 14; and Chauvin, *Lexicon*, 216–17.

Divine Causation will avoid these untoward Spinozistic implications. In the case of an extended thing, God could still be the cause of it without actually being extended, without violating the containment requirement on causation, and without thereby rendering causation unintelligible.

This strategy appeals to a kind of property containment that does not involve the formal instantiation of the problematic property. Descartes unpacks eminent containment in just this way, though he imbeds his definition in a representational context that is nonessential to the core distinction:

> Whatever exists in the objects of our ideas in a way which exactly corresponds to our perception of it is said to exist *formally* in those objects. Something is said to exist *eminently* in an object when, although it does not exactly correspond to our perception of it, its greatness is such that it can fill the role of [*supplere*] that which does so correspond. (AT VII.161/CSM II.114)[27]

Descartes here describes the two main components of eminent containment, both of which are tied to the properties that a thing *formally* contains via actual instantiation. Given what is to come, it is worth separating out these two components.

The first is comparative:

> *Comparative*: S eminently contains a property *p* only if S formally contains another property, *q*, that is better than *p*.

The expression 'better than' is intentionally vague, as Descartes offers several variants that gesture in the same direction without getting any more precise: "greater" (AT VII.185/CSM II.130), "more excellent" (AT IX.32/CSM II.28), "more perfect" (AT VII.40/CSM II.28), "more noble" (AT VII.79/CSM II.55), "in a higher form" (AT VII.135/CSM II.97), and "has more reality than" (AT VII.165/CSM II.117). In the background is the longstanding view that properties and property-bearers are ranked along a single scale of excellence or metaphysical perfection, a once-popular blending of axiology and ontology that is now loosely referred to as "the great chain of being."

The second component of eminent containment is functional, one that Descartes aptly describes in terms of *role-filling*. The basic idea is that an eminently contained property corresponds to a formally contained property that acts as an adequate substitute for it, a relation that is best expressed counterfactually or counterpossibly:

> *Substitutionary*: S eminently contains a property *p* only if S formally contains another property, *q*, that can fill the same functional role that *p* would have played, had S formally contained *p*.[28]

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[27]For an account of eminent containment that hews to the representational context, see Vinci, *Cartesian Truth*, 68–75.

[28]As ever, there is a substantial literature on how to best interpret Descartes's account of eminent containment. On one oft-cited account from Kenneth Clatterbaugh, something close to *Comparative* is both necessary and sufficient for eminent containment ("Descartes's Causal Likeness Principle"). Eileen O'Neill makes a compelling case against the textual adequacy of such an account ("Mind-Body Interaction"), though I will argue below that Descartes does sometimes treat the satisfaction of *Comparative* as sufficient for the satisfaction of *Substitutionary*, which raises a serious concern about Descartes's theory. A somewhat orthogonal debate concerns whether formal and/or eminent contain-

In what follows, by 'Eminent Containment,' I refer to a form of property containment that satisfies both *Comparative* and *Substitionary*. Note that as I have defined these conditions, Eminent Containment is not itself a causal notion.[29] It might be that various requirements can be satisfied in virtue of Eminent Containment, but the appeal to the functional role is neutral on what the requirements and roles are.[30] Still, our focus will be on the causal case and Descartes's thesis that *a thing satisfies Causal Containment if it satisfies Eminent Containment for the properties of its effects.*

Contemporary readers of Descartes have not been enamored with this thesis, to put it mildly. Daisy Radner notes that "the notion of eminent reality is far from clear when applied to God, and it becomes even more obscure when applied to creatures." Jorge Secada objects that eminent containment, "though easy to apprehend in its general meaning, is difficult to the point of intractability when examined closely." Jonathan Bennett concludes that "nobody has succeeded in making this look reasonable."[31]

Contemporary critics disagree about exactly where the problem lies. I will briefly present three of my own, more internal concerns with Descartes's thesis, which can be categorized as *conceptual*, *explanatory*, and *epistemic*. These, in turn, will help motivate Regis's alternative and ultimately expose some of its own costs.

The first concern is that Descartes's thesis flouts his bedrock intuition about giving that he used to justify Causal Containment in the first place. For it turns out that a thing *can* give something it does not formally have, so long as what it formally has is better than what it gives. But this seems to flout the conceptual

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ment requires *similarities* between causes and effects (De Rosa, "Descartes's Causal Principle"). As I have outlined them, the core commitments of eminent containment do not require similarity, though that is consistent with some particular functional role in *Substitutionary* requiring similarity.

[29]Suárez also points out that, strictly speaking, divine eminent containment is not identical to causal capacity, even though it is true that God "can cause all things because [God] eminently contains them" (*DM* XXX.i.10). This helps blunt a common criticism that Eminent Containment is partly circular because it builds causal capacity into its very definition (see esp. Bennett, *Learning*, 87; and Gorham, "Dilemma"). For an early modern example that borders on the circular, consider Clauberg's claim that with respect to extended properties that are eminently contained in God, we should understand "only that God is able to fill their role [*supplere*] . . . that is to say, can create, preserve, and direct . . . the whole mass of corporeal things" (*De Cognitione*, XI.6).

[30]See Newlands, "Backing," for examples of noncausal requirements that Eminent Containment was taken to satisfy.

[31]In order of citation: Radner, "Problem," 43; Secada, *Cartesian Metaphysics*, 81; and Bennett, *Learning*, 87–88. For a more positive outlook, see Schmaltz, *Descartes on Causation*, 67–71. Although many early moderns criticized the broader causal theory in which eminent containment was often embedded, very few objected to the notion of eminent containment per se (apart from Regis and, more obliquely, Spinoza). Malebranche rejects the eminent containment of all extended things in *finite* minds (*LO* 228), but he readily accepts the universal containment of all creatures in God "in a completely spiritual way that is incomprehensible to us" (*LO* 229). In a similar vein, Rudolph Goclenius (appealing to Boethius) claims that God contains "physical things eminently and most perfectly, in the noblest way," and can therefore "move himself, not in the way we do, but in another way that is unknown to us" (*Lexicon*, 147). Hobbes, in passing, asks Descartes whether the attendant notion of degrees of reality is fully intelligible (Descartes, AT VII.185/CSM II.130). Perhaps the closest early modern analogue to the contemporary worry about the sheer intelligibility of eminent containment itself is found in Stephanus Chauvin's *Lexicon Philosophicum*. After ably recounting the standard formal versus eminent containment distinction, Chauvin concludes, "I frankly admit that I do not understand these different ways of containing at all, at least as they are usually explained; but there isn't a more accurate or better account available" (*Lexicon*, 139).

truth that giving implies possessing. If I have only a car to give, I cannot directly give my daughter a bike, even if a car is a better form of transit than a bike. More generally, the intuitive appeal of Descartes's giving principle tracks *formal* containment, as it does seem highly intuitive that I can give only what I formally possess. But it is far from "a primary notion which is as clear as any we have" (AT VII.135/CSM II.97) that I can also give what I do not formally have, so long as I have something more excellent.

The second worry is more general and also more damning. As it is traditionally invoked, appeals to Eminent Containment in this context are explanatorily inert, naming rather than solving the problem it was introduced to handle. One way to see this is to consider the relationship between *Comparative* and *Substitutionary*. All too often, the comparative component is cited as a sufficient basis for satisfying the functional role component, as if being metaphysically greater by itself suffices for role-filling. But merely being a more excellent property is insufficient to justify, much less *explain*, the substitutionary component. I might well be a better tennis player than my daughter, but how could it follow from this alone that I am an apt substitute for her in the school play? Unless *Substitutionary* can be independently explained, appealing to it simply reinvites the very question it was supposed to answer: how *can* a thing play the same role without formally having the relevant property?

This pattern of pseudo-explanation occurs in the Sixth Meditation. Descartes considers the possibility that a distinct finite substance that eminently contains extended properties is the cause of his ideas of bodies. In unpacking this, Descartes implies that satisfying the comparative component suffices for Eminent Containment, which implies that satisfying *Comparative* suffices for satisfying *Substitutionary*. Suppose this cause is "some creature more noble than a body, in which case it will contain eminently whatever is to be found in the ideas" (AT VII.79/CSM II.55). But how comparative greatness by itself accounts for the capacity for causal role-filling is left wholly unexplained.[32] Given that Causal Containment was motivated by a commitment to intelligibility, this explanatory gap threatens to render eminent-based causation as mysterious as causation would be if one simply rejected the causal containment requirement outright.

Lastly, Descartes's appeal to Eminent Containment is epistemically costly. For if causes need only eminently contain their effects, then he cannot infer from the properties of effects to even the basic kinds of properties had by their causes. Descartes tries to do this to conclude that God, his ultimate cause, is a thinking thing. "For as I have said before, it is quite clear that there must be at least as much in the cause as in the effect. And therefore, *whatever kind of cause is eventually proposed, since I am a thinking thing* and have within me some idea of God, *it must be admitted that what caused me is itself a thinking thing* and possesses the idea of all the perfections which I attribute to God" (AT VII.49–50/CSM II.34, emphases added).

[32]In responding to a different concern, Schmaltz suggests that Descartes may be thinking of the comparative that "it is a greater perfection to be undivided than to be divided" (*Descartes on Causation*, 68–69; Descartes, AT VII.138/CSM II.99). Perhaps so, but this reinforces my concern, since it is unclear why a mind's being indivisible suffices for its playing the various roles that being divisible would play, were a mind formally divisible (which is a difficult counterpossible to even parse).

However, once Eminent Containment is allowed to satisfy Causal Containment, all that follows from Causal Containment is that Descartes's cause contains thinking *in some way or another*, not that his cause is actually a thinking thing. More generally, allowing Eminent Containment in this context blocks seemingly salutary inferences from the formal nature of creatures and God's causal role to God's own nature. So even if Descartes's appeal to Eminent Containment shows that God's causing bodies to exist does not imply that God is extended, it will no longer follow from God's causing minds to exist that God is thinking, is an agent, has a will, ideas, and power, and so forth.

Regis himself raises this last worry for Cartesian-style inferences from representations to the formal natures of their causes once Eminent Containment is allowed. "[Suppose] efficient causes only eminently contain the perfections of their effects, from which it follows that when one has an idea of a thing, one can rightly conclude only that this thing must eminently contain what the idea represents; but it would not follow that it formally contains it, nor therefore that the thing was as the idea represented it as being" (*U* 237–38). In section 4, we will consider Regis's alternative way of bridging such inferential gaps.

Perhaps defenders of Eminent Containment can overcome these conceptual, explanatory, and epistemic concerns. But they are worrisome enough that non-Spinozists committed to Divine Causation should be open to exploring other ways of avoiding Spinozistic Divine Containment.[33] Regis offers a principled alternative that eschews not only Eminent Containment but also Causal Containment, at least in the case of God. He motivates this by challenging the most innocuous-sounding component of Eminent Containment, namely *Comparison*, and endorsing a very different relationship between divine and nondivine things.

3. REGIS'S ALTERNATIVE: REJECTING DIVINE CAUSAL CONTAINMENT

Regis understands God to be *l'Être parfait*, which implies that God has "every perfection . . . really and essentially" (*U* 127), including "a great number that surpass our knowledge" (*U* 155). In a rare note of public agreement, Regis admits that he ascribes to God some of the same properties that Spinoza ascribes to God, including eternality, simplicity, and infinity (*U* 933).

However, Regis explicitly rejects Spinozistic Divine Containment, the thesis that God formally contains every property of finite things. "If by 'All-Being,' someone means that God formally contains all beings, they will conceive of God as a substance which has extension and thinking as essential attributes, and consequently as only the collection [*l'assemblage*] of all bodies and minds. But this

[33] A different strategy would be to challenge Divine Causation. That initially sounds like a nonstarter for Cartesians and Spinoza alike, but one variant would be to accept Causal Containment and argue that (a) the objects of God's ideas depend in a noncausal way on God's thinking them; (b) those objects can have features that are not contained in God's nonrepresentational nature; and (c) purely representational containment suffices for satisfying Causal Containment. On this account, God contains extended properties solely by thinking of them; see e.g. Newlands, "Ground." However, this requires the rejection of a principle about representation that Regis champions, as we will see in section 4.

violates the simplicity of the idea of God" (*U* 158–59). Although his primary target here is Malebranche, Regis links universal formal containment with Spinoza: "this is the meaning that Spinoza and his disciples have adopted, which leads them to say that God is a thinking thing and is extended" (*U* 159).[34]

Regis accepts Divine Causation, the thesis that God is the efficient cause of finite things. Just before the previously quoted passage, he notes, "If the words ['God is All-Being'] mean only that God is the cause of every being, their meaning is very correct" (*U* 158; see also *U* 164). Several chapters later, Regis provides more details of God's causal role, none of which are intended to undercut Divine Causation. For example, he clarifies that "God immediately produces every substance and the essences of modal things [i.e. finite things] by himself, and he produces the existence of those same modal things only through secondary causes" (*U* 271).[35]

However, this division is not intended to restrict the scope of what depends on divine causation. It is meant to distinguish only what immediately and entirely depends on God's will from what depends on both God's will and also on the more proximate causal contributions of finite things.[36] Establishing the efficacy of secondary causes is important for Regis's efforts to avoid occasionalism, but he does not deny that God causally contributes to every effect, either immediately and solely or in cooperation with finite causes. As Regis summarizes this embedding of secondary causes within universal divine causation, "God established creatures as secondary and proximate causes of everything that he produces" (*U* 273).

If anything, Regis stands out for endorsing an incredibly wide scope of divine causation, a rare advocate of Descartes's so-called "creation doctrine." According to Regis, God's will is also causally responsible for the essences of finite things and for all mathematical and moral truths. Metaphysical truths also depend on God's willing them to be so, including principles like the whole is greater than its parts and that a thinking substance cannot instantiate extended properties. God's will also establishes modal space; finite things and states of affairs involving them are possible/impossible/necessary because and only because God causes them to be so.[37]

But whereas Regis follows Descartes in affirming a stunningly wide range of divine effects, he avoids appealing to divine eminent containment. Admittedly,

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[34]For more on the extension of Regis's criticism of Malebranche in his earlier *Système* to its association with Spinozism in the *Usage*, see Del Prete, "Malebranche-Spinoza."

[35]Some interpreters have accused Regis of a different aspect of Spinozism, according to which finite bodies and minds are nonsubstantial collections of modes of a single extended finite substance and a single thinking finite substance (see Del Prete, "Un cartésianisme 'hérétique,'" for the fullest defense; see also Benigni, *Itinerari dell'antispinozismo*, 46n69 and 50; Lennon, "Cartesian Dialectic," 361–62; "Individuation," 25–29; and Sangiacomo, "From Secondary Causes," 11). This accusation has a long history (see Lelevel, *V* 87–89), but the conclusion would not follow solely from Regis's classification of particular finite things here and elsewhere as *chose modales/êtres modaux* rather than as *êtres substantiels*. Regis emphasizes that the difference between a particular modal being and a substance is merely conceptual, in that the latter category abstracts away from considering any particular modification (*S* 101; *RDH* 55–56; *U* 189, 960). For an alternative response in the case of finite minds, see Schmaltz, *Radical Cartesianism*, 209–12.

[36]See *U* 272, 377, 409–17; *S* 101; and *RDH* 67–68, 82–86. For competing accounts of details, see Ott, "Regis's Scholastic Mechanism," and Sangiacomo, "From Secondary Causes."

[37]See *U* 271–73, 171–74, 190; and S 90. Schmaltz discusses modifications that Cartesians like Desgabets and Regis made to Descartes's original version (*Radical Cartesianism*, 77–129).

Regis sometimes echoes Descartes closely on Causal Containment and its satisfaction via Eminent Containment. This is especially true in the *Système*, which hews much closer to Descartes in style and content than the later *Usage*. For example, Regis claims that "an effect cannot have any perfection which is not found in its total cause, because otherwise the effect would receive its perfection from nothing, which is repugnant" (*S* 69). This repeats the fine-grained version of Descartes's containment requirement and Descartes's defense of it. In arguing that bodies cannot cause his mind to exist, Regis allows that Causal Containment could be satisfied by Eminent Containment. "For my mind does not depend on any body for its existence, because if it did, then the body would have to contain, really or eminently (that is, in a more excellent manner), all the perfections of my mind (which it does not)" (*S* 100).

However, Regis generally avoids appealing to Eminent Containment when discussing divine causation.[38] By the time of the *Usage*, he acknowledges only a more restricted version of Causal Containment, one that applies to a proper subset of efficient causes and effects:

> Efficient causes eminently contain the perfections of their effects insofar as they contain both the genus and difference [of their effects] or only the genus. This should be understood for univocal and equivocal causes, because analogical causes do not contain the perfections of their effects, neither formally nor eminently. (*U* 407)

This is a very important framing for Regis, and it points to his more far-reaching strategy for avoiding Spinozistic Divine Containment. Sure, he concedes, perhaps some efficient causes formally or eminently contain the properties of their effects, but this is true only if causes and effects share something more general in common, such as being members of the same fundamental kind, genus, or species. But a cause can also be "totally different" (*U* 407) from its effect, and in such cases, *Causal Containment is false*.

In this passage, Regis labels cases of such radically different causes and effects 'analogical causes,' but that is a very misleading name. Analogical relations bring to mind the *Comparative* component of Eminent Containment. In fact, Aquinas appeals to analogy in the context of discussing Causal Containment and Universal Divine Containment. "Therefore if there is an agent not contained in any genus, its effect will still more distantly reproduce the form of the agent . . . only according to some sort of analogy, since *esse* is common to everything" (*ST* I, q. 4, a. 3, resp). As Aquinas goes on to argue in this passage, since God is *esse* and all creatures participate in *esse*, creatures are always like God to some extent, even if in a "distant" or highly general sense. Thus, for Aquinas and many others, what might be described as divine analogical causation still satisfies Causal Containment via Eminent Containment.[39] By contrast, what Regis calls "analogical causes" would

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[38]One possible exception occurs in the *Usage* when Regis is disputing Malebranche's characterization of God, and he mentions in passing that the "eminent containment of all beings in God" is something with which "we will still agree" (*U* 158), though he objects that such containment would leave it undetermined whether God is a mind or body, which hints at the "epistemically costly" objection to Eminent Containment from the previous section.

[39]For other examples, see Burgersdijk, *Metaphysicarum*, I.xxvi.1; Eustachius, *Summa Philosophiae*, III.ii.2.5; Heereboord, *Disputation*, II.26.ii; and Suárez, *DM* XVIII.ii.21.

be better described as *purely equivocal* causes, and we will see that Regis is happy in most other contexts to invoke *equivocity* to characterize his view.[40]

Regardless of terminology, the key point is that Regis thinks God and finite things are cases of such radically different cause and effects, "from which it follows that God and creatures have nothing in common except name" (*U* 407). Regis still insists that God is a genuine efficient cause of finite things, per Divine Causation, despite sharing only naming conventions. He repeats this in his response to Spinoza's causal commonality axiom (*E* Ia5). "So strictly speaking, it is false that when two things that have nothing in common, one cannot be the cause of the other. We have made clear to the contrary . . . that God is the cause of all creatures, by this reason alone, namely that he has nothing in common with them" (*U* 919).

This is a very bold gambit. Regis concludes that Spinozistic Divine Containment is false *not* because God formally contains some, but not all properties had by finite things. It is false because God does not formally contain *any* versions of creaturely properties—even the good ones! "The perfections of God have nothing in common with those of creatures" (*U* 169). As he puts it in the *Système*, "So when I ascribe the same perfections to God which are found in bodies and minds, this is only in an equivocal sense" (*S* 89).

Relatedly, Regis is skeptical of the *Comparison* component of Eminent Containment when applied to God. Regis denies that, strictly speaking, there is any comparative measure available that applies to both divine and creaturely properties, even "more excellent than." For example, he claims that "God's justice cannot be more excellent than ours except insofar as it produces and causes it," in virtue of the fact that divine and human justice agree only in name (*U* 196). Instead, "we must think that divine perfections have no relation with creaturely perfections except the relation of cause to effect" (*U* 195). This is why Regis eschews Aquinas's *media via* of analogical predication, which requires a "proportionality" (Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 13, a. 5, resp) between God and creatures that Regis denies.

Instead, Regis affirms a pure and universal equivocity between God and the features of finite things:

> Universal Divine Otherness (UDO): God does not contain, in any way, any property or type of property instantiated by finite things.

If UDO is true, then Spinozistic Divine Containment is indeed false, but so too is Universal Divine Containment. Indeed, the divine containment of *any* creaturely property, in *any* form of containment, is false according to Regis.

Forget Spinozistic worries about God containing extended properties. Regis thinks traditional divine perfections are wholly different from their putative finite counterparts. "God has an intellect and a will, but we must not imagine that God's intellect and will resemble human intellect and will" (*U* 167); indeed, "our will must totally differ from God's will; that is, they have nothing in common except the name" (*U* 168). This total difference in all but name includes *freedom* ("There

[40]Some of the terminological mess is compounded by editorial mistakes in the Fayard edition of *Usage*, which manages in the space of a single paragraph to (a) mistakenly apply Regis's definition of *equivocal* cause to *univocal*; (b) completely leave off his actual definition of *univocal* cause; and (c) leave off his reference to *equivocal* cause (*U* 406). None of this occurs in the original 1704 printing.

is nothing more equivocal than the word 'freedom' when ascribed to God and creatures" [*U* 175; *S* 225]), *actions* ("The word 'action' is very equivocal between God and creatures" [*U* 365–66; *S* 204]), and even *thinking* itself (our thinking and God's thinking "have nothing similar to each other except the name" [*U* 933]).

Regis extends this complete difference to ontological categories, a point he makes in his repudiation of Spinozism. "The word 'attribute' is no longer apt for God any more than the word 'substance'" (*U* 925; see also 920, 927, 932). In fact, his most frequent objection to Spinoza's substance monism here is not to the loss of finite substances but to the claim that *God* is a substance. Expressed in the other direction, if some finite things are substances with intrinsic attributes, then God is neither a substance nor has any intrinsic attributes. Similarly, Regis concludes that modal categories like necessity are only equivocally applied to both God and creatures (*RDH* 49).

Even *being* is only equivocally predicated of God and finite things, according to Regis. "The word 'substance' will be equivocal between God and bodies and minds; the word 'being' also" (*S* 88). Regis objects to unnamed Aristotelians that creatures cannot participate in God's being and cannot bear any "true resemblance" to God because "God's being and the being of creatures have nothing in common" (*U* 211). Hence, contra Aquinas's view that all creatures resemble and are proportional to God in virtue of having *esse*, Regis reasons that if creatures have *esse*, then God neither has *esse* nor is *esse* itself.[41]

Indeed, *any* intrinsic ontic structure had by finite things—attributes, properties, faculties, representations, powers, even an essence or nature—cannot be in God, given Universal Divine Otherness. Regis notes that it follows from this that God cannot be defined or even described (*U* 155). We also cannot demonstrate God's existence, since "demonstrations presuppose definitions," which in turn require categorical structures that do not apply to God (*U* 155). All we can really do when reasoning naturally about God is unpack the contents of our idea of the perfect being (*U* 156), a surprising backdoor to natural knowledge of God that we will return to in the next section.

And lest we think Regis is merely overemphasizing traditional efforts to avoid theological anthropomorphism (*S* 95) or affirm divine simplicity (*U* 153), he is clear that he rejects anything short of full and total equivocity for God.

> And it is useless to say that God's justice is like human justice, just with the exception that justice in God is more excellent than justice in humans, because I will then ask whether God's justice is of the same genus and species as ours or of a different genus and species. If the same, then our justice does have something univocally in common with God's, which cannot be said. And if different, then God's justice cannot be more excellent than ours except insofar as it produces and causes it. (*U* 196)

[41] See e.g. Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 4, a. 3; and *SCG* I.29.2. Regis is very concerned in the *Usage* to appear to be in agreement with both Aquinas and Augustine, though he tends to cite them most where he is, in fact, expressing very different views. (An amazing example is Regis namedropping Augustine in support of his own extreme divine voluntarism [*U* 172].) The present case is no exception, as Regis goes on to quote Aquinas at length on analogical predication (*U* 211–12) as if they agree, when in fact he has just tried to undercut one of Aquinas's central metaphysical commitments. Antonella Del Prete reaches a similar conclusion about Regis's "paradoxical" appeal to Aquinas here ("Malebranche-Spinoza," 176).

The justice that God causes in us in incomparably other than what is in God, sharing only a naming convention in common. Hence, according to Regis, Eminent Containment, Causal Containment, Spinozistic Divine Containment, and Universal Divine Containment are all false when applied to God.

Before turning to evaluation, we might wonder how Regis defends a sweeping thesis like Universal Divine Otherness. One possibility turns on divine causation itself. In responding to Spinoza, Regis claims that "God is the cause of all creatures, for this reason alone, that he has nothing in common with them" (*U* 919). Prima facie, this suggests that Universal Divine Otherness somehow implies Divine Causation, but Tad Schmaltz has argued that Regis could be seen as reasoning in the other direction, namely from Divine Causation to Universal Divine Otherness.[42]

Schmaltz's reconstruction relies on a different principle about efficient causation that Regis occasionally voices, which Schmaltz calls a *causal dissimilarity principle*. "Effects differ from their causes *only* in what they receive from them" (*U* 407, emphasis added). In Regis's only other direct expression of this principle, Regis states it slightly differently: "an effect *must* differ from its cause in what it receives from it" (*U* 167–68, emphasis added).

If this causal dissimilarity principle is combined with Regis's wide-ranging version of Divine Causation, then he can reach Universal Divine Otherness. For if God is the efficient cause of everything finite (including essences), then by the causal dissimilarity principle, God must have nothing in common with anything finite. In support of Schmaltz's interpretation, it is notable that Regis cites this dissimilarity principle to infer that "God's will is totally different from ours" from the fact that "our will receives its essence and existence from God's will" (*U* 168).

However, I am not persuaded that this is Regis's main line of reasoning. For one, it puts tremendous pressure on Regis to justify that causal dissimilarity principle, which seems patently false in its strongest form. If one ball causes the motion of another ball, it is not the case that the *only* difference between the two balls can be with respect to their motions. Nor does it seem true in Cartesian physics that the second ball *must* have a different speed from the first in virtue of being moved by it.[43]

There is a nearby idea that seems more plausible, namely that effects cannot already have what they receive from their causes, and in this sense, effects must have previously differed from their causes with respect to what they receive from them. Such a prohibition on causal redundancy might just be the flipside of Descartes's intuition about giving: just as giving presupposes possessing, receiving presupposes lacking. But that gentle reasoning does not entail that effects must and can only differ from their causes with respect to what they receive, which is

[42]Schmaltz, *Radical Cartesianism*, 113–21. These labels and framings of Schmaltz's interpretation are my own, though hopefully faithful to his account.

[43]A referee suggested that Schmaltz could respond by restricting Regis's causal dissimilarity principle to only cases of equivocal causes. But while this might save the principle from everyday counterexamples, it would undermine Regis's ability to use it to reach Universal Divine Otherness. For if only equivocal causes require dissimilarity, then inferring Universal Divine Otherness from Divine Causation would require Regis to first show that God *is* an equivocal cause, i.e. that God has nothing in common with God's effects, which is what he was supposed to be proving here in the first place.

what we need to derive Universal Divine Otherness from Regis's wide-ranging version of Divine Causation.[44]

In fact, I do not think Regis has any single master argument for Universal Divine Otherness. Instead, he offers what are supposed to be converging, case-by-case considerations. For example, Regis argues that human free actions depend on various external things, whereas divine free actions are independent of any external dependencies. From this, he concludes that the word 'freedom' is merely equivocal when applied to both God and humans (*U* 175). In a different case, Regis argues that divine and human thinking "have only a name in common" because human thinking involves being modified in various ways, whereas God cannot receive any modifications (*U* 933). In other places, Regis appeals to the fact that finite things and their features fall under various genus and species classifications whereas God is beyond any genus, differentia, and species, to defend their total difference from God (*U* 154, 195, 255, 933). At one point, Regis simply infers directly that God's "supreme unity consists in being indivisible in himself, and therefore [God] is different from all creatures, which have nothing in common with him" (*U* 182).

Even when Regis appeals to causal dissimilarity to support the equivocity of divine and human wills, he also offers different arguments for the same conclusion. He claims that in humans, the will is temporally and/or metaphysically posterior to the intellect, whereas in God there are neither any priority relations nor any "real or modal" distinctions between willing and understanding, from which "it follows that the will of God totally differs from ours, which is to say, that they have nothing in common except the name" (*U* 167).

If there is any overarching unity to these diverse considerations, it is that (a) the various dependence structures of finite things do not in any way apply to God, and (b) those dependencies are essential to the identities of the various finite things and features, be it substantiality, thinking, acting, and even having being (*S* 88). As Regis explains succinctly at one point, "We know by experience that the mind which constitutes our nature is imperfect and dependent" (*U* 151), from which he concludes that our mind cannot in any way resemble the divine.

Of course, both of those general theses are eminently(!) resistible, and none of Regis's individual arguments for particular cases are especially convincing.[45] This might sound overly critical, but Regis would hardly be alone in fruitfully deploying a broad background commitment, even if he lacks a satisfying master argument for it and even if its most independently plausible instances do not yield a general

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[44]Schmaltz points out that Suárez accepted only a weaker, temporal version (*Radical Cartesianism*, 114; see Suárez, *DM* XVIII.ix.5–6; and also Burgersdijk, *Metaphysicarum*, I.xxvi.5). For a fuller discussion of Regis's causal dissimilarity principle, especially in relation to Spinoza's own appeal to a similar-sounding principle in *E* Ip17s, see Schmaltz, "Disappearance," and Del Prete, "Malebranche-Spinoza," though it is worth bearing in mind that Spinoza's claims are all embedded in a conditional: "*if* will and intellect do pertain to the eternal essence of God," and it is not at all clear that Spinoza himself accepts the antecedent.

[45]Regis himself points to one line of resistance. He argues, in accordance with (a) and (b), that God is not extended because various limitations are essential to being extended (*U* 152). He then imagines the reply that, by the same reasoning, God also cannot think, and he responds that we can consider thinking "in itself and without restriction," which is to deny (b) with respect to thinking. Presumably, a similar move could be made with respect to the other features traditionally ascribed in some way to both God and creatures (as in e.g. Aquinas, *SCG* I.30.2).

inductive case. Spinoza's Principle of Sufficient Reason and Hume's Copy Principle arguably function in such ways and have similar kinds of support—or lack thereof, depending on one's perspective.

Rather than focus further on Regis's attempts to defend Universal Divine Otherness, I want to instead consider some of its consequences. For as we have seen, at least the following can be said in its favor, especially in the context of repudiating Spinozism: Universal Divine Otherness, if true, renders Spinozistic Divine Containment patently false. Indeed, Regis will have offered a *thoroughly* anti-Spinozistic position, one that Spinoza himself called "the complete opposite" (*Ep* 4) of his own view. It is hard to be more clearly opposed to something than by embracing its complete opposite! Even more impressively, Regis will have accomplished this without relying on what I argued in section 2 was the more traditional but problematic appeal to Eminent Containment.

This might sound like an early modern marketing pitch for Regisianism: *Keep your divine causation and avoid Spinozism, all without paying the exorbitant costs of eminent containment!* If so, it's time to read the fine print.

4. TALLYING THE COSTS

If we learn anything from the history of metaphysics, it is that there are never cost-free solutions. In this section, I will consider some of the costs of Regis's anti-Spinozism, which amounts to a Spinozistic rejoinder. But it is not merely a Spinozistic rejoinder, since as we saw in section 2, Descartes and others thought the price of rejecting Causal Containment was quite high, high enough to justify their eminent-based strategy. I will group the costs of Regis's strategy in what I take to be an escalating order, at least from the imagined perspective of Spinoza and Descartes: *inconsistency*, *instability*, and *unintelligibility*.

The first concerns center on Regis's execution of his own strategy. Although Regis accepts Universal Divine Otherness, he sometimes slips into ascribing various properties to God that violate it, including in his "Refutation" where he ought to have been especially careful. For example, while denying that God is a substance, he claims that God is nevertheless a being and/or a thing: "In addition to substances and modes there is a Being [*il y a l'Être*] which exists through himself which we called God" (*U* 932; see also 920); God is "something [*quelque chose*] which is not a substance" (*U* 922; see also 923). In denying that God has intrinsic attributes, he adds that "speaking properly, God is all reality [*toute realité*]" (*U* 925). It seems to follow that God, like finite things, exists and is "there" in the sense of being real and being a proper object of quantification.

Regis's own account of God's nature (about which he writes quite a bit!) also predicates various positive *propria* (*U* 931, 201) to God, including existing through himself; being eternal, infinite, and self-determining; and even having a nature in the first place (*U* 933, 255).[46] He offers what he describes as "demonstrations"

[46]Regis claims that some positive attributes, like being eternal and omnipotent, count as merely *extrinsic* divine attributes and do not violate his prohibition on divine otherness, since "nothing prevents extrinsic attributes from being suitable for God" (*U* 925). However, he defends this by arguing that extrinsic attributes are "nothing other than God himself, conceived as acting by himself and the cause of himself," which suggests that extrinsic attributes are apt for God because of various *intrinsic*

of God's existence (*U* 127–36), which he later claims to be indemonstrable (*U* 155). And despite Regis's concerns about drawing comparisons between God and finite things, he sometimes claims that God's thinking and way of being is, in fact, comparatively better than ours. "God's thinking is of a superior order" (*U* 934); "God is something more excellent than substance" (*U* 156).

Perhaps these are all mere infelicities in expression, but sometimes the slippage is severe.[47] Regis claims that "God's nature consists in a mind [*l'esprit*]; but it does not consist in a mind that resembles the mind that constitutes our nature" (*U* 151). However, just a few pages later, he claims that he conceives God as the perfect mind in order to "avoid the suspicion" that "the perfect mind that constitutes God's nature does not resemble something in the imperfect mind that constitutes our nature" (*U* 165).

Beyond worries about expressive consistency, Universal Divine Otherness generates internal instabilities with some of Regis's other central commitments. An especially important example concerns exemplar causation. In its purest form, an exemplar cause is "the model that one follows in trying to make a work" (*U* 406). Regis gives examples of architectural plans (*U* 406) and portrait models (*S* 91).

But in a more general sense, an exemplar cause is tied to intentionality as the source of representational content. In this more general sense, a table can be an exemplar cause of my idea of the table. "I understand in general by the term 'exemplar cause' anything that is represented by another" (*S* 77).[48] Importantly, Regis thinks exemplar causation is a form of genuine dependence that extends to all source-representational pairings. "All ideas, with respect to the properties that they represent, depend on their objects as their exemplar causes" (*S* 77). For example, exemplar causes are responsible for representational discrimination; they are what "make an idea represent one thing rather than another" (*U* 235). And although divine ideas had been treated by others as cases of exemplar causation in creation,[49] Regis argues that God cannot have any representations of creatures, since God would thereby *depend* on exemplar causes (*S* 91; *U* 169).

Although Regis denies that *efficient* causation must satisfy containment requirements, he thinks *exemplar* causation has very demanding containment requirements. Regis presents this as a basic axiom in the *Système*: "The exemplar cause of ideas must formally contain all the perfections that the idea represents" (*S* 77). So whereas efficient causes need not (and in God's case cannot) formally contain any properties of their effects, the exemplar cause of an idea must "really

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divine features like self-determination—intrinsic features which, according to Regis, God strictly lacks. Elsewhere, Regis distinguishes *relative* from *absolute* divine attributes, and classifies the former as attributes that God has in virtue of relations to creatures (such as mercy). But there he groups *eternity* as an absolute or nonrelational attribute (*U* 201).

[47]Schmaltz puts a similar conclusion more gently: "admittedly, the emphasis in Regis on the merely equivocal relation between God and creatures is counterbalanced to some extent by other aspects of his thought" (*Radical Cartesianism*, 120).

[48]Aquinas also presents exemplar causation in both the pure and more general, intentionality-based sense (Doolan, *Divine Ideas*, 4–43), as does Suárez (*DM* XXV.i.2–3). Regis defends this broader, "improper and metaphorical" sense of exemplar cause in response to Du Hamel's complaint that ideas themselves lack intentions (*RDH* 15).

[49]For Aquinas, see *ST* I, q. 44, a. 3, resp; and Doolan, *Divine Ideas*, 157–64. For Suárez, see *DM* XXV.i.4.

and formally" (*S* 77) contain every property that it is represented as having. Let us give a corresponding label for the containment requirement that all ideas must satisfy:

> Exemplar Containment (EC): Every idea has an exemplar cause that formally contains every property represented in that idea.

Notice that Exemplar Containment explicitly rules out Eminent Containment for exemplar causes. For reasons we will see shortly, an exemplar cause must *formally* contain each of the properties of the representational object that depends on it.

Exemplar causation is not a minor feature of Regis's philosophy. Regis claims that "all human certainty is based on the fact that ideas depend on their objects as exemplar causes" (*U* 236; *S* 75–77). In particular, Regis uses Exemplar Containment to argue from his ideas of external bodies and of God to the existence of bodies (*U* 241–42; *S* 74 and 98) and God (*U* 129; *S* 80–81 and 97). He describes these arguments as "so natural and convincing that if I were allowed to dispute them, I could call into doubt all the most constant truths" (*S* 81).

The parallel between these arguments is more important than their details. Regis first argues that bodies exist from (a) his ideas of extended properties, (b) Exemplar Containment, and (c) the fact that "I know with great certainty that my mind does not contain them [i.e. extended properties]" (*S* 74). He concludes that it must be "extension itself which is the [exemplar] cause of the properties which my idea represents of it" (*S* 74–75). He claims that this reasoning alone provides assurance that anything exists beyond his ideas and himself. "If I am assured that the sun exists when I see it, this is only because I have an idea of the sun and I know that [EC]. Without that, I would be assured that I have an idea of the sun, but I could not conclude from this that the sun exists" (*S* 81; see also *U* 236).[50]

As Regis points out, this proof works only if Exemplar Causation prohibits eminent containment (*U* 238). If exemplar causes could eminently contain the properties of their effects, then God could be the exemplar cause of my idea of bodies by eminently containing extended properties. But since EC requires *formal* containment and since God does not formally contain any bodily properties, only actually extended things can be the exemplar causes of my ideas of extended things.

Regis runs a parallel argument for God's existence from (a) his idea of a perfect being; (b) Exemplar Containment; and (c) the fact that finite "bodies and minds do not formally contain all the perfections represented in idea of the perfect being" (*U* 129). He concludes that there must exist something that formally contains all the perfections represented in (a), namely God.

However, when we combine Exemplar Containment with Universal Divine Otherness, serious internal problems arise. One immediate worry is that according to Regis's two demonstrations, God and bodies are both exemplar causes of our respective ideas of them. But Universal Divine Otherness implies that God and finite things cannot both be exemplar causes, lest they share something in

[50]Although arguing from one's ideas of bodies to the existence of a material world is broadly Cartesian, Regis's version represents a significant departure from Descartes. Unlike Descartes, Regis argues directly for the existence of bodies via Exemplar Containment without appealing to God's existence and goodness (*U* 240–45).

common. It seems to follow that if God is an exemplar cause, then by UDO bodies are not exemplar causes of our ideas and what Regis presents as his only basis for rejecting external world skepticism is lost. On the other hand, if bodies are exemplar causes, then by UDO God is not an exemplar cause, in which case at least one of his arguments for God's existence is unsound by Regis's own lights.

One might respond on Regis's behalf that being an exemplar cause is not a genuine property of things, or at least not the sort of property that falls under the scope of UDO.[51] One way to motivate this would be to treat *being an exemplar cause* as something like *being accurately thought about*, which would make it a kind of purely extrinsic, mere Cambridge property. (And if UDO prevents God and bodies from having *being thought about* in common, then the bare fact that Regis has an idea of both God and bodies would be immediately inconsistent with UDO, regardless of Exemplar Containment.)

However, this response undersells the nature of exemplar causation for Regis. Being an exemplar cause of an idea is not simply the property of being represented accurately. While Regis emphasizes that exemplar causes are "related to" but not identical with efficient causes (*S* 77, 181; *RDH* 37–39; *U* 406), they are nevertheless genuine *causes*. As such, exemplar causes are responsible for something, namely they make it the case that the representations of them represent the properties that they formally have. Exemplar Containment is true because of the work that exemplar causes do.

This is why I emphasized that exemplar causes induce genuine dependence, even if that dependence is not exactly an instance of efficient causation. This is also why Regis claims only in passing that exemplar causes must exist in order to function as exemplars (*U* 129; *S* 81). Based on a weaker account of exemplar causation, Du Hamel objected to Regis's arguments that "everyone agrees that exemplar causes need not exist" in order to function as models (*RDH* 39). But because Regis understands exemplar causes to be genuinely active, difference-making causes, Du Hamel's concern sounds as unpromising as objecting to the cosmological argument on grounds that a first efficient cause need not exist in order to be causally efficacious.

Hence, being an exemplar cause is not a purely extrinsic, mere Cambridge property like *being thought about*, in which case Regis's arguments require God and bodies to share the same causal responsibilities with respect to representational content, in apparent violation of UDO. Of course, as with Descartes's account of efficient causation, Regis's account of exemplar causation raises many questions of its own.[52] But my worry here concerns its fit with Universal Divine Otherness, not its independent plausibility.

Indeed, if we step back from the details, we can sense a more general instability in the combination of Universal Divine Otherness and Exemplar Containment. On the one hand, Regis claims that God is wholly other, having nothing formally in common with any finite thing. And yet, he also claims that some finite things

[51] I am grateful to Daniel Moerner for raising this objection, a variant of which was also pushed by Sam Rickless on a separate occasion.

[52] For the most obvious, see Regis's attempts to explain our ideas of chimeras without positing the existence of *impossibilia* (*S* 84; *RDH* 18–21).

represent God with *perfect correspondence* between at least some of the represented properties and God's actual, formal nature. Finite minds can represent God's formal properties (or whatever is the UDO-consistent paraphrase of "having formal properties"), even though those properties are not exemplified anywhere else in the world in any other form.

It is easy to understand why Regis would be attracted to something like Exemplar Containment, given his commitment to Universal Divine Otherness. In a sense, EC guarantees the *epistemic accessibility* of God in the face of the *metaphysical opacity* of God demanded by UDO. Strictly speaking, given UDO and the formal natures of finite things, God is not a substance; God does not think, represent, or act; God lacks being; and God cannot be defined or even described. Any property of anything besides God cannot be had by God in any way. If so, one might expect God to be completely beyond our mental grasp, a kind of Schleiermachian Whence that eludes any and all attempts by finite minds at even partial representation.

Nevertheless, Regis thinks we can represent God as a perfect being and can grasp and distinguish some of God's perfections, even if we cannot fully comprehend them (*U* 197–201). Exemplar Containment is what guarantees our representational ability to do this, as it posits a tight correspondence between our idea of God and God's actual nature, even when nothing else about us or the world corresponds in any way to that nature.

But the discontinuity between the metaphysics of Universal Divine Otherness and the representational fidelity of Exemplar Causation is so jarring that it is tempting to respond that if UDO and EC are both true, then we do not, in fact, have an idea of God. In terms of Regis's argument for God's existence outlined above, if we accept premises (b) and (c), we ought to conclude not that God exists but that (a) is false: whatever is contained in our representations of the perfect being is not representative of the divine. In theological terms, given the demands of UDO and EC, all representations of God are mere idolatry. Or, moving in the other direction, if we do in fact have an idea of God, then that is good evidence that UDO or EC is false.

In light of these concerns, it would be nice if Regis offered a robust defense of Exemplar Containment, but he instead appeals only to "the natural light" (*S* 74) and to what he takes to be the skeptical consequences of its denial (*U* 236; *S* 74–81). By contrast, we saw in section 2 that Descartes defended a nearby version of Exemplar Containment by embedding it in a more general efficient causal containment principle and defending that more general principle with a conceptual truth about giving. I suspect that from Descartes's perspective, untethering EC from this broader theory of efficient causation renders it ad hoc, at best. At worst, Regis's untethering threatens the very intelligibility of exemplar causation that Descartes tried to provide with his broader causal theory and universal Causal Containment principle. Simply asserting on the basis of Exemplar Causation that the world is causally responsible for guaranteeing representational fidelity without efficient causation does nothing to explain *how* it does so.

From Spinoza's perspective, Regis's account looks worrisome for a slightly different intelligibility reason. Spinoza offers a blanket reply to "everyone who . . . denies that God is corporeal" while still accepting that bodies are extended and

created by God. They "entirely remove corporeal or extended substance itself from the divine nature. And [yet] they maintain that it has been created by God. But by what divine power could it be created? They are completely ignorant of that, and this shows clearly that they do not understand what they themselves say" (*E* Ip15s). Spinoza's target includes those who accept Divine Causation and Causal Containment and then appeal to Eminent Containment to avoid Spinozistic Divine Containment. He objects that such an escape introduces unintelligibility, which he thinks even the advocates of Eminent Containment should not tolerate. For example, as I argued in section 2, Descartes's appeal to Eminent Containment seems to violate his own bedrock conceptual truth about causation and giving.

Spinoza would surely regard Regis's alternative strategy for accepting Divine Causation while avoiding Spinozistic Divine Containment as even *more* unintelligible. If God is as radically other as Regis claims, then how is it apt to conceive of God as a cause at all? Every single thing that we would want to say about divine causation—that it is an *action* undertaken by a *thing* with *power* to bring about what it *wills*—is strictly equivocal, according to Regis. If so, then what is Regis even affirming when he claims that God "is the cause of every being" (*U* 158)? This seems like an extreme case of someone failing to "understand what they themselves say" (*E* Ip15s)—by the lights of their own theory!

For his part, Regis might embrace some of these consequences. He claims it is "pointless to say that God acts reasonably," at least insofar as that implies that God has reasons for acting in anything like the way we do (*U* 212). He argues that "when it comes to something that exists outside of God" that God "has revealed that he produced," we should not challenge this on grounds that we cannot understand "the way in which it was made, since we know with great certainty that God's power is as incomprehensible as his nature" (*U* 198)—including, I suppose, the very claims that God has power and a nature in the first place. So even if Spinoza is right that Universal Divine Otherness renders Divine Causation wholly unintelligible, Regis might simply respond, who said God was intelligible to us in the first place?

5. CONCLUSION

We are rapidly approaching bedrock. Spinoza and Descartes both think that Divine Causation is at least somewhat intelligible, though they disagree on whether this commitment to intelligibility and Causal Containment implies Spinozistic Divine Containment. Regis accepts Divine Causation too, but he is open to denying its intelligibility, at least to us. Of course, he still thinks that divine *exemplar* causation is intelligible enough to yield Exemplar Containment, which I claimed has destabilizing consequences when combined with his Universal Divine Otherness. Perhaps Regis could simply embrace the instability and unintelligibility of these other components as well, though at some point, accepting too much unintelligibility, instability, and inconsistency renders the whole enterprise of philosophical inquiry moot.

Nevertheless, we can now discern where our comparative evaluations should focus. Using our labels one last time, we have seen that Spinoza accepts Divine Causation and Causal Containment while rejecting Eminent Containment, which

yields something close to Spinozistic Divine Containment and, by implication, Universal Divine Containment and the denial of Universal Divine Otherness. By contrast, Descartes (and many others, including Aquinas and Suárez) accept DC, CC, and Eminent Containment, which leads to UDC and the denial of SDC and UDO. For his part, Regis accepts DC and UDO, which prompts him to reject all the others: Eminent Containment, CC, UDC, and SDC. The relevant cost comparison will then be the relative costs of Divine Spinozistic Containment (Spinoza) versus Eminent Containment (Descartes et al.) versus Universal Divine Otherness (Regis).

Obviously, these three options do not exhaust the conceptual space, even among early modern theists. One deep background commitment shared by Descartes, Spinoza, and Regis is that divine containment is all-or-nothing, as we see in the competing universalized claims of UDC, SDC, and UDO. In this regard, Regis does indeed share something in common with what "Spinoza and his disciples have adopted" (*U* 159), namely a commitment to general and exceptionless philosophical principles, even when reasoning about the divine.

Far from dragging him down to Spinoza's abyss, Regis's commitment to this kind of principled universality is what gives his anti-Spinozism its great reach and power. For if Regis is right, then Spinoza was wrong not merely in a piecemeal fashion that could be fixed with a bit of definitional tinkering. If Regis is right, then what many early moderns regarded as the monistic foundations of Spinozism will have been thoroughly and decisively defeated, and no amount of friendly explication or emendation will save it. That result turns on a pretty contentious "if," as I argued in the previous section. Still, for those of us tracking these early modern debates, such decisive stakes provide all the more reason to attend closely to Regis's sweeping strategy.[53]

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