Suárez on Creation and Intrinsic Change*

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Abstract

The late scholastic philosopher Francisco Suárez (1548–1617) articulates and defends an extraordinarily detailed account of efficient causation. Some of the most interesting and difficult questions connected with this account concern the particular types of efficient causation he acknowledges. This paper clarifies one of the most fundamental distinctions Suárez employs in the course of his treatment of efficient causation—namely, that between motion (*motus*) or change (*mutatio*), on the one hand, and creation *ex nihilo*, on the other. The paper shows that, although motion and creation differ in systematic and important ways, they nevertheless can both be captured by Suárez's general theoretical model of efficient causation. Moreover, the paper shows that creation serves as a kind of limit case of efficient causation, and accordingly that it informs how Suárez understands motion or change as well.

Efficient causation plays a prominent role in scholastic philosophy and theology. Its significance is perhaps most obvious in scholastic

*To prepare this paper, I have consulted Francisco Suárez, *Opera omnia*, 28 vols., ed. Charles Berton (Paris: Vivès, 1856–61). Suárez's *Metaphysical Disputations* are found in volumes 25 and 26, which are also available in reprint. See Francisco Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, 2 vols. (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1965). I abbreviate this work as 'DM', and cite specific passages by disputation number, chapter number, and paragraph number. All translations are mine, but I have consulted existing English translations where available. See Francisco Suárez, *On Efficient Causality: Metaphysical Disputations 17, 18, and 19*, trans. Alfred Freddoso (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994); and Francisco Suárez, *Creation, Conservation, and Concurrence: Metaphysical Disputations 20–22*, trans. Alfred Freddoso (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2002).

philosophy of nature. Aristotelians famously appeal to four kinds of causes—namely, formal, material, efficient, and final causes—in order to explain change (*mutatio*) and rest (*quies*) in the natural world. But the topic of efficient causation also figures prominently in scholastic debates outside the philosophy of nature, especially in philosophy of mind and philosophical theology. For example, it serves as the backdrop for much of scholastic psychology, which construes faculties such as the will and the intellect as causal powers.[1] Likewise, efficient causation is central to the ways in which scholastics formulated a variety of Christian doctrines—most notably that God creates the world *ex nihilo*, that he sustains it, and that he participates or concurs in the actions of creatures.[2]

However, in spite of its importance for understanding scholastic thought, the topic of efficient causation has received surprisingly little attention from scholars of medieval philosophy.[3] And when

[1]The secondary literature on powers in scholastic psychology is large, at least relative to other topics in scholastic philosophy. Two papers that cover a lot of historical ground are Adam Wood, 'The Faculties of the Soul and Some Medieval Mind-Body Problems,' *The Thomist* 75, no. 4 (2012): 585–636; and Peter King, 'The Inner Cathedral: Mental Architecture in High Scholasticism,' *Vivarium* 46, no. 3 (2008): 253–74. For a recent treatment of the notion of a faculty in scholastic philosophy, see Dominik Perler, 'Faculties in Medieval Philosophy,' in *The Faculties: A History*, Oxford Philosophical Concepts, ed. Dominik Perler (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015): 97–139.

[2]For discussion of creation in the Latin West and in Classical Islam, see Taneli Kukkonen, 'Creation and Causation,' in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, 2 vols., ed. Robert Pasnau and Christina van Dyke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 232–46. For a detailed study of Aquinas's views on creation, see Norman Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Creation: Aquinas's Natural Theology in* Summa contra gentiles *II* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999). For a treatment of Olivi's views on God's causal role in the world, see Gloria Frost, 'Peter Olivi's Rejection of God's Concurrence with Secondary Causes,' *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 22, no. 4 (2014): 655–79. Frost's paper also helpfully distinguishes several dialectical options regarding the relationship between divine and creaturely efficient causation. For additional literature on divine concurrence, see subsequent notes, especially in §2.

[3]Two recent treatments are Michael Rota, 'Causation,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies and Eleanore Stump (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012): 104–14; and Kara Richardson, 'Efficient Causation: From Ibn Sina to Ockham,' in *Efficient Causation: A History*, Oxford Philosophical Concepts, ed. Tad Schmaltz (New York: Oxford University Press,

these scholars have approached scholastic accounts of efficient causation, they have almost always done so in the context of related (but distinct) philosophical or theological issues.[4] Likewise, although scholars of early modern philosophy have recognized the influence of scholastic accounts of efficient causation on subsequent early modern thinkers, their treatments of these accounts have been mostly perfunctory. Accordingly, with regard to efficient causation, the views of even the most important scholastic thinkers remain poorly understood.

In this paper, I examine the account of efficient causation developed by the late scholastic thinker Francisco Suárez (1548–1617).[5] It is worth mentioning three reasons for focusing on Suárez in particular. First, he offers what is probably the most detailed treatment of efficient causation in the history of philosophy. Indeed, in his *Metaphysical Disputations*, he devotes 8 of the 54 individual disputations to topics directly connected with efficient causation.[6] This amounts

2014): 105–31.

[4]One recent example is Robert Pasnau, *Metaphysical Themes: 1274–1671* (New York: Clarendon Press, 2011), which addresses efficient causation only tangentially, mostly in the context of medieval and early modern debates about qualities. Another example is Marilyn Adams, *Some Later Medieval Theories of the Eucharist: Thomas Aquinas, Giles of Rome, Duns Scotus, and William Ockham* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[5]For recent treatments of Suárez's account of efficient causation, see Jacob Tuttle, 'Suárez's Non-Reductive Theory of Efficient Causation,' *Oxford Studies in Medieval Philosophy* 4 (2016): 125–58; and Stephan Schmid, 'Efficient Causality: The Metaphysics of Production,' in *Suárez on Aristotelian Causality*, Investigating Medieval Philosophy, vol. 9, ed. Jakob Fink (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015): 85–121.

[6]These are DM 17–22, which are included in the Freddoso translations cited above; as well as DM 48, *On Action*; and DM 49, *On Passion*. The latter two disputations are crucial parts of Suárez's treatment, because he identifies efficient causation with the Aristotelian categories of action and passion. For discussion, see Tuttle, 'Suárez's Non-Reductive Theory of Efficient Causation', especially §§1 and 3; Schmid, 'Efficient Causality,' 92–94; Helen Hattab, 'Conflicting Causalities: The Jesuits, their Opponents, and Descartes on the Causality of the Efficient Cause,' *Oxford Studies in Early Modern Philosophy* 1 (2003): 1–22; and J. Patout Burns, 'Action in Suarez', *The New Scholasticism* 38, no. 4 (1964): 453–472. For working translations of large portions of DM 48 and 49, see Jacob Tuttle, 'Suárez's Metaphysics of Efficient Causation' (Ph.D. Diss., Purdue University, 2013): 129–226.

to more than 800 pages of double-columned Latin text. Second, because Suárez's career fell within the transitional period between the medieval and early modern eras, his account of efficient causation has special historical significance. A better appreciation of his own views on this topic will shed light on the views of his medieval predecessors, as well as on the views of the early moderns who attacked Aristotelian natural philosophy.[7] Third, although Suárez has recently begun to receive some scholarly attention, his philosophy is still grossly under-appreciated. A secondary aim of this paper is to give readers a sense of the sophistication and intrinsic interest of Suárez's philosophical work.

Some of the most interesting and difficult questions connected with Suárez's theory of efficient causation concern the particular types of efficient causation he acknowledges. Indeed, one reason for the staggering length of his treatment of the topic is the wide variety of contexts in which he appeals to efficient causation. The primary aim of this paper is to shed light on one of the most fundamental distinctions Suárez employs in the course of this treatment—namely, that between motion (*motus*) or change (*mutatio*), on the one hand, and creation *ex nihilo*, on the other. It is well-known that medieval Aristotelians understood motion to presuppose the existence of a subject or patient on which the agent acts, whereas they took creation *ex nihilo* to preclude the existence of such a subject or patient. Accordingly, we can formulate the following preliminary definitions on their behalf:

> **Definition of Motion or Change:** An instance of efficiant causation is an instance of motion or change if and only if it is performed on a subject.
>
> **Definition of Creation Ex Nihilo:** An instance of efficient causation is an instance of creation *ex nihilo* if and only if it is *not* performed on a subject.

[7] Much of the scholarly work on Suárez's theory of efficient causation is aimed at clarifying his influence on early modern thinkers. See especially Walter Ott, *Causation and Laws of Nature in Early Modern Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), Ch. 3; Tad Schmaltz, *Descartes on Causation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 24–48; and Hattab, 'Conflicting Causalities'.

Although these definitions capture what Suárez regards as the fundamental difference between motion and creation, it turns out that he has a good deal more to say about how we are to understand these two kinds of efficient causation. In this paper, I defend a more detailed and systematic interpretation of Suárez's views about motion and creation than is available in the existing literature.[8] I show that, in spite of important differences between these two types of efficient causation, Suárez thinks motion and creation both can be understood in terms of the same general theoretical framework.

The paper is divided into four sections. In §1, I reconstruct Suárez's analysis of what I call 'efficient causal situations' (ECSs)—namely, the situations (or facts, or states of affairs) that account for the truth of claims of the form 'C efficiently causes E'. I argue that, according to Suárez, such situations can be analyzed in terms of four components: an agent, an effect, an action, and an active power. In §2, I extend the analysis of ECSs to accommodate what Suárez and other Aristotelians regard as paradigmatic instances of efficient causation—that is to say, the instances of everyday experience. It turns out that these paradigmatic instances always involve motion or change. In §3, I outline how Suárez understands instances of efficient causation involving creation *ex nihilo*, while highlighting how these cases differ from the paradigmatic ones. In §4, I show that, although motion and creation constitute fundamentally different kinds of efficient causation, they nevertheless both fall under the same generic account articulated in §1.

In several places throughout his *corpus*, Suárez refers to his commentary on the *Physics*.[9] This would be the natural place to look for his considered views about motion. However, if this work was ever completed, it appears to have been lost. No such title is included

[8]Scholars of medieval philosophy and theology have had relatively little to say about the relationship between motion and creation, beyond the minimal observation that the former includes a subject, whereas the latter does not. One exception is Alfred Freddoso's book-length introduction to his translation of DM 20–22. See Alfred Freddoso, 'Introduction,' in *Creation, Conservation, and Concurrence*, xcv–cxxi. Pages xxxv and xli are especially relevant. Although I think Freddoso's treatment yields valuable insights, the broad scope of his introduction precludes the sort of detailed analysis that I offer here.

[9]See for example DM 20.5.22.

in his *Opera omnia*, and the most authoritative English-language bibliography of his published works makes no mention of it.[10] Accordingly, my interpretation relies exclusively on Suárez's discussion of motion in the *Metaphysical Disputations*. Although he does not devote any single disputation to motion as such, his views on this topic can be gathered from remarks that he makes throughout his treatment of efficient causation, and especially from DM 48, *On Action*, and DM 49, *On Passion*.[11] For Suárez's views about creation *ex nihilo*, I rely primarily on DM 20, *On the First Efficient Cause, and His First Action, which is Creation*.

1 The Structure of ECSs

In order to introduce the topic of efficient causation, it will be helpful to consider Suárez's paradigmatic example of fire heating water. In this example, he identifies the fire as an efficient cause, and the water's quality of heat as its effect. Moreover, on his view, the fire efficiently causes the heat by performing an action—namely, the action of heating. Put in a somewhat different way, Suárez thinks that it is precisely in virtue of performing this action that the fire qualifies as an efficient cause. In his own terminology, action is the 'causality' (*causalitas*) of an efficient cause, or what he elsewhere describes as the 'connection' (*connexio*) or 'link' (*vinculum*) between an efficient cause and its effect.[12] Suárez's notion of action is thus crucial to his theory of efficient causation. In fact, this is a bit of an understatement, for it would be better to describe his theory of efficient causation as a theory of action.

To get a better understanding of his notion of action, it is important to recognize that Suárez understands efficient causes to make or produce their effects. That is, for C to efficiently cause E is for C to make or produce E. Indeed, the term '*causa efficiens*', which is normally translated as 'efficient cause', literally means 'making' or 'producing cause'. Now, Suárez thinks that there is a tight concep-

[10] See the bibliography in Benjamin Hill and Henrik Lagerlund, eds., *The Philosophy of Francisco Suárez* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[11] Suárez's most sustained discussion of motion is in DM 49.2.

[12] Suárez argues that action is the causality of an efficient cause in DM 18.10.

tual connection between production and action. In fact, he apparently regards 'action' as synonymous with 'making' or 'production', for in more than one passage he remarks that these terms (or their cognates) amount to the same thing. He writes:

> [A]ction, as action, if it is true and proper, is nothing besides production (*productio*) or making (*effectio*) [...].[13]
>
> [W]hat is it to make (*efficere*) except to act (*agere*)?[14]
>
> [T]o be an actual efficient cause is the same thing as to be something [that is] acting (*agens*).[15]

This way of understanding action is reinforced by reflection on standard Aristotelian examples of action such as heating, cutting, and burning. It would appear that to heat something just is to produce a new (higher) temperature in it, and hence that, (more generally) to act just is to produce something.[16] In light of these observations, it should not be surprising that Suárez takes action to be the causality of an efficient cause. Or, to put the point in a more modern idiom, he thinks that efficient causation *just is* action. Indeed, as he remarks, this claim seems to be true just in virtue of the terms themselves.[17]

Suárez's notion of action is also closely related to his notion of an active power (*potentia activa*). In order to introduce the latter notion, consider again our paradigm case of efficient causation, in which a fire heats some water. Given that the fire actually does

[13]'[A]ctio, ut actio, si sit vera ac propria, nihil aliud est quam productio aut effectio [...]' (DM 48.2.16).

[14]'[Q]uid enim est efficere nisi agere?' (DM 18.10.3). '[D]enominatio agentis [...] eadem est cum denominatione causae efficientis in actu [...]' (DM 18.10.3).

[15]'[I]dem autem est esse causam efficientem in actu, quod esse agens' (DM 18.10.5).

[16]It should be clear that Suárez's use of the terms 'action' and 'agent' is much broader than that of contemporary philosophers, who tend to reserve them for voluntary behavior and the entities that engage in such behavior, respectively. For Suárez, anything whatever that produces an effect performs an action, and hence qualifies as an agent.

[17]'Et probatur, nam id est causalitas causae agentis, quod illam constituit, vel potius denominat actu agentem; sed hoc est actio, nihilque aliud esse potest; ergo. [...] Minor ex terminis videtur etiam clara [...]' (DM 18.10.5).

heat the water, it seems clear that it is also able to heat the water. Likewise, if a particular medium actually does refract light, it should be obvious that it is able to refract light. Moreover, it is plausible to suppose that the fire and the medium each possess some feature that enables them to heat things and to refract light, respectively. Suárez construes active powers in just this way—as properties that enable their subjects to perform particular types of actions. For example, fire is able to heat precisely because it is itself hot. In general, therefore, let us say that P is an active power for actions of type A if and only if P enables its subject to perform actions of type A.[18]

Now, because Suárez understands active powers as properties that enable their subjects to act in certain ways, it should not be surprising that he conceives actions as being essentially related to their corresponding active powers.[19] He frequently refers to an active power as a 'principle by which' (*principium quo*) an agent acts.[20] What he means by this is that an agent acts only by exercising an active power for the sort of action in question. In fact, Suárez thinks that an action just is the manifestation or exercise of an active power. He writes:

> [A]ction, insofar as it is action, can be correctly said to be the final actuality of an active power, and to be its exercise [...].[21]

[18]The two main sources for Suárez's views about active powers are DM 18.2–4, and DM 43, *De potentia et actu*. For a helpful discussion of active powers in Aquinas, see Michael Rota, 'Causation in Contemporary Metaphysics and in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas,' (PhD diss., Saint Louis University, 2006), 130–131.

[19]'[A]ctivitas dicit in agente potentiam aliquam realem [...]' (DM 43.1.4). Although Suárez is not speaking in his own voice in this passage, he suggests no reason for thinking that he disagrees with the sentiment. See also DM 48.1.20: 'Eo enim modo, quo potentia activa dicitur potentia, quamvis potius sit quidam actus, actio ab illa manans potest dici actus ejus [...] his enim est essentialis respectus actionis ut sic.'

[20]See especially DM 18.2–3. For example: 'Ac rursus exponere oportebit, quando unum accidens est principium quo efficiendi aliud, an sit principale, vel instrumentale' (DM 18.3.1).

[21]'[A]ctionem, ut actio est, recte dici posse ultimum actum potentiae activae, et exercitium ejus [...]' (DM 48.1.20).

Moreover, because Suárez says that this is true of action 'insofar as it is action', it is clear that he takes this feature to follow from the very notion or account of action.

Suárez thus analyzes ECSs in terms of four components: an agent or efficient cause, an effect, an action, and an active power. As we have seen, he thinks that in such situations, the agent produces an effect by performing an action, where this action is to be understood as the manifestation of an active power. Accordingly, we can summarize this analysis of ECSs as follows:

> **Analysis of ECSs:**
>
> A situation qualifies as an ECS iff:
>
> (i) There is an agent or efficient cause, C,
>
> (ii) C produces or efficiently causes an effect, E,
>
> (iii) C's production of E just is C's performance of an action, A,
>
> (iv) A is the manifestation of C's active power, P_a.

Applying this analysis to our paradigmatic example, Suárez thinks that the fire (an agent) produces or efficiently causes a quality of heat (an effect), by exercising its power for heating, where this exercise just is an action of heating.

2 ECSs Involving Motion

Now, although this analysis captures what Suárez thinks is common to every ECS, it turns out that many of the examples of efficient causation that he acknowledges involve some additional components. Perhaps the most obvious of these components is a subject or patient on which the agent acts. The actions of everyday experience, such as heating, cutting, and burning, all evidently presuppose some material that is heated, cut, or burned, respectively. Suárez expresses this point in DM 12, where he writes:

> [I]t is evident from experience that neither does an artisan make a statue except from stone or metal, nor does a fire

> heat unless something is presupposed for it that is capable of receiving heat, nor does [some fire] produce fire except from wood, hemp, or another similar thing.[22]

Another important component of paradigmatic ECSs is a passive power (*potentia passiva*). The notion of a passive power is perhaps best explained by comparison with the corresponding notion of an active power. As we have seen, Suárez understands an active power as a feature that enables an agent to perform a particular type of action. Thus, it is in virtue of its power to heat that some fire is able to perform an action of heating. Likewise, he understands a passive power as a feature that enables a patient to be acted on in a particular way.[23] As Suárez points out in the passage quoted above, it is not just any subject that is able to undergo the process of heating, but only something that is capable of receiving heat. The difference between materials such as water, wood, and hemp, on the one hand, and asbestos, on the other, is that the former all possess this capacity, while the latter does not. In general, then, let us say that P is a passive power for actions of type A if and only if P enables its subject to undergo actions of type A.[24]

Now, to the extent that an ECS involves a patient and a passive power, Suárez thinks it must also involve a passion, or being-acted-on. For example, in our paradigmatic case of fire heating water, it is true not only that the fire heats the water, but also that the water is heated by the fire. Accordingly, this situation involves not only the action of heating, but also the passion of being heated. In keeping with many in the Aristotelian tradition, Suárez denies that action and passion are distinct in extramental reality.[25] Rather, they are to be identified with the same motion—or, as he sometimes puts it, with

[22]'[E]xperimento constat, neque artificem facere statuam nisi ex ligno aut aere, neque ignem calefacere nisi aliquid ei supponatur quod calorem suscipiat, neque efficere ignem nisi ex ligno, stupa aut alia re simili. ' (DM 12.3.2).

[23]'In 5 autem Metaph., cap. 12, prius dividit potentiam in agentem et patientem, et deinde utramque definit, dicens, *potentiam activam esse principium transmutandi aliud in quantum aliud*; passivam vero esse *principium transmutandi ab alio*' (DM 43.1.1).

[24]For a helpful discussion of Aquinas's notion of a passive power, see Rota, 'Causation in Aquinas,' Ch. 3.

[25]DM 49.1.3.

the same dependence of an effect on its efficient cause. Nevertheless, Suárez insists that action and passion have very different notions or accounts (*rationes*).[26] As we have seen already, he understands action to be the actualization or manifestation of an active power. And, perhaps not surprisingly, it turns out that he also understands passion to be the manifestation of a passive power. He makes this point explicitly in DM 49, where he writes:

> [P]assion is the first actualization of a passive power [...].[27]

We can thus understand paradigmatic ECSs in terms of the manifestation of two complementary powers by one and the same motion or dependence. Speaking of the corresponding actualization of active and passive powers in DM 49, Suárez writes:

> [O]ne and the same actuality necessarily performs each function (*munus*) in reality [...].[28]

For example, in our paradigmatic case of fire heating water, the dependence of the heat that is being produced constitutes the manifestation of both the fire's power to heat, and the water's power to be heated. When we want to draw attention to the fact that this dependence is the manifestation of the fire's power to heat, we refer to it as an action of heating. But when we want to point out that it is the manifestation of the water's power to be heated, we refer to it as a passion of being heated. Suárez often puts this point in terms of the different relations under which action and passion are conceived. While the term 'action' adverts to the fact that the motion or dependence proceeds from an agent, the term 'passion' emphasizes the fact that that same motion or dependence exists in a patient.[29]

[26] DM 49.1.8.

[27] '[P]assio est prima actuatio potentiae passivae [...]' (DM 49.2.10).

[28] '[U]nus [...] et idem actus in re utrumque munus necessario exercet [...]' (DM 49.1.10).

[29] See DM 49.1.8. Suárez cites both Aristotle and Aquinas in support of this view. For the canonical treatment of this topic in Aristotle, see *Physics* 3.3, 202^a15–202^b20. References to Aristotle's works are taken from *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, 2 vols., ed. Jonathan

It is worth pausing to take note of one further detail about how Suárez understands passion. Apart from his characterization of passion as the manifestation of a passive power, he also frequently describes it as the reception (*receptio*) of a form by a patient, or as the coming-to-be (*fieri*) of a form in a subject. For example, consider the following representative passages:

> [A] passion is the reception of some form.[30]

> [A] passion is nothing other than the coming-to-be of a form, or the formal end-point of an action insofar as it is received in a subject [...].[31]

These remarks are significant not only for what they tell us about passion, but also for what they reveal about the kinds of effects Suárez thinks must be present in paradigmatic ECSs. The reason why he habitually refers to passion as the reception or coming-to-be of a form is that he thinks that in ECSs involving passion, the effect will always be a form that comes to exist in the patient. To put this point somewhat differently, when an agent acts on a subject, this is to be understood in terms of its producing a form in that subject. Thus in our paradigmatic example, the fire's heating the water is to be understood in terms of its producing a specific quality—namely, heat—in the water.

Barnes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984). For discussion of this passage from the *Physics*, see Anna Marmodoro, 'The Union of Cause and Effect in Aristotle: *Physics* III 3', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 32 (2007): 205–232. For Aquinas's treatment of the relationship between action and passion, see his *Commentary on the Metaphysics*, Book 11, lecture 9; and his *Commentary on the Physics*, Book 3, Lecture 4. A readily accessible collection of Aquinas's works can be found on the Corpus Thomisticum site at http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/index.html. For discussion of Aquinas's views about action and passion, see Gloria Frost, 'Aquinas's Ontology of Transeunt Causal Activity', *Vivarium* 56 (2018): 1–36; Rota, 'Causation in Aquinas,' Ch. 3; and John Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being*, (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000): 220.

[30] '[E]nim passio receptio alicujus formae' (DM 49.1.1).

[31] '[P]assio nihil aliud est quam fieri formae, seu formalis termini actionis prout recipitur in subjecto [...]' (DM 49.1.3).

We are now in a position to appreciate what is, for my purposes, the most important component of paradigmatic ECSs—namely, motion or change. In the foregoing discussion, I noted that Suárez thinks action and passion are to be identified with the same motion. Accordingly, it follows that any ECS that involves both action and passion will also involve motion. However, one might well wonder exactly what this amounts to. Precisely how are we to conceive the motion with which an action and its corresponding passion are identified? Suárez follows Aristotle in characterizing the process of motion or change as one in which numerically the same subject differs over time. He cites Aristotle approvingly in DM 49, where he writes:

> [A]ccording to the testimony of Aristotle, that is properly said to be changed which is different than it was before. Therefore it is necessary that motion express a relation (*respectum*) to some subject, which it makes to be formally different than before [...].[32]

Now, it is important to notice that Suárez's concept of motion excludes what we would nowadays call 'Cambridge change'. For example, he would deny that Juliet undergoes a genuine change merely in virtue of coming to be loved by Romeo. Although there is some sense in which Juliet may be said to differ over time in this case, this difference is to be explained purely in terms of what Suárez

[32] '[M]utari proprie dicitur id quod se habet aliter quam prius, teste Aristotele; ergo necesse est ut motus dicat respectum ad aliquod subjectum, quod formaliter facit aliter se habere quam prius' (DM 49.2.7). Suárez does not cite any specific passage from Aristotle, but he likely has in mind *Physics* 5.1, 225^a1–12, and 6.5, 235^b18–32. (Note that in the First Edition of the *Complete Works of Aristotle*, the headings for Book VI of the *Physics*, at the top of the right-hand pages, are misprinted as 'Book V'.) The characterization of something moved as 'se habet aliter quam prius', and its attribution to Aristotle, would have been well-known to Suárez's audience, since it appeared in a variety of *Physics* commentaries. For example, see Ockham's *Brevis summa libri physicorum* III, chapter 3, in Guillelmi de Ockham, *Opera Philosophica*, 7 vols., ed. P. Boehner, *et alia* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1974–88); and Book 3, question 1 from Nicole Oresme, *Questiones super Physicam (Books I–VII)*, ed. Stefano Caroti, *et alia* (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2013). For a discussion of Oresme's theory of motion, focusing on his *Physics* commentary, see Stefano Caroti, 'Oresme on Motion (Questiones super Physicam, III, 2–7),' *Vivarium* XXXI, no. 1 (1993): 8–36.

calls 'extrinsic denomination', as opposed to any of Juliet's forms or intrinsic properties. Thus, although Juliet is now denominated 'beloved', whereas she was not before, this is in virtue of something entirely extrinsic to her.[33] And Suárez insists that a mere difference in extrinsic denomination is not sufficient for a genuine change. This is why, in the passage quoted above, he says that motion makes a subject to be *formally* different than it was before. He expresses this point most clearly in the context of his treatment of the category where (*ubi*), in which he argues that because local motion does constitute a genuine change, the body that is moved must receive a new intrinsic property in the course of that change.[34] He writes:

> [T]his real thing that falls under the expressions 'to be here', or '[to be] there', is not something merely extrinsic to the body that is said to be here or there, nor can it consist only in extrinsic denomination. This is clear [...] because through a mere change in extrinsic denomination a thing is not really changed [...]; therefore it does not differ (*variatur*) in respect of that extrinsic denomination alone, but also intrinsically in respect of something existing in it [...].[35]

Suárez's view is thus that a subject undergoes change if and only if it differs over time in respect of the forms inhering in it. Accordingly, to the extent that paradigmatic ECSs necessarily involve the production of a form in a patient, that patient can be said to undergo motion or change. And finally, as we have seen, Suárez identifies the

[33]For discussion of extrinsic denomination in Suárez, see John Doyle, 'Prolegomena to a Study of Extrinsic Denomination in the Work of Francis Suarez, S.J.,' *Vivarium* XXII, no. 2 (1984): 121–156.

[34]According to Suárez, where is an extramentally distinct mode of a located object. For Suárez's treatment of the category of where, see DM 51, *De ubi*. For discussion of this case, see Doyle, 'Extrinsic Denomination,' 139–140.

[35]'[H]oc ipsum reale, quod his vocibus subest, esse hic, vel illic, non est aliquid mere extrinsecum illi corpori, quod hic vel ibi esse dicitur, neque in sola denominatione extrinseca consistere potest. Quod patet [...] quia per mutationem solius denominationis extrinsecae non mutatur res realiter [...]; ergo non variatur in illo sola denominatio extrinseca, sed aliquid intrinsece in ipso existens [...]' (DM 51.1.14).

motion or change itself with that causal link or dependence whereby the form is produced in the patient.

We have now seen all of the characteristic components of paradigmatic ECSs. In addition to the components that are shared by all ECSs—namely, an agent or efficient cause, an effect, an action, and an active power—paradigmatic ECSs also involve a patient, a passion, a passive power, a form that is produced in the patient, and a motion. Drawing on these additional components, we can formulate the following analysis of paradigmatic ECSs:

Analysis of Paradigmatic ECSs:

An ECS qualifies as a paradigmatic ECS iff:

(i) the agent's action, A, is performed on a subject or patient,

(ii) A is a manifestation of *both* the agent's active power, P_a, and the patient's corresponding passive power, P_p,

(iii) in virtue of being the manifestation of P_p, A also qualifies as an instance of passion,

(iv) the effect that serves as A's end-point is a form, F, that is produced in the patient, and

(v) in virtue of having F as its end-point, A makes the patient to be intrinsically different than it was before, and A thereby also qualifies as an instance of motion.

It is worth pausing to emphasize just how ubiquitous this analysis is in Suárez's treatment of efficient causation. In order to illustrate the analysis, I have used the traditional Aristotelian examples of heating, cutting, and burning. But as it turns out, Suárez thinks that every instance of efficient causation in which a natural agent exercises a natural active power conforms to the above paradigm, and consequently qualifies as an instance of motion or change. He typically expresses this point by noting that in order for created agents to exercise their natural active powers, they must do so by acting on a subject. He writes:

> [C]reated agents by their natural power can operate only on a presupposed subject.[36]

> [N]o created active power [...] is active except on a presupposed subject [...].[37]

> [A] created agent cannot produce anything except from a presupposed subject, and through an action received in it.[38]

The reason for this, Suárez thinks, is that the natural active powers of creatures require corresponding passive powers in order to be actualized. Intuitively, the idea is that a natural agent such as fire cannot perform its natural action of heating in the absence of anything that has the capacity to be heated. And in fact, Suárez thinks this point is so obvious from experience that, in another passage, he remarks that if one were considering only natural agents, one might well conclude that every action is performed on a subject.[39]

It is important to notice, however, that Suárez does not think motion is confined to natural agents. He also insists that many of God's actions are performed on a subject, and so qualify as instances of motion. This is perhaps easiest to appreciate in cases of divine concurrence. In keeping with the Christian theological tradition, Suárez thinks that in order for a creature to act, God must participate or concur in that action. Moreover, he understands concurrence in terms of two or more agents performing numerically the same action.[40] Thus, in our paradigmatic example of fire heating water, it turns out that the same action of heating is performed both by God and by the fire. Accordingly, it should be clear that every case in

[36]'[C]reata agentia virtute naturali solum possunt operari ex praesupposito subjecto' (DM 48.4.11).

[37]'[Q]uia nulla potentia activa creata [...] est activa, nisi ex praesupposito subjecto [...]' (DM 43.2.11).

[38]'[A]gens creatum nihil potest efficere, nisi ex praesupposito subjecto, et per actionem receptam in illud' (DM 48.4.12).

[39]'Imo hic modus agendi tam est proprius naturalium causarum, ut philosophi, qui ad illas tantum attenderunt, inde sumpserint axioma illud: Ex nihilo nihil fit' (DM 12.3.2).

[40]DM 22.3.1–8.

which a creature moves or changes a subject is also a case in which God moves or changes that same subject.[41]

Perhaps not surprisingly, Suárez also thinks that God is able to change a pre-existing subject all by himself, without the concurrence of any created agent. He could, for example, produce heat in some water even in the absence of fire or any other created agent. More generally, Suárez insists that God is able to make up for the active causal power of any creature. Thus, to the extent that some creature is able to move or change a subject in a certain way, God is also able to move or change that subject in the same way.

3 ECSs Involving Creation

The foregoing analysis of paradigmatic ECSs sheds light on a great number of the cases of efficient causation that Suárez acknowledges. Nevertheless, he denies that every instance of efficient causation conforms to this model. One of the most important influences on Suárez's theory of efficient causation is the Christian theological tradition, according to which God creates the world *ex nihilo*—that is to say, out of nothing. As Suárez points out, Christian theologians have traditionally understood this to mean that when God creates, he does not do so by acting on any pre-existing material. In Suárez's own idiom, creation does not involve the concurrence of a material cause. He writes:

> [A]s theologians define it, creation signifies the production of some thing out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). And in order to distinguish this [kind of] action from the others, that phrase 'out of nothing' excludes any concurrence of

[41] For discussion of some of the philosophical issues associated with divine concurrence, with emphasis on Suárez's views, see Louis Mancha, Jr., 'Concurrentism: A Philosophical Explanation' (Ph.D. Diss., Purdue University, 2003), Chs. 5 and 6; Alfred Freddoso, 'Introduction,' in *Creation, Conservation, and Concurrence*, xcv–cxxi; Alfred Freddoso, 'God's General Concurrence with Secondary Causes: Pitfalls and Prospects', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 67 (1994): 131–56; and Alfred Freddoso, 'God's General Concurrence with Secondary Causes: Why Conservation is not Enough', *Philosophical Perspectives* 5 (1991): 553–85.

> a material cause, and the dependence of the thing that is created on any subject [...], so that 'out of nothing' means the same thing as 'out of no subject' (*ex nullo subjecto*).[42]

This characterization of creation has some important consequences for how Suárez understands its nature and ontological status, as well as the ECSs in which it figures. One consequence that should be immediately evident is that actions of creation do not also qualify as passions. As we have seen, Suárez thinks that actions such as heating, cutting, and burning can be re-described from the perspective of the patient as the passions of being-heated, being-cut, and being-burned, respectively. But because actions of creation preclude the existence of a patient, they cannot be re-described as instances of passion. God could, for example, create some hot water *ex nihilo*, but because this sort of action would not be performed on any pre-existing patient, there would not be anything that could correctly be characterized as undergoing the action. Accordingly, Suárez insists throughout his treatment of efficient causation that creation does not constitute a passion. He expresses this point especially clearly in a passage from DM 20.4, where he approvingly reports the opinion of Gregory of Rimini. He writes:

> [A] passion cannot be understood without a patient [...]. Therefore, since the dependence of creation does not presuppose any subject out of which it occurs, it cannot have the true account of a passion [...].[43]

Suárez's view that creation is not a passion can also be understood in terms of the manifestation of causal powers. As we have seen, he identifies action and passion with the manifestation of active and passive powers, respectively. Moreover, we have seen that in

[42]'Significat [...] creatio effectione alicujus rei ex nihilo, ut Theologi definiunt. Illa autem particula, *ex nihilo*, ut distinguat hanc actionem ab aliis, excludit omnem concursum causae materialis, et dependentiam rei, quae creatur, ab aliquo subjecto [...], ita ut idem sit dictum, *ex nihilo*, quod *ex nullo subjecto*' (DM 20.1.1).

[43]'[P]assio autem intelligi non potest sine patiente [...]. Cum ergo creationis dependentia non supponat aliquod subjectum ex quo fiat, non potest veram rationem passionis [...] habere' (DM 20.4.17).

paradigmatic instances of efficient causation, it is the very same dependence of an effect on its efficient cause that manifests the agent's power to perform the relevant kind of action, and the patient's power to undergo that kind of action. For example, in our case of fire heating water, the heat's dependence on the fire manifests both the fire's active power to heat, and the water's passive power to be heated. However, because in cases of creation there is no patient, neither will there be any passive power to be manifested, and accordingly neither will there be any passion. If God should create some hot water *ex nihilo*, his production of that effect would be the manifestation of his active power, but not of any passive power.

Another important result of Suárez's characterization of creation concerns the nature of the effects that creation involves. We saw above that Suárez thinks we can understand action on a subject in terms of an agent's production of a form in that subject. Thus, in accidental generation (say, in the generation of heat in some water), the agent produces an accidental form in a subject. Likewise, in substantial generation (say, in the generation of some water), the agent produces a substantial form in a subject. But again, because creation does not involve a subject, this evidently cannot be the right way to understand the effects in cases of creation. It is for this reason that Suárez endorses what he regards as the standard view of the theologians concerning such effects—namely, that they do not depend on a subject or material cause in their coming-to-be (*fieri*). Employing standard medieval terminology, Suárez refers to such effects as 'subsistent' (*subsistens*) because they exist in their own right, in the sense that they do not exist in and characterize a subject. He writes:

> [T]he theologians infer that whatever is created must be subsistent, or be made in the manner of something subsistent, because it is required that it be made outside a subject or without dependence on a subject. But whatever exists without dependence on a subject subsists, or holds itself (*habet se*) in the manner of something that subsists.[44]

[44]'Unde inferunt Theologi, quidquid creatur, debere esse subsistens, aut fieri

As examples of subsistent beings, Suárez typically cites complete substances. For example, in what he calls the 'primordial creation' of the world—so-called because it takes place at the beginning of time—God created the four Aristotelian elements of earth, air, fire, and water, as well as (in all probability) the celestial bodies.[45] These substances are complete in the sense that they are not themselves ordered to be hylomorphic parts of any further substance, as are substantial form and prime matter. Prime matter is likewise subsistent because, like complete substances, it does not depend on any further substance for its existence.[46] Except in very unusual circumstances, Suárez insists that substantial form is not subsistent, because it exists in and is sustained by prime matter. One of the rare exceptions is the human soul, which, although it exists in a subject, is naturally capable of existing without it, so that the soul is able to survive bodily death.[47] Finally, Suárez denies that accidental forms are ever subsistent, although, to accommodate the possibility of God's creat-

per modum subsistentis, quia oportet ut fiat extra subjectum seu sine dependentia a subjecto. Quod autem existit sine dependentia a subjecto, subsistit, vel habet se ad modum subsistens; [...]' (DM 20.1.1).

[45]Suárez discusses primordial creation in DM 20.5, where he considers the medieval controversy about whether the eternity of the world can be disproved via natural reason.

[46]For Suárez's treatment of prime matter, see DM 13, *De materiali causa substantiae*. For an unpublished English translation of portions of this work, see Sydney Penner's website, http://www.sydneypenner.ca/SuarTr.shtml. Suárez rejects the Thomistic view that prime matter is pure potentiality. Instead, he argues that it is 'a certain entitative actuality'. He writes: '[M]ateria non est ita pura potentia, quin sit aliquis actus entitativus secundum quid' (DM 13.5.10).

[47]For Suárez's most comprehensive discussion of complete and incomplete substances, see DM 33.1. For an English translation of a very brief passage from this text, concerning the soul's character as an incomplete substance, see Roger Ariew, John Cottingham, and Tom Sorell, eds., *Descartes'* Meditations*: Background and Source Materials* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 49–50. For Suárez's treatment of the soul specifically, see Francisco Suárez, *Commentaria una cum questionibus in libros Aristotelis De anima*, 3 vols., ed. Salvador Castellote (Madrid: Sociedad de Estudios y Publicationes [vols. 1 and 2] and Fundación Xavier Zubiri [vol. 3], 1978-1991). He argues for the immortality of the human soul in Disputation 2, Question 3. For an English translation of part of this work, see Francisco Suárez, *Selections from* De Anima*: On the Nature of the Soul in General, On the Immateriality and Immortality of the Rational Soul*, tr. John Kronen and Jeremiah Reedy (Munich: Philosophia Verlag, 2012).

ing them in separation from any substance, he does allow that they can in principle exist 'in the manner of something subsistent'.[48]

It is worth noting one further result of Suárez's characterization of creation—namely, that it does not involve motion or change. Recall that Suárez understands motion in terms of the same subject differing over time in respect of its intrinsic properties or forms. In our paradigmatic example of efficient causation, the water is said to change from being cold to being hot precisely because it first possesses the quality of coldness, and later of heat. However, in cases of creation, there is by hypothesis no subject that differs over time because of the agent's action, and accordingly nothing that can be said to undergo a change because of that action. This should be clear to the extent that Suárez understands creation not as the production of a form in a pre-existing subject, but rather as the production of a subsistent entity *de novo*.[49] Imagine, for example, that God creates some hot water *ex nihilo*. In such a case, the water and its quality of heat are both end-points of God's action. However, Suárez insists that the end-point of an action is never what undergoes change in the course of that very action. He writes:

> [A]n [action's] end-point is not properly said to be different than before, since it did not exist before.[50]

[48] DM 20.1.1.

[49] One question that is suggested by this point concerns creation's relationship to divine conservation. Suppose that God creates an effect, E, at one time and conserves it until a later time. If God's creation of E presupposes that E does not already exist, must it not follow that his subsequent conservation of E is distinct from his initial action of creation? Like some others in the scholastic tradition, Suárez answers this question by claiming that the terms 'creation' and 'conservation' express distinct concepts, even though the *significata* of these concepts are not necessarily distinct in extramental reality. Thus, he writes that 'creation expresses the production of a thing while connoting that it has not existed before, whereas conservation expresses the same production while connoting that the thing has already existed before' (DM 21.2.2). Accordingly, on Suárez's view, it would be correct to describe God's initial production of E as an instance of creation, and his subsequent production of E as an instance of conservation. Suárez's views about the relationship between creation and conservation involve a number of other complications that are beyond the scope of this paper. Interested readers may consult DM 20.5 and DM 21.2–3.

[50] '[N]am terminus non proprie dicitur aliter se habere quam prius, cum prius

Likewise, he remarks more specifically about the products of creation:

> [A] created thing is not properly said to be different than before (*se habere aliter quam antea*), because before it was nothing. Rather, it ought to be said to have (*habere*) being *simpliciter*, which it did not have before.[51]

Suárez's point, then, is that in order to be genuinely different than before, and accordingly to undergo change in the proper sense, it is not enough for a thing merely to come into existence. Indeed, to suppose that something that is produced *de novo* undergoes a change is to commit a conceptual mistake, for what undergoes change in the proper sense must endure throughout the change.

We have now seen the main differences between paradigmatic ECSs, and those involving creation. Because ECSs involving creation do not involve a subject or patient, neither do they involve a passion, a passive power, or a genuine change. Rather, they involve the production of an effect and everything that it presupposes, all at once. We can thus formulate the following analysis of ECSs involving creation:

> **Analysis of ECSs Involving Creation:**
>
> An ECS involves creation iff:
>
> (i) the agent's action, A, is not performed on any subject or patient,
>
> (ii) A is a manifestation of the agent's active power, but not of any patient's passive power,
>
> (iii) A does not also qualify as an instance of passion,
>
> (iv) the effect that serves as A's end-point is not a form that is produced in a patient, but rather a subsistent entity (or one that is made 'in the manner' of a subsistent entity),

non esset [...]' (DM 49.2.7).

[51] '[R]es, quae creatur, non dicitur proprie se habere aliter quam antea, quia antea nihil erat, sed dicenda est habere esse simpliciter, quod antea non habebat' (DM 20.4.18).

(v) because A does not make any subject to be intrinsically different than before, A does not also qualify as an instance of motion or change.

One remaining question concerns the type of agent or efficient cause that must be involved in creation *ex nihilo*. In my discussion so far, I have taken for granted that this agent must be God, and Suárez generally talks this way as well. After all, as we saw in §2, Suárez thinks that a creature's natural active powers cannot be manifested without corresponding passive powers. However, because ECSs involving creation are, by hypothesis, situations that do not include any passive powers, it looks as if creatures are in principle incapable of creating *ex nihilo*. One way of framing this view is to say that, in contrast to motion or change, creation is a distinctively divine action—that is to say, an action that can only be performed by God. But if it is correct that creation is a divine prerogative, then presumably our analysis of ECSs involving creation should be modified to reflect this fact. More specifically, one might expect our analysis to include some explicit reference to God, rather than to a generic agent.

Although there is a perfectly good sense in which Suárez takes creation to be a divine prerogative, I think he would deny that this is part of the concept or account of creation *ex nihilo* as such. This can be seen by considering Suárez's discussion of the medieval controversy about whether the possibility of creation can be demonstrated via natural reason.[52] In his treatment of this controversy, Suárez pursues two parallel dialectical strategies. The first of these strategies appeals to the existence of a perfect (and thus omnipotent) being. Because such a being is able to accomplish whatever is logically consistent, its existence guarantees the possibility of creation, so long as creation is not somehow contradictory or incoherent. In his presentation of this argument, Suárez explicitly takes for granted God's existence, noting that he intends to demonstrate it later in the *Metaphysical Disputations*.[53]

[52]See DM 20.1.

[53]Suárez argues for the existence of God in DM 29, *De deo primo ente et substantia increata, quatenus ipsum esse ratione naturali cognosci potest*. For an

However, Suárez's second dialectical strategy does not presuppose the existence of God. Instead, he argues that certain kinds of actually existing beings must have been created *ex nihilo*, so that creation is actual and thus, *a fortiori*, possible as well. Suárez runs the same kind of argument for several different types of entities, but the easiest to appreciate is his argument that prime matter must be a product of creation. He argues that either (i) matter exists from itself or in its own right (*ex se*), and is thus uncaused; or (ii) that matter is efficiently caused. He rejects (i) for several reasons, one of which is that matter lacks the degree of perfection or nobility that would be required for a being that has its existence from itself. He writes:

> [F]or since [prime] matter is the lowest of all substances—even the corruptible ones—it is incredible that it should have this highest perfection, which is to have its being from itself—a perfection of which all the other species of generable things and their forms are incapable.[54]

Accordingly, since it is unfitting for matter to exist from itself, it must be efficiently caused. But then either (i) matter is the product of creation, or (ii) matter is the product of motion or intrinsic change. Suárez then argues that matter cannot be the product of motion, because this would result in a vicious regress. This can be seen by considering our analysis of paradigmatic ECSs from §2. Recall that according to this analysis, every instance of motion or change requires a pre-existing subject or patient which undergoes the change. Suárez identifies this subject as the matter or material cause of the effect

English translation of this and the preceeding disputation, see Francisco Suárez, *The Metaphysical Demonstration of the Existence of God: Metaphysical Disputations 28–29*, trans. John Doyle (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2004).

[54] '[N]am cum illa sit infima omnium substantiarum etiam corruptibilium, incredibile est illam habere hanc perfectionem summam, quae est ex se habere esse, cujus perfectionis aliae species omnes rerum generabilium, et formae illarum non sunt capaces' (DM 20.1.18). In this text, Suárez does not explain why he thinks prime matter is 'the lowest of all substances', in respect of its perfection or nobility. For discussion of the notion of perfection or nobility in Suárez's theory of efficient causation, see Tuttle, 'Suárez's Metaphysics of Efficient Causation', Ch. 3; and Kara Richardson, 'The Metaphysics of Agency: Avicenna and his Legacy,' (Ph.D. Diss., University of Toronto, 2008), Ch. 4.

that results from the change. For this reason, if some matter—call it m_1—were the product of change, this change would itself presuppose the existence some further matter—call it m_2. But then we face the same disjunction for m_2: either it is the product of creation, or it is the product of motion. If it is the product of motion, then this motion will itself presuppose the existence of some further matter—call it m_3—and so on *in infinitum*. We must then endorse (i), and accept that some matter is created *ex nihilo*.[55]

These arguments for the possibility of creation are interesting because they help to situate Suárez's views about creation within the context of his natural theology. However, the second argument is also important for my specific purposes here, because it shows that Suárez's theoretical model for understanding creation does not include any explicit reference to God. Instead, the argument's aim is to show that one could know that an action of creation has in fact been performed, without knowing exactly what type of agent has performed it. One way of putting this point is to say that, on Suárez's view, the notion of creation includes reference to some creator, but it does not include enough information to confirm for us what (if anything) distinguishes this creator from the ordinary agents involved in instances of motion or change.

As one might have expected, Suárez does insist that creation *ex nihilo* must involve a divine agent. Thus, later in his disputation on creation, he argues that creation requires 'an absolutely infinite power', which he thinks is only possessed by God.[56] Even so, he regards this as a deep metaphysical fact about creation, which must be established via argument rather than stipulation. Accordingly, in order to avoid begging what he takes to be serious and interesting philosophical questions, Suárez does not characterize the notion of creation in terms of divine agency.

[55]This sort of regress figured prominently in medieval treatments of prime matter, and so would have been well-known to Suárez's audience. For one earlier example of a regress argument that aims to establish the ingenerability of prime matter, see Aquinas, *De principiis naturae*, Ch. 3.

[56]DM 20.2.40.

4 Conclusion

My discussion in the previous section has highlighted many of the ways in which Suárez thinks creation *ex nihilo* differs from motion or change. However, it is important to recognize that, in spite of these differences, creation nevertheless satisfies the generic analysis of ECSs that I defended in §1. As we saw there, according to this analysis, an ECS must include an agent or efficient cause, an effect, an action, and an active power. In light of what we have seen in the previous section, it should be clear that instances of creation do include each of these components. Thus, in the creation of some hot water, God (an agent) makes or produces an effect (the hot water) by exercising his active power, where this exercise just is his action of creation.

This result is important, not only for what it tells us about how Suárez understands creation, but also about how he understands efficient causation more generally. I have been characterizing instances of motion as 'paradigmatic' instances of efficient causation, because they are part of our everyday experience, and to that extent are better known to us than instances of creation. However, our analysis of ECSs involving creation shows that they are conceptually more simple than ECSs involving motion, because they do not involve a passion, a passive power, or an intrinsic change. Rather, they involve only the production of an effect, via the manifestation of an agent's active power. Accordingly, we can think of creation *ex nihilo* as the most basic or minimal case that can be accommodated by Suárez's account of efficient causation. Suárez's acknowledgement of this minimal or limiting case illustrates his view that the concept of efficient causation can be fully captured in terms of production, without appealing to motion or intrinsic change.

Before closing the paper, it is worth mentioning an important caveat about the scope of its results. Because Suárez thinks that both creation and motion can be captured by the same generic model of efficient causation, one might also expect him to say that creation and motion have a common nature or ontological status. That is to say, one might be tempted to assume that Suárez's unified *conception* of efficient causation reflects a unified account of what efficient

causation is *in itself*. Indeed, such a unified account of the nature of efficient causation is suggested by Suárez's own insistence that efficient causation is to be identified with action. After all, if efficient causation *just is* action, then presumably every instance of efficient causation will fall in the Aristotelian category of action, and accordingly these instances will have the sort of generic unity proper to items in the same category.

However, it turns out that Suárez's analysis of ECSs does not commit him to this view. In fact, the analysis I have defended here is actually fairly neutral about the precise nature of efficient causation. One way of appreciating this point is to see that for Suárez, efficient causation is a *functional* rather than a *categorial* concept. In other words, it is a concept that specifies a functional or metaphysical role, without also specifying an ontological kind or category for the items that perform this role.[57] So far I have not emphasized this aspect of Suárez's analysis of ECSs, but it should be clear upon reflection that this is correct. After all, to say that efficient causation should be understood in terms of the production of an effect does not tell us much about what this production must be in itself. But if this is right, then it looks as if Suárez's analysis is consistent with what we might call a 'pluralistic' account of the nature of efficient causation, according to which different types of efficient causation have fundamentally different natures or ontological statuses.

We can get some sense for how such an account might look by considering more carefully Suárez's claim that efficient causation is to be identified with action. Although one might assume that this thesis requires every instance of efficient causation to fall in the Aristotelian category of action, Suárez's contemporaries likely would have regarded this assumption as controversial. In fact, medieval philosophers sometimes granted that a term signifying an item in one of the accidental categories might also signify something outside that category. Some of the most well-known cases of this occur in theological contexts. For example, on the standard medieval view, when we speak of Socrates's justice, we signify an accident in the category

[57] I take this formulation of the notion of a functional concept from Jeffrey Brower, *Aquinas's Ontology of the Material World: Change, Hylomorphism, & Material Objects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 66–69.

of quality—namely, Socrates's habit of justice. But when we speak of God's justice, we cannot invoke the same type of *significatum*. 'God's justice' cannot signify an accident, because this would violate the traditional Christian doctrine of divine simplicity, according to which God's attributes are not extramentally distinct from himself. For this reason, medievals often insisted that when we speak of God's justice, we signify not some accident in God, but rather God himself.[58] And of course, there is nothing peculiar about God's attribute of justice; the same sort of account was intended to apply to God's other attributes as well.

All this is to say that Suárez's analysis of ECSs, and in particular his identification of efficient causation with action, does not obviously preclude what I have been calling a 'pluralistic' account of the nature of efficient causation. Indeed, in part because actions of creation are attributed to God, it would not have been surprising for a figure of Suárez's time to say that God's actions of creation have a fundamentally different nature or ontological status than do creatures' actions of motion.[59] And in fact, Suárez considers just such an account. According to this opinion, which he attributes to Cajetan and other disciples of Aquinas, the actions of creatures fall in the category of action, and thus count as extramentally distinct accidents of their subjects. On the other hand, regarding God's actions, proponents of this opinion claim that:

> [T]he action of God is also in God, though not through proper inherence, but rather through his identity and simplicity, because that action is not of the category (*genere*) of action, nor [is it] an accident, but it is rather the very substance of God.[60]

[58]For discussion of this case, see Jeffrey Brower, 'Making Sense of Divine Simplicity,' *Faith and Philosophy* 25, no. 1 (2008): 3–30.

[59]Another consideration in favor of creation's distinctive ontological status is that it does not occur in a subject or patient. For this reason, it is not immediately clear how it could be an accident.

[60]'[A]ctionem Dei esse in Deo, non tamen per propriam inhaerentiam, sed per identitatem et simplicitatem suam, quia illa actio non est de genere actionis, neque accidens, sed ipsamet substantia Dei' (DM 48.4.3). For discussion of the same view in the context of creation, see DM 20.4.2–5.

I do not mean to suggest here that Suárez actually endorses the account of efficient causation that he attributes to Cajetan. Although I do believe that Suárez accepts a version of what I have been calling 'pluralism' about efficient causation, to do justice to his own views on this topic would require another paper.[61] My purpose is rather to emphasize that Suárez's analysis of ECSs is general enough to accommodate a range of medieval theories about the precise nature of efficient causation, and its various types. In fact, I take it that part of the interest of Suárez's analysis of ECSs lies in its relative ontological neutrality. Because his analysis leaves open a variety of dialectical options regarding the nature of efficient causation, it appears promising not only for clarifying Suárez's own views, but also for understanding and assessing the theories of other scholastic thinkers.[62]

[61]Suárez's own view is that actions are most fundamentally divided not according to the types of agents that perform them, but rather according to the types of effects at which they terminate. In keeping with this opinion, he argues that actions terminating in accidents fall in the Aristotelian category of action, whereas actions terminating in substances fall in the category of substance. For his treatment of the issue, see DM 20.4.7 and 48.6. For an English translation of the relevant portions of DM 48.6, see Tuttle, 'Suárez's Metaphysics of Efficient Causation', Appendix B. For Suárez's discussion of the related issue of whether 'action' is a univocal or analogical term, see DM 48.6.3–6. Readers who have an interest in Suárez's theory of analogy may also wish to consult DM 2, *De ratione essentiale seu conceptu entis* and DM 28, *De prima divisione entis in infinitum simpliciter, et finitum, et aliis divisionibus, quae huic aequivalent*, especially §3. For treatments of Suárez's views about analogy, see Daniel Heider, 'Is Suárez's Concept of Being Analogical or Univocal?' *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 81, no. 1 (2007): 21–41; E.J. Ashworth, 'Suárez on the Analogy of Being: Some Historical Background,' *Vivarium* 33, no. 1 (1995): 50–75; and John Doyle, 'Suárez on the Analogy of Being,' *The Modern Schoolman* 46, no. 3 (1969): 219–249.

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