Jeffrey E. Brower

AQUINAS'S METAPHYSICS OF MODALITY:
A REPLY TO LEFTOW

Brian Leftow sets out to provide us with an account of Aquinas's metaphysics of modality.[1]

Drawing on some important recent work, which is surely close to the spirit (if not quite the letter)

of Aquinas's thought, he frames his discussion in terms of "truthmakers": what is it that *makes*

true claims about possibility and necessity—that is to say, what serves as their ontological

ground or ultimate metaphysical explanation?[2] Leftow's main thesis is that, for Aquinas, all true

modal claims are made true by one and the same thing—namely, God. Along the way, however,

he also attempts to show that Aquinas's endorsement of this thesis commits him to an

objectionable form of Platonism about possible worlds.

Leftow's discussion is wide-ranging and provocative, and there is much to be learned

from it both about metaphysics in general and about Aquinas's metaphysics in particular.

Moreover, I myself am fully prepared to accept his main thesis: it seems to me that Aquinas *does*

think God is the truthmaker for all modal truths. Nonetheless, I have some worries about the

argument Leftow uses to establish his thesis, as well as some reservations about his

characterization of the view that results from the thesis itself. Aquinas's account seems to me

more plausible and interesting than Leftow's discussion suggests, and hence capable of being

defended against each of the two principal objections he raises. My aim in what follows is to

make good on these claims.

In order to explain what I think is wrong with Leftow's interpretation, I begin (in Section

I) with a brief summary of the argument for his main thesis, showing precisely how it relates to

his two principal objections. Having done that, I then turn (in Section II) to what I take to be the most serious problem with his argument. Ultimately, I claim that even if this problem could be overlooked or somehow avoided, Aquinas's account could still be defended against Leftow's principal objections. Finally, after suggesting what I take to be the true source of Aquinas's commitment to the main thesis, I conclude (in Section III) with a friendly amendment to Leftow's characterization of Aquinas's views.

I. SUMMARY OF LEFTOW'S ARGUMENT AND PRINCIPAL OBJECTIONS

Leftow's argument for the main thesis of his paper relies on the three claims, the first two of which entail the third:

	(1)	God's power is the truthmaker for all modal truths (i.e., all truths about what is broadly logically possible, necessary, impossible, and contingent).
	(2)	God is identical with God's power.
∴	(3)	God is the truthmaker for all modal truths.

The main thesis of Leftow's paper is that Aquinas is committed to claim 3. Since Aquinas's commitment to this claim is entailed by his commitment to the other two, Leftow's discussion focuses on showing that Aquinas accepts claims 1 and 2.[3]

There can, I think, be no real question about Aquinas's acceptance of claim 2; as Aquinas himself points out, this is a trivial consequence of his views about the absolute simplicity of God (e.g., *ST* 13.4). Leftow is, of course, aware of this fact, and says as much (Sect. I). The burden of his argument, therefore, is to establish that Aquinas is committed to claim 1. If he can succeed in this, his main thesis will go through; if not, it will remain unmotivated.

What is Leftow's strategy for establishing Aquinas's commitment to claim 1? Here I think it's useful to consider how arguments about truthmakers in general often proceed. Suppose you want to show that the truthmakers for relational claims include nothing but individuals and

their monadic properties. Employing a common strategy, you might proceed as follows: first, attempt to show that truths about relations (i.e., true claims of the form "*aRb*") are entailed by, or somehow necessarily connected with, truths about individuals and their monadic properties (i.e., true claims of the form "*Fa & Gb*"); then, attempt to show that the relational truths are *explained by* the non-relational truths (i.e., that claims about relations are true *because of* or *in virtue of* truths about individuals and their monadic properties).

Leftow's strategy for establishing Aquinas's commitment to claim 1 can be thought of as following the same two-stage pattern (even if these stages don't correspond exactly to his order of presentation). In the first stage, Leftow seeks to show that, for Aquinas, truths about what is possible (necessary, impossible, etc.) are necessarily connected with truths about God's power; in the second stage, he attempts to show that Aquinas also thinks that modal truths are *explained by* truths about God's power. In short, Leftow uses these two stages to establish that Aquinas accepts the following claim:

(1a)   Claims about possibility (necessity, impossibility, etc.) are true in virtue of the truth of claims about God's power.

But this just appears to be equivalent to saying that Aquinas's accepts claim 1, at least on the assumption that truthmaker theory is trivially committed to:

(1b)   A claim C is true in virtue of an entity E if and only E is the truthmaker for C.[4]

Let us look briefly at the two stages of Leftow's strategy for establishing 1a, before turning to his principal objections to Aquinas's position as a whole.

Stage 1: Aquinas makes it clear in a number of places that he thinks there is a necessary connection between possibility and God's power. As he says in *Summa Theologiae*: "God has the power to do all things that are possible" (*ST* 1.25.3; cf. also *SCG* 2.25). Again, in his

Disputed Questions on Power he says: "God's power extends to all things that are possible in themselves, where the latter are things that do not imply a contradiction" (*QDV* 1.7). For the sake of simplicity, we can represent these sorts of claims as follows:

(1a*)   X is possible if and only if God has the power to do X.

Leftow's interpretation of 1a* is both plausible and ingenious (see Sect. III). Drawing on various texts (including those just referred to), Leftow argues that the type of possibility in question must be interpreted as something like broadly logical possibility (or what he calls 'outermost possibility,' since it includes a temporal index), and that the bearers of this sort of possibility are propositional in nature. Regimenting Aquinas's language, he stipulates that we use the term 'state of affairs' as shorthand for whatever Aquinas takes these proposition-like entities to be (whether sentences, their contents, or genuinely abstract states of affairs). Since we ordinarily speak of states of affairs as 'being actualized' (as opposed to 'being true'), we can restate Leftow's understanding of the claim at 1a* as follows:

(1a**)   A state of affairs S is possible (i.e., possibly obtains) if and only God has the power to actualize S.

Now here is where the ingenuity of Leftow's interpretation comes in. Admitting that Aquinas lacks a theory of possible worlds in anything like the contemporary sense, he shows that claim 1a** immediately expands to one. On a standard contemporary theory, a possible world just *is* a certain type of possible state of affairs—namely, one that is "maximal" with respect to its entailments.[5] But, then, since the left-hand side of the biconditional at 1a** is clearly intended to range over *all* possible states of affairs, it must range over these "maximal" possible states of affairs as well, and hence over possible worlds in the contemporary sense. Thus, by guaranteeing that God has the power to actualize any possible state of affairs, 1a** thereby guarantees that his power extends to the whole realm of contemporary possible worlds. And, of course, from here it is only a short step to the claim that *all* modal truths are necessarily

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connected with truths about God's power, since all modal truths can be defined in terms of truths about possible worlds (what is necessary is true in all possible worlds, what is contingent is true in some, but not others, etc.).[6]

Stage 2: If the purpose of the first stage is to show that all modal truths, for Aquinas, are necessarily connected with truths about God's power, the purpose of the second stage is to establish that these same truths are *explained by* God's power. That is to say, in addition to what we've already seen, Leftow also thinks Aquinas accepts what I earlier referred to as 1a:

> (1a)   Claims about possibility (necessity, impossibility, etc.) are true in virtue of the truth of claims about God's power.

Now as far as I can tell, Leftow's only grounds for attributing 1a to Aquinas derive from Aquinas's frequent claim that all God's possible effects pre-exist in his power (see Sect. V). In particular, he says, consider the following passage from the *Summa Theologiae*:

> [S]omething is called 'able to be created' not by a passive power, but only through the active power of the Creator, who can produce something out of nothing. (*ST* 1.75.6 ad 2)

As Leftow interprets it, this passage is intended to tell us something about the nature of the truthmakers for claims about what is broadly logically possible—that is, claims such as "It is possible that Tony Blair exists". Indeed, Leftow says that this passage has two distinct implications for the truthmakers of such claims, one negative and one positive:

> (i)   <u>Negative implication:</u> The truthmakers for claims about what is (broadly logically) possible *cannot* be facts about mere possibilia (such as a merely possible Blair, or an abstract individual Blair essence), since those facts would include passive powers (i.e., powers for *undergoing*, as opposed to *actively doing*, something).

> (ii)   <u>Positive implication:</u> The truthmakers for such claim *must* rather be facts about God's power (such as that God has the power to create Tony Blair).

If Leftow is right about these implications, his conclusion at 1a stands. And given what we've seen about this claim's connection to the rest of his argument, if the conclusion at 1a stands, his main thesis will stand as well.

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Leftow's Principal Objections: Having summarized the argument for Leftow's interpretation of Aquinas, we can now appreciate his two principal objections. As our summary makes clear, Aquinas's account (as Leftow interprets it) involves a two-fold reduction. (I shall follow Leftow here in speaking of the reduction in terms of "facts", though it really ought to be understood in terms of truthmakers rather than facts or even truths.) First of all, Aquinas's account reduces facts about modality to facts about God's power (this is the point of the argument from 1a and 1b to 1); and then, secondly, it reduces facts about God's power to facts about God's nature or existence (this is the point of the argument from 1 and 2 to 3).

Leftow is prepared to grant that the first reduction goes through. Assume, therefore, that modal facts reduce to facts about God's power. Still, he says, there is a question about how facts about God's power, which seem irreducibly modal insofar as they make reference to what *can* or *might* be, are to be reduced to facts about God's nature or existence, which are clearly non-modal, involving reference only to what *is*. "I won't be able to discuss this here" says Leftow "but I see no plausible answer" (Sect. V). This is the first of his two principal objections. For future reference, let us call it 'the power-reduction problem'.

Leftow's other principal objection has to do with the problem of how an absolutely simple being can make true all modal truths, despite their differences in content. "Thomas's claim that it somehow does [make them all true] is not obviously false" says Leftow. "But if Thomas wants to persuade us here, he owes us an account of *how* it works. Absent some such account, the position has an air of (what Russell called) theft, not honest toil" (Sect. VI). As Leftow sees it, Aquinas never provides the desired account. Hence we are stuck not only with

the power-reduction problem, but also with what Leftow calls 'the one-many problem'. (More on these objections below.)

II. Response to Leftow's Argument and Principal Objections

So much for Leftow's argument and his principal objections to the account resulting from it. Let us see what can be said in response to them.

Response to the Argument: There are a number of things that might be said in response to Leftow's argument for the main thesis, but here I focus only on what I take to be its most worrisome aspect—namely, its attempt to establish that Aquinas accepts:

> (1a) Claims about possibility (necessity, impossibility, etc.) are true in virtue of the truth of claims about God's power.

This claim strikes me as extremely counterintuitive, certainly not the sort of thing I would expect Aquinas to endorse. If anything, what's possible would appear to constrain God's power, not the other way around. What is more, 1a seems to me to fit poorly with what we've seen of Aquinas's views about God's power or omnipotence. When Aquinas says that God can do all things "that are possible *in themselves*" or "that don't imply a contradiction," this suggests that he too thinks of God's power as being "constrained" by what is possible, and hence of the order of explanation as running from possibility to God's power. This suggestion is reinforced, moreover, by characteristic features of his various discussions of omnipotence. In his *Summa Theologiae*, for example, Aquinas is careful to distinguish between two distinct types of modality, both of which he says can be referred to by the term 'possible':

> Power or capacity (*potentia* or *possibile per respectum ad aliquam potentiam*): this is a type of modality that applies to certain kinds of subject—namely, agents (in the case of *active* powers) or patients (in the case of *passive* powers);

Possibility proper (*possibile absolute*): this is a type of modality that applies to proposition-like entities—namely, those entities that Leftow calls 'states of affairs'.

Having drawn this distinction, Aquinas makes it clear that he thinks the sense of 'possible' operative in "God can do all things that are possible" must be understood in terms of possibility proper (cf. *ST* 1.25.3). Nor does he so much as hint at the idea that this sort of possibility can be further reduced. On the contrary, near the end of his discussion in the *Summa*, he explicitly addresses a worry that would seem to arise for God's omnipotence given the irreducibility of possibility proper—namely, that there *exist* certain things, the impossible ones, that God *can't* do. To remove this worry, Aquinas explicitly adds that "it is better to say that these things can't be done than to say that God can't do them." Here again, the addition seems to me designed to put his readers at ease about the apparent constraint on God's power—to tell them, in effect, that this "constraint" is no real limitation on God's power at all, but a mere a fact about the "things" in question.

Of course, none of this is decisive. But it does seem to provide a kind of initial presumption against Leftow's interpretation, or at very least to show that some work must be done to convince us that Aquinas really does mean to explain possibility in terms of God's power. As I have indicated, however, apart from his discussion of a single passage, Leftow seems to rest his case entirely on Aquinas's frequent claim that all God's possible effects pre-exist in his power. As far as I can see, however, this claim by itself is of little use for his purpose. As Leftow says at one point:

> I know of no place where [Aquinas] says exactly what this [claim] means. This suggests to me that he thinks it asserts something uncontroversial, not anything elaborate or ontologically problematic. (Sect. V)

But if Aquinas's frequent claim that God's possible effects pre-exist in his power states something "uncontroversial," how can it be used to support something as counterintuitive and implausible as 1a? Much more plausible, I think, to interpret it in terms of the familiar medieval

doctrine that no effect can be greater than its cause. Not only is *this* doctrine rightly regarded as uncontroversial (at least for medieval thinkers), but we can even find places where Aquinas explains it in terms of the pre-existence, either actually or eminently, of an effect in its cause.[7] Of course, Leftow might still justifiably complain that Aquinas never fully explains exactly what this pre-existence amounts to (after all, what does it mean exactly to say that an effect pre-exists *eminently* in its cause?). Even so, I don't see how this is relevant to the establishment of 1a. Mysterious or not, the doctrine is supposed to be perfectly general. Hence, it's not just God's possible effects that pre-exist in his power, but all the possible effects of all agents pre-exist in those agents. In that case, however, it is not clear that the doctrine has *anything* to do with explaining the nature of possibility proper, much less with explaining it in terms of God's power.

As it turns out, similar remarks apply to the specific passage to which Leftow appeals in support of 1a. Indeed, in light of the foregoing, we can see that this passage doesn't support either of the conclusions he wants to draw from it, negative or positive. Here is the passage once more:

> [S]omething is called 'able to be created' not by a passive power, but only through the active power of the Creator, who can produce something out of nothing. (*ST* 1.75.6 ad 2)

In terms of the different types of modality distinguished above, it should now be clear that this passage concerns *powers* (or *capacities*) rather than *possibilities*. But then, *pace* Leftow, Aquinas is not here speaking about truthmakers for claims such as "It is *possible* that Tony Blair exists"; rather, he is speaking about truthmakers for claims such as "Tony Blair is *able* (i.e., has the *capacity*) to be created". The point of the passage as a whole, moreover, is not to tell us about the truthmakers for claims about possibility, but rather to put us on guard against certain mistakes we might be tempted to make concerning the truthmakers for claims about powers. On its surface, a claim like "Tony Blair is able to be created" might seem to require the attribution of

a passive power to something. But this can't be right, Aquinas wants to say, since prior to the creation of Tony Blair, there isn't anything for such a power to be attributed to. In this respect, Leftow is right: Aquinas wants no truck with mere possibilia, and hence seeks to identify the truthmaker for claims such as "Tony Blair is able to be created" with an active power of an agent—more specifically, with the active power of God that makes true claims such as "God is able to create Tony Blair".[8] But nothing at all follows from this, either positive or negative, about the precise nature of the truthmaker for the corresponding claim about possibility (namely, "It is possible that Tony Blair exists"). Suppose an active power of mine makes it true that "A house is able to be built (by me)." It doesn't follow that this same power is the truthmaker for the claim that "It is possible that a house exist." But, then, neither should we make the parallel inference in the case of God.

In the end, therefore, I think Leftow's argument for the main thesis of his paper fails to get off the ground. As we have seen, this argument depends on three claims:

(1) God's power is the truthmaker for all modal truths (i.e., all truths about what is broadly logically possible, necessary, impossible, and contingent).
(2) God is identical with God's power.
∴ (3) God is the truthmaker for all modal truths.

But in failing to show that Aquinas accepts the first claim, Leftow also fails to show that he accepts 3—which is just to say that his main thesis remains unmotivated.

Response to the Principal Objections: Even if everything I've said so far in response to Leftow were mistaken, however, Aquinas's account could still be defended against Leftow's principal objections—or so I now want to argue.

But first a necessary clarification concerning the objections themselves. Initially, it might appear that neither of the objections raises a *special* problem for Aquinas's account of modality

proper. After all, in terms of truthmaker theory, it would seem to follow from the doctrine of divine simplicity that God is the truthmaker for both of the following claims:

(4)   God exists.
(5)   God is all-powerful.

But, then, if God is the truthmaker for both of these claims, then we already appear to have the objectionable reduction of powers, as well as the problem of explaining how *one* thing can make true *many* claims with differing content. And the same point could be illustrated with other examples. Hence, the power-reduction and the one-many problem seem to be perfectly general.

Despite appearances, Leftow *does* regard his principal objections as specific to Aquinas's modal metaphysics (see Sects. V-VI). As his discussion of dispositions makes clear, he has no objection *in general* to reducing powers to their categorical (and hence non-modal) bases. Moreover, he recognizes that one of the main attractions of truthmaker theory is that it assumes distinct truths can be made true by the same truthmaker, despite their differences in meaning or logical form. Presumably, if he meant to raise the one-many problem in general, he would have done so by challenging the very framework in terms of which he casts Aquinas's theory.

But then how are we to understand Leftow's objections? The key to understanding them, I think, lies in his claims about theft vs. honest toil (Sect. VI). His objections are not meant to target the claim *that* an individual (namely, God) can explain both (a) God's having the powers he does, and (b) the truth of all true modal claims. Rather, they are meant to raise a question about *how* such an individual does this. As he says at one point: "I have no knockdown argument that things can't be this way, but again, this is too easy. There is the air of theft about this, of work that needs to be done and has not been. We want more of an explanation, and would legitimately prefer a position that could give it to us, *ceteris paribus*." (Sect. V).

Even properly nuanced, however, Leftow's objections seem to me misguided. If Aquinas can show definitively *that* God must be the explanation for all the powers he has and for all modal truths there are, then he will have accomplished all he needs to accomplish, even if he can't show *how* this is the case. We often have reasons for accepting *that* things are a certain way, even in the absence of a full explanation of *why* they are that way. Indeed, Christians need only think of the mysteries of the faith (say, the Trinity) to convince themselves that they have reasons for accepting things that can't, even in principle, be fully explained (at least to finite minds). And, of course, mathematicians, and perhaps also natural scientists, have their own mysteries.

The question then is whether Aquinas does, in fact, show *that* things are the way he thinks they are. This is a difficult question to answer. But the important point is that he tries. If it's honest toil that Leftow seeks, he need only look to Aquinas's defense of the doctrine of divine simplicity. Aquinas defends this doctrine at great length, arguing that its truth can be demonstrated on the basis of evident truths (cf. *ST* 1.3.1-7). The same considerations that motivate simplicity, however, also entail that everything distinct from God is dependent on him for its existence. In that case, however, God's powers and all possible worlds must either be identical with God or dependent on him. But either way he will serve as their explanation. Here at last, I think, we arrive at the true source of Aquinas's view that God is the truthmaker for all true modal claims.

Admittedly, it would be nice to have an account of exactly how a simple being can explain its having all the powers it does, as well as an explanation for the truth of all modal claims. But it seems that in *requiring* Aquinas to give us both, Leftow requires too much. Even

if all Aquinas can show us is *that* a simple being is what makes true all true modal claims, we will have no choice but to accept his account.

III. AQUINAS'S METAPHYSICS OF MODALITY

So far I have been focusing on those aspects of Aquinas's modal metaphysics about which Leftow and I disagree, attempting to raise some difficulties for his understanding of them. I now want to conclude briefly by turning to those aspects of Aquinas's views about which we agree, offering a friendly amendment to his description of them.

There are two familiar accounts of the metaphysics of modality in the contemporary literature. The first, which is best known from the works of Alvin Plantinga, identifies possible worlds with maximal possible states of affairs—where these states of affairs are taken to be genuinely abstract entities that "include" other entities by entailing them.[9] This sort of account can be characterized in three ways, namely as: (i) *Platonist* (or *abstractist*), since it defines possible worlds in terms of a sort of entity (namely, abstracta) that only a Platonist could love; (ii) *actualist*, since the entities in terms of which it defines possible worlds (namely, states of affairs) are part of the actual world; and (iii) *non-reductionist*, since it defines possible worlds in terms of *possible* states of affairs, thereby taking possibility to be a primitive or irreducible property.

According to a well-known rival of this account, which owes to the work of David Lewis, possible worlds are not abstract entities, but concrete spatio-temporal beings of the same kind as the actual world.[10] On this view, the actual world is just one among many existing worlds, with its actuality consisting merely in its being *ours*. And just as the actual world "includes" other entities (namely, as mereological parts), so too the other possible worlds include their

inhabitants. This sort of account can also be characterized in three ways, each of which highlights a contrast with the previous account—namely as: (i*) *nominalist* (or *concretist*), since it defines possible worlds in terms of concrete or spatio-temporal objects;[11] (ii*) *possibilist*, since it admits the existence of non-actual (or merely possible) worlds and objects; and (iii*) *reductionist*, since it attempts to explain possible worlds, and hence what *can* or *might* be, in terms of what *exists* (e.g., spatio-temporal objects).

Aquinas's metaphysics of modality shares certain features of both of these contemporary accounts, while rejecting others. Because Leftow construes possible worlds for Aquinas in terms of states of affairs (though without assuming any particular view about their nature), he thinks of Aquinas's views as broadly Platonist. Thus, at one point he says:

> Platonist modal ontologies base modal truth on the existence of abstract entities … Thomas's modal metaphysic trims its abstract ontology down to the single entity *deity*, then identifies that with God himself. (Sect. III)

There is certainly something right about this description. If God is the truthmaker for all modal truths, then all possible worlds must be "included" in the simple God, where this inclusion must be understood not in terms of mereological parthood, but rather in terms of something more like a relation of entailment or necessary connection or perhaps just identity. Moreover, since God is an actual being—indeed, since he is pure actuality for Aquinas—his account is also like that of the Platonists in being actualist.

But note that in the other relevant respects, Aquinas's account is more like that of the nominalists than Platonists. Aquinas explains possible worlds in terms of a concrete object—or at least in terms of something (namely, a person) that, unlike the abstracta of the Platonists, is endowed with causal power. Like the nominalists, moreover, Aquinas is a modal reductionist (indeed, if Leftow were right, he would be a modal reductionist twice over). Along the parameters we've been discussing, therefore, Aquinas's account ought to be described as

follows: (i*) *nominalist* (or *concretist*), (ii) *actualist*, and (iii*) *reductionist*.

In light of this description, we can see why it might be misleading to say (as Leftow does) that Aquinas's modal metaphysic is like that of the Platonists except that it trims its abstract ontology down to a single entity. For this might suggest that, for Aquinas, God is identical with something abstract (which seems absurd), or that Aquinas is not a modal reductionist after all. As it turns out, there are contemporary philosophers who are both modal reductionists and think of possible worlds in terms of a single abstract entity.[12] But their views are not at all like Aquinas's either. Here again, therefore, the comparison seems misleading.

My point is not that we should ultimately characterize Aquinas's account in terms of nominalism rather than Platonism. For even this would seem to run the risk of selling his views short. The real interest of Aquinas's views on this topic is that they don't fit neatly into any of the familiar categories, but rather present us with a type of modal metaphysics that is unlike anything currently on offer.   My friendly amendment, therefore, is that we adopt a characterization of Aquinas's views that does more to emphasize their distinctiveness.[13]

NOTES

[1] All parenthetical references of the form "(Sect. I)" or "(n. 2)" are to sections and notes of Leftow's paper. For Aquinas's works, I rely on the editions in R. Busa, *S. Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia*, 7 vols. (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Friedrich Frommann Holzboog, 1980), and employ the following abbreviations:

      QDV   *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*

      SCG   *Summa contra gentiles*

      ST   *Summa theologiae*

[2] Leftow never explains what he has in mind by 'truthmaker' (or the 'in virtue of' relation in terms of which this notion is so often explicated—see claim 1b below). This suggests that perhaps he takes the notion as primitive. For a defense of this view, as well as some discussion of the alternatives, see Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra, *Resemblance Nominalism: A Solution to the Problem of Universals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 31-45.

[3] This statement of Leftow's argument ignores certain nuances of his interpretation that aren't relevant for my purposes. For a more precise statement of what Leftow takes to be the relationship between God, God's power, and the various types of modal claims there are, see Sect. IV of his paper.

[4] Cf. my note 2 above.

[5] A state of affairs S is *maximal (with respect to its entailments)* just in case it is such that, for any other state of affairs T, S's obtaining entails (or includes) either T's obtaining or T's non-obtaining.

[6] There is a question about whether God can really actualize *any* possible world. What about a world in which I freely do some action A? If we take for granted a libertarian conception of

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freedom, the answer would seem to be 'no'. (At least God won't be able to *strongly* actualize such worlds; and even if God has middle knowledge, there may still be some worlds such that God can't even *weakly* actualize them. Cf. Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974].) Of course, if Aquinas were a compatibilist, he could say that God has the power to (strongly) actualize even those worlds in which I free do A. But as Leftow points out (n. 4), whether Aquinas is a compatibilist is a difficult issue to decide.

[7] Cf., e.g., *ST* 1.4.2: "[T]he same perfection that is found in an effect must be found in the cause either (a) according to the same nature when the agent is a univocal cause, as when a man generates a man, or (b) in a more eminent mode when the agent is an equivocal cause—for example, in the sun there is a likeness of the things that are generated through the sun's power."

[8] It is important to note that, for medievals, powers or capacities obtain along with their exercise; that is to say, their exercise does not block their ascription. Hence, even after Blair is created it is still true that he is able to be created.

[9] Cf. Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity*.

[10] Cf. Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

[11] But cf. *On the Plurality of Worlds*, Section 1.7 for some reservations about the term 'concrete'.

[12] Cf., e.g., Ted Sider, "The Ersatz Pluriverse," *Journal of Philosophy* 99 (2000): 279-315.

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