

Reading Questions for November 2

These questions covers a short reading by Thomas Aquinas, it is called “Whether God is omnipotent” and is from *Summa Theologica*, First Part, Question 25, Article 3. The answers do not have to be turned in. You will definitely have to read more than once to get the answers.

*Background:*

This week we’re looking at what it means to say that God is omnipotent (all-powerful). For today’s class, we’ll look at an important reading by Aquinas in which he tries to answer this question. Later in this week we’ll look at some readings that build on and respond to what Aquinas says.

The way this text is structured is the following: Aquinas will be answering the question from the title by saying God is omnipotent. First he considers four arguments that God is not omnipotent. In the text, they are called “Objections” but the way we are using terminology in our class, they would be called “Counter-arguments” (while most philosophers recognize the distinction between the two, the terminology is not fully standardized.) Next, he states his view (“On the contrary”) and develops it (“I answer that”). Finally, he offers objections to the four counter-arguments (“Reply to objections” ...) This is a pretty difficult text, so in class we’re going to work through it slowly and carefully. But I think it would be good practice to see how much you can figure out on your own.

*Questions:*

1. In the “I answer that” section what is Aquinas saying? Is it plausible? Why? (Note: you may have to go line-by-line to figure it out, and it’s ok to skip some lines if you can’t figure out what he means by them).
2. What is “Objection 2”? What does Aquinas say in “Reply to Objection 2”? Is it plausible? Why?