Reading Questions for November 4

These questions cover two short articles. The first is by George I. Mavrodes and is called "Some Puzzles Concerning Omnipotence." The second is by Harry G. Frankfurt and is called "The Logic of Omnipotence." The answers do not have to be turned in. You will probably 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 start by looking at a reading by Mavrodes in which he offers a puzzle that he thinks Aquinas (Monday's author) cannot solve. He then offers what he takes to be a solution to it. Then we'll look at Frankfurt, who argues that Mavrodes' puzzle can be solved without introducing a questionable principle that Mavrodes relies on.

Questions:

1. What is the puzzle that Mavrodes introduces and why does he think that Aquinas cannot solve it? What is Mavrodes' solution to it? Is it plausible? Why or why not?

2. What is the questionable principle that Frankfurt thinks Mavrodes assumes? How does Frankfurt think you can solve the puzzle even without assuming that principle? Is he right? Why or why not?