

1. If something were the cause of itself, it would be prior to itself.
 2. Nothing is prior to itself.
 3. Nothing is the cause of itself. (1,2)
 4. There are no infinite causal chains.
 5. At least one thing has a cause.
 6. Every causal chain must be (i) circular, (ii) infinite, or (iii) have a first cause.
-

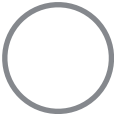
C. There is a first cause. (3,4,5,6)

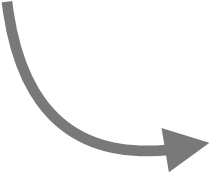


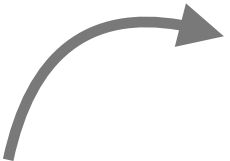






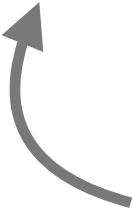












This is a little tricky. There is a sense in which in this example nothing is the cause of itself, because nothing is **directly** the cause of itself. But it still seems like things are **indirectly** the cause of themselves. After all, if A causes B and B causes C, isn't there also a sense in which A causes B?

Let's agree to understand "causes" in our argument as meaning "directly or indirectly causes." Then the kind of causal chain pictured above is ruled out by premise (3).


Aquinas' ultimate aim is not to argue for the existence of a first cause; his ultimate aim is to argue for the existence of God. So the thing we have labeled as a conclusion must actually just be a (derived) premise in the overall argument.

How can we get from our
argument to the conclusion
that God exists?

So far, so good. But there is
an obvious sense in which our
argument so far is
incomplete.



Three views
about
the universe



Aquinas'
first cause
argument



Two
objections
to Aquinas

the kalām
argument

def insert(i):

1. If something were the

would be prior to

causes if it's if, it

its self in

its self is its self

causal chain.

3: Nothing is the cause

2: Nothing is prior to

5. At least one thing



4. There are no if in it

6. Every causal chain

(iii) have first

Cherrie is a first

lars anders

$(ii) \inf_{i \in I} i$, or

Qairat.

must be (i) circular,

causes.(3,4,5,6)

cause of themselves. After all, if A causes B

But it still seems like things are indirectly the

in this example nothing is the cause of itself,

and B causes C, isn't there also a sense in

This is a little tricky. There is a sense in which

because nothing is directly the cause of itself.

which A causes B?

causes.' The kind of causal chain pictured

Let's agree to understand "causes" in our

argument as meaning “directly or indirectly

above is ruled out by premise (3).

Aquinas' ultimate aim is not to

(derived) premise in the overall

cause; this ultimate aim is to argue

argue for the existence of a first

argument.

for the existence of God. So the

things we have labeled as a

conclusion must actually just be a

that God exists?

argument to the conclusion

How can we get from our

argument so far is

So far, so good. But there is



incomplete.

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of understanding the underlying mechanisms of the observed phenomena. This is followed by a detailed analysis of the data, which reveals several key findings. The results indicate that the proposed model is highly effective in capturing the essential features of the system under study. Furthermore, the analysis shows that the system exhibits a high degree of robustness and stability, even in the presence of significant perturbations. These findings are supported by a series of numerical simulations and theoretical arguments. The paper concludes by highlighting the potential applications of the proposed model and suggesting directions for future research.

Q. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

4. There are no finite

5. At least one thing has a

1. If something were the cause

to its side.

of itself, it would be prior

2. Nothing is prior to itself.

its self . (1,2)

6. Every causal chain must be

(i)circilar;(ii)infinites;

or (iii) have a first cause.

3. Nothing is the cause of

7. There is a first cause.

(3, 4, 5, 6)



8: If there is a first cause,

causal chain.

C. Good exists. (7, 8)

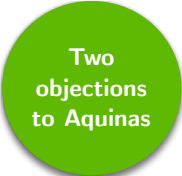
theinGdexistst.



A large red circle with a slight drop shadow, containing the text "Three views about the universe" in white. The text is centered and arranged in three lines.

Three views
about
the universe

Aquinas'
first cause
argument



Two
objections
to Aquinas



the kalām
argument

and indeed nothing in the universe can be.

cause. Because the universe — including the Big Bang — has a

Bang — must have a cause. So the Big Bang can't be the first cause —

beginning in time, the universe as a whole — again, including the Big

On this view, everything which begins to exist at some time must have a

was caused to exist by something outside the universe.

the universe can't exist at some time, then it follows that the universe

If one accepts this extra premise, and one accepts the assumption that

must have come to exist at a certain time.

And then there are just two options — that thing must be eternal, or it

then *that* thing would have to be eternal, or have come to exist at a certain

If we go with the second option, then it must have had a cause. And

time.

There are a number of questions one could raise about this argument.

But let's focus in on one premise:

Aquinas' assumption that if there is a first cause, then that thing must

Could not object to this premise in much the way that we objected to



universe is Good?

be God? How do we know that this eternally existing first cause of the

Our first topic is the question of whether God exists.



Three views
about
the universe

Aquinas'
first cause
argument



Two objections to Aquinas

Many arguments for God's existence are best thought of as

arguments against simple atheism. Whether they attempt to

how seriously you take quasi-theism. This is something to which

we win! return.

good arguments for the existence of God then depends in part on

Let's turn then to our first argument for the existence of God: the

first argument we find in the reading from Thomas Aquinas.

**Aquinas'
first cause
argument**

Might defend (8) by saying that this hypothesis is impossible, on the

ground that there can't be an uncaused cause, like the explosion of

particles described?



8. If there is a

first case, then

Goodixists.

Instead, it seems like Aquinas has to argue that nothing like the Big

Bang could genuinely be a first cause. Things like the Big Bang have to

have a cause; but things like God don't.

And that is, in a way, exactly what Aquinas tried to do (though of course

which was an uncaused cause would have to have other properties, which

he did not have the Big Bang in mind). He tried to argue that something

God has, but the Big Bang does not.

Might defend (8) by saying that this hypothesis is impossible, on the

grounds that there can't be an uncaused cause?

Bang have to have a cause; but things like God don't. But why?

nothing like the Big Bang and even first class. Things like the Big

Instead, it seems like a defender of the first cause argument has to argue that

cause, but God does not exist. And it appears to be entirely consistent with

This would appear to be a description of a world in which there is a first

simple atheism. So it looks as though, if we are to believe (8), we must have

some reason for rejecting the above hypothesis.

The Big Bang

The first event in the history of the universe was an explosion of an extremely dense collection of particles, with every particle moving apart from every other particle. This event had no cause - in particular, no being set into motion - and, further, every subsequent event has been an effect of this event.



Two objections to Aquinas



the kalām
argument

1. If something were the cause of itself, it would be prior to itself.
2. Nothing is prior to itself.
3. Nothing is the cause of itself. (1,2)
4. There are no infinite causal chains.
5. At least one thing has a cause.
6. Every causal chain must be (i) circular, (ii) infinite, or (iii) have a first cause.

C. There is a first cause. (3,4,5,6)

argue for the existence of a first

things we have labeled as a

for the existence of God. So the

conclusion must actually just be a

argument.

cause; this ultimate aim is to argue

Aquinas' ultimate aim is not to

(derived) premise in the overall

How can we get from our

that God exists?

argument to the conclusion

So far, so good. But there is



incomplete.

anobviouseninwhichour

argument so far is