

Three views
about
the universe

Aquinas'
first cause
argument



Two objections to Aquinas



the kalām
argument

On this view, everything which begins to exist at some time must have a cause. Because the universe — including the Big Bang — has a beginning in time, the universe as a whole — again, including the Big Bang — must have a cause. So the Big Bang can't be the first cause — and indeed nothing in the universe can be.

If one accepts this extra premise, and one accepts the assumption that the universe came to exist at some time, then it follows that the universe was caused to exist by something outside the universe.

And then there are just two options — that thing must be eternal, or it must have come to exist at a certain time.

If we go with the second option, then it must have had a cause. And then *that* thing would have to be eternal, or have come to exist a certain time.

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

But let's focus in on one premise:

12. If there is an eternally existing first cause of the universe and everything in it, then God exists.

Could one object to this premise in much the way that we objected to Aquinas' assumption that if there is a first cause, then that thing must be God? How do we know that this eternally existing first cause of the universe is God?

Our first topic is the question of whether God exists.

But what does it mean to say that God exists? Don't people have different ideas of what God could be?

In this class, we'll be working with the conception of God common to what are often thought of as the major monotheistic religions — Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Here is the view of God common to these religions:

The classical conception of God

God is not part of the universe, but is the creator of the universe. God is also all-powerful, all-knowing, and perfectly good. God has always existed, and always will exist. God is the greatest being that could exist.

With this conception of God in mind, we can state two views about the nature of reality.

Simple theism
God exists, and
created
the universe.

Simple atheism

The universe (or perhaps several universes) are all that exists.
Nothing created it (or them).

These two views are exclusive: if one is true, the other is false. Are they the only possible views?

No. One might think that the universe was created by something outside of the universe, but that that being is not God. Let's call this view 'quasi-theism':

Quasi-theism

The universe was created
by something outside of it,
but not by God.

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12. If there is an n -ary existential first order formula $\phi(x_1, \dots, x_n)$ such that $\phi(x_1, \dots, x_n) \in \Sigma_1^1$ and $\phi(x_1, \dots, x_n) \in \Sigma_1^1$ then $\phi(x_1, \dots, x_n) \in \Sigma_1^1$.

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University is Good?

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Universe is Good?

Our first topic is the question of whether God exists.

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

arguments against simple atheism. Whether they attempt to

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

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



we win! return.

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

first argument we find in the reading from Thomas Aquinas.

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**

the 1990s, the number of people with a mental health problem has increased by 50% (Mental Health Foundation 2000).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the needs of people with mental health problems, and the importance of providing them with appropriate services. However, there is a significant gap between the current needs of people with mental health problems and the services available to them. This gap is due to a number of factors, including a lack of resources, a lack of training for health professionals, and a lack of awareness of the needs of people with mental health problems.

One of the main reasons for the gap between need and service is a lack of resources. There is a significant shortage of health professionals, particularly in the area of mental health. This shortage is due to a number of factors, including a lack of training opportunities, a lack of financial incentives, and a lack of awareness of the importance of mental health.

Another reason for the gap between need and service is a lack of training for health professionals. Many health professionals do not receive adequate training in the area of mental health. This is due to a number of factors, including a lack of training opportunities, a lack of financial incentives, and a lack of awareness of the importance of mental health.

A third reason for the gap between need and service is a lack of awareness of the needs of people with mental health problems. Many people do not understand the needs of people with mental health problems, and therefore do not provide them with the services they need. This is due to a number of factors, including a lack of information, a lack of understanding, and a lack of empathy.

There are a number of ways in which the gap between need and service can be closed. One way is to increase the number of health professionals, particularly in the area of mental health. This can be done by providing more training opportunities, increasing financial incentives, and increasing awareness of the importance of mental health.

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7. There is a first case:

(3, 4, 5, 6)

2. Nothing is prior to itself.

causal chain.

to its side.

8: If there is a first cause,

of itself, it would be prior

(i) circling; (ii) infighting;

3. Nothing is the cause of

C. Good exists. (7, 8)

its self . (1,2)

theinGdexistis.

1. If something were the cause

4. There are no finite

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

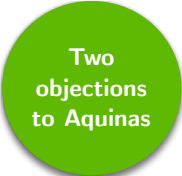
6. Every causal chain must be

or (iii) have a first cause.

5. At least one thing has a



Aquinas'
first cause
argument



Two
objections
to Aquinas

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?



first case, then

Goodixists.

8. If there is a

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

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

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

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

God has, but the Big Bang does not.

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

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grounds that there can't be an uncaused cause?

nothing like the Big Bang and quite a first class. Things like the Big

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

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

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

some reason for rejecting the above hypothesis.


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

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.



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