Three views universe







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 Aguinas' 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?

This is a reasonable question. Here is one way which a defender of the kalām argument might respond.

Most theists are less certain that God exists than they are that 2+2=4; most atheists are less certain than God does not exist than they are that 2+2=4. So most of us think that there is some chance that God exists and some chance that God does not exist.

Keeping this in mind, recall the three hypotheses about reality with which we began.

## Simple theism God exists, and

God exists, and created the universe.

#### Simple atheism

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

#### Quasi-the<u>ism</u>

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

If you agree that the kalām argument shows that that there is a beginningless being outside of the universe which caused the universe to exist, that rules out simple atheism. So the simple atheist cannot respond to the argument just by denying (12).

Does the existence of such a being rule out quasi-theism? No. So it looks like the kalām argument should not convince at least some kinds of quasi-theists that God exists.

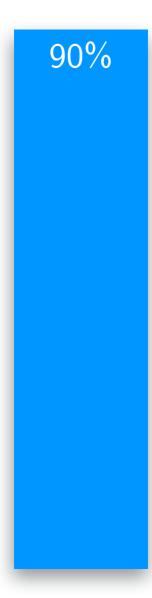
But that does not mean that the argument should not convince many people that it is much more likely that God exists than they thought it was before encountering the argument.

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# SIMPLE THEISM

## SIMPLE ATHEISM















Let's return to the analogy with Santa. We can distinguish three different views here. First, there is the belief that Santa exists. Second, there is Santa-skepticism: the belief that nothing exists with any of the properties ascribed to Santa. Third, there is quasi-Santa-ism: the view that something lives at the North Pole with some of the properties traditionally ascribed to Santa, but not all.

Suppose that you are a Santa-skeptic. But suppose now that you encountered a surprisingly convincing argument for the existence of an ancient jolly elf living at the North Pole who has in fact been delivering tovs all around the world for centuries.

and indeed nothing in the universe can be.

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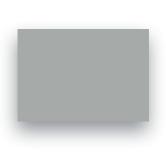
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### (1,2)itself.

itself.

### 5. At least one thing has a

### 2. Nothing is prior to itself.

### 6. Every causal chain must be

#### chains. causal

### 3. Nothing is the cause of

### of itself, it would be prior

### 1. If something were the cause

(3,4,5,6)

### 8. If there is a first cause,

### cause.

### then God exists.

#### 4. There are no infinite

#### 7. There is a first cause.

(i) circular, (ii) infinite, or (iii) have a first cause.

\_\_\_\_\_\_

#### (7,8)C. God exists.









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

we will return.

arguments against simple atheism. Whether they also amount to

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

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

first cause argument we find in the reading from Thomas Aquinas.

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





particles described?

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

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



## first cause, then

## God exists.

## 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

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

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

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

God has, but the Big Bang does not.

Might one 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?

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

nothing like the Big Bang could genuinely be a first cause. Things like the Big

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

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

some reason for rejecting the above hypothesis.

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

#### 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 it into motion - and, further, every subsequent event has been an effect of this event.

Our first topic is the question of whether God exists.













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# SIMPLE ATHEISM

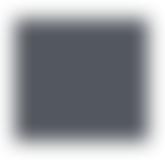


## thousands of years old who lives at the North Pole and delivers toys to

## Claus exists. Santa Claus is meant to be a bearded jolly elf who is

children all around the world with the help of his flying reindeer.

Here an analogy might help. Consider the question of whether Santa



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