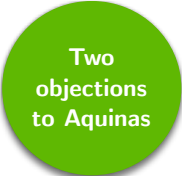




A large red circle with a slight drop shadow, containing the text "Three views about the universe" in white. The text is centered and arranged in three lines.

Three views  
about  
the universe

Aquinas'  
first cause  
argument



Two  
objections  
to Aquinas



the kalām  
argument

Let's turn to premise (8). Here is one hypothesis which would seem to falsify (8):

8. If there is a  
first cause,  
then God exists.

This would appear to be a description of a world in which there is a first cause, but God does not exist. Indeed, 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.



# 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.

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

we win! return.

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

arguments against simple atheism. Whether they attempt to

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

first argument we find in the reading from Thomas Aquinas.

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



Let's turn to premise (8). Here is one hypothesis which would

statement to falsify (8):



theinGodexistis.

8. If the iris is a

first class,

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**Aquinas'  
first cause  
argument**



# Two objections to Aquinas

particles described?

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

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





Goodixists.

8. If there is a

first case, then

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

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

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

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

God has, but the Big Bang does not.



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

grounds that there can't be an uncaused cause?

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

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?

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

some reason for rejecting the above hypothesis.




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# Two objections to Aquinas



the kalām  
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# The Big Bang

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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

and indeed nothing in the universe can be.

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

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

was caused to exist by something outside the universe.

must have come to exist at a certain time.

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



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 at a certain

time.

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

But let's focus in on one premise:



University is Good?

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

Could not 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

Our first topic is the question of whether God exists.







A large red circle with a subtle drop shadow, containing the text "Three views about the universe" in white.

Three views  
about  
the universe

Aquinas'  
first cause  
argument





of itself, it would be prior

1. If something were the cause

3. Nothing is the cause of

2. Nothing is prior to itself.

its self . (1,2)

to its side.

4. There are no finite

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



causal chain.

8: If there is a first cause,

(i)  $\text{circilair};$  (ii)  $\text{infinites};$

5. At least one thing has a

theinGdexistis.

C. Good exists. (7, 8)

(3, 4, 5, 6)

or  $(iii)$  have a first cause.



6. Every causal chain must be



7. There is a first case:





Let's turn to premise (8). Here is one hypothesis which would seem to falsify

(8)

□

□





8. If there is a

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Good Air for.

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

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