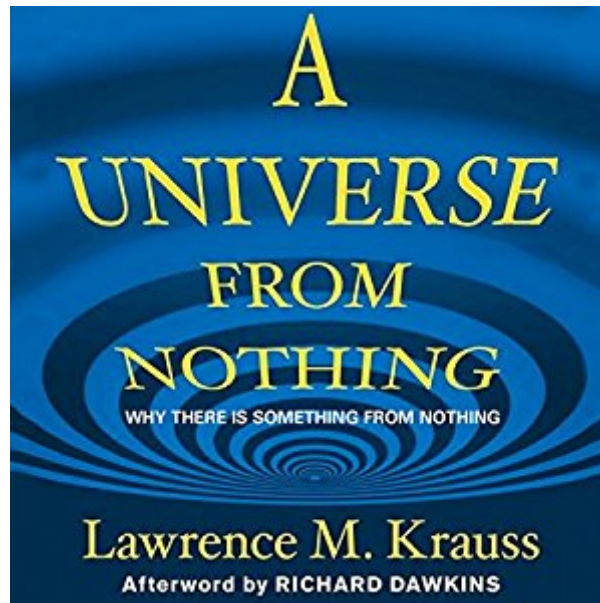




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A Universe From Nothing: Why There Is Something Rather Than Nothing



Synopsis

Where did the universe come from? What was there before it? What will the future bring? And finally, why is there something rather than nothing? Krauss' answers to these and other timeless questions, in a wildly popular lecture on YouTube, has attracted almost a million viewers. The last of these questions in particular has been at the center of religious and philosophical debates about the existence of God, and it's the supposed counterargument to anyone who questions the need for God. Scientists have, however, historically focused on more pressing issues-such as figuring out how the universe actually functions, which could help us to improve our quality of life. In this cosmological story that rivets as it enlightens, pioneering theoretical physicist Lawrence Krauss explains groundbreaking scientific advances that turn the most basic philosophical questions on their head. One of the few prominent scientists to have actively crossed the chasm between science and popular culture, Krauss reveals that modern science is indeed addressing the question of why there is something rather than nothing-with surprising and fascinating results. The beautiful experimental observations and mind-bending theories are all described accessibly, and they suggest that not only can something arise from nothing, something will always arise from nothing. With his characteristic wry humor and clear explanations, Krauss takes us back to the beginning of the beginning, presenting recent evidence for how our universe evolved-and the implications for how it will end. It will provoke, challenge, and delight listeners as it looks at the most basic underpinnings of existence in a whole new way. And this knowledge that our universe will be quite different in the future has profound consequences and directly affects how we live in the present. As Richard Dawkins described it, this could potentially be the most important scientific book with implications for supernaturalism since Darwin.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is excellent for anyone who at times wonders about the big "How..."-questions. Krauss' description of how something came from nothing is fascinating, mostly easy read, even he st times stretches our imagination. Recommended!

Here is a book for those who have an interest in exploring the wonders of the universe and the elements that comprise it. It is not an easy read but it is a fascinating one to say the least. Those who have a background in physics, and especially astrophysics, will have a leg up in grasping the explanations which Prof. Krauss presents in this book. Personally, I have neither but still enjoyed the book and found it extremely interesting and educational. He does not have much regard for those who are critical of his perspective based on the existence of a Supreme Being or Prime Mover. God is a creation of the human mind and is left for the field of theology, not science. If you have strong feelings about the existence of God, you will not appreciate this book. For others, I think you will enjoy the trip. I intend to re-read it in order to better grasp what Prof. Krauss discusses.

This book truly makes your head spin - with the remarkable work of cosmologists and the incredible conclusions of their research. While Krauss provides thoughtful reflections on the significance of cosmology to theology and philosophy, his discussions of the underpinnings of the theoretical physics concepts that lead to the fundamental realization that something can (and will) come from nothing are not always easy for the casual reader. His discussion style is not simple, so readers should be ready for a tough, detailed read - but ultimately a rewarding one.

Seemingly limitless quantum fields permeate the vastness of interstellar space, giving rise on occasion to the casually efficacious, to the fleeting and the ephemeral, to virtual particles of no prior moment, reminding us once more that things (like space between the stars) are not what they appear to be (altogether void and comprising nothing). These quantum fields and their vital fluctuations may well be brute facts of our universe, a primitive feature of nature. If so, their presence throughout all of space points to something more than the extremes of being and nonbeing, or to the mutually entailing opposites of something or nothing. Rather they evince the

interconnected and dependent nature of all things. They remind us that everything is "somehow" connected to everything else. Quantum fields and their fluctuations are that "somehow". The fleeting existence of the virtual binds space and matter seamlessly, evincing the interconnectedness of form and formlessness. Though lacking a prior moment, virtual particles are neither self instantiated nor do they arise without a cause. They do not abide independently. Rather they arise in dependence upon their fields, upon each other, upon the adjacent non-virtual particles, upon the dark energy flowing among the stars, and the gravity that is the presence of those stars, the curvature of spacetime. Virtual particles are neither nothing nor are they an inherently existing something; they are, as are all phenomena, dependent arisings, conventionally and nominally existent and ultimately nonexistent.

There is no doubt where Laurence Krauss stands on the question whether physics or metaphysics should inform our understanding of the universe. As I understand him, Krauss uses scientific evidence and the scientific method to conclude scientifically and plausibly that, due to some quantum processes, there was a spontaneous beginning of something out of nothing at the very beginning of space and time in the singularity known as the Big Bang followed by the inflationary period when the universe and everything in it, took a fraction of a second to grow through twenty-eight orders of magnitude. But, says Krauss, physics is a two way street and beginnings are linked. Far into the future protons and neutrons will decay, matter will disappear, and the universe will approach a state of maximum simplicity and symmetry and we may one day return to nothing via processes that may not only be comprehensible but also processes that do not require an external control or direction. This does not make it "impossible to believe in God but rather makes it possible to not believe in God," says physicist Steven Weinberg. One may turn to divine revelation if one wishes but, if we are to be intellectually honest, "we must make an informed decision, informed by fact, not by revelation."

Krauss is a great communicator. He leads the reader easily through not so easy physical arguments and these arguments appear to be highly plausible. Having read this book I am now convinced that its main messages are valid and at state-of-the-art level for our time - despite some lack on understandable philosophical accuracy (Aristotle and, otherwise, Kant could help the author for a better understanding of what it means the name "cause" or, in other words, what it really means "why"). Nevertheless an excellent book that I am happy to own.

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