



# Why Is There Anything?

*Matthew Rave*

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## **Why Is There Anything?** Matthew Rave

“Why is there anything?” This has been called the fundamental question of philosophy. “Why does the universe exist at all?” “Why does our universe seem so arbitrary?”

Theologians say that God created the universe. Physicists say that the universe created itself at the Big Bang. Philosophers say that the universe exists because it must. Who’s right? Some even argue that the question “why is there anything?” is itself meaningless.

What other question causes so much mystery, so much intellectual debate?

In the book *Why Is There Anything?*, Matthew Rave argues that the question is not meaningless. Instead, physics and philosophy—together with aesthetics, ethics, psychology, mathematics, literature, and computer science—can help unravel this tangled question. Rave looks at the fundamental question from as many angles as possible, and talks about ways the question has traditionally been addressed. An application of quantum mechanics (and the many-worlds interpretation) then brings us closer to an “ultimate” answer. Maybe there is no ultimate answer to the question “why is there anything?” That doesn’t mean, though, that one can’t have fun thinking about it. In Rave’s unique, playful style—a sort of Socratic dialogue meets *My Dinner With Andre*—no topic is left out. Rave has made a comprehensive survey of the fundamental question, using as many tools as possible. Challenging yet accessible, broad in scope and eclectic in its approach, this book uses humor and metaphor to create a very personal narrative, one that employs dialogue and wordplay such as in Hofstadter’s *Gödel, Escher, Bach*. In a word, the book is fun.

By the end of the book, Rave hopes to convince the reader of two things: one, that the fundamental question is complex, vast, rich, and not easily dismissed; and two, that modern physics—in all its baroque glory—can help illuminate and clarify the fundamental question in ways that are surprising and satisfying.

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