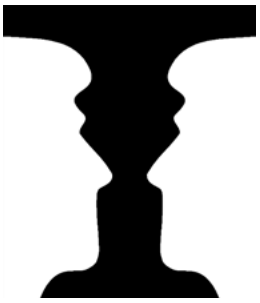


NANCY PEARCEY'S WORLDVIEW GRID

Adapted From *Total Truth* by Nancy R. Pearcey

One way to quickly analyze worldviews is with a 3-part grid comparing ideas about Creation, Fall and Redemption. Creation refers to a worldview's theory of origins which will have direct implications about human nature (anthropology). Fall refers to a worldview's explanation of evil and suffering, or what's gone wrong with the world. Redemption, then, looks at a worldview's agenda for reversing the "Fall" and setting the world right again. Below are Pearcey's analyses of four different worldviews using this 3-part grid, followed by our analyses of others:

MARXISM		
CREATION	FALL	REDEMPTION
The ultimate origin of everything is self-creating, self-generating matter.	The world's problem is the rise of private property.	Revolution! Overthrow the oppressors and recreate the original paradise of primitive communism.

ROUSSEAU'S PHILOSOPHY

CREATION	FALL	REDEMPTION
The true Eden is the original pre-social condition, or the "state of nature."	The source of all suffering and oppression is society or civilization.	... results from dissolving social ties, leaving people independent from one another and dependent upon the state.

MARGARET SANGER'S RELIGION OF SEX

CREATION	FALL	REDEMPTION
Sanger was an avid proponent of both biological and Social Darwinism.	Social and personal dysfunctions resulted from the rise of Christian morality.	Healing and wholeness will come from sexual liberation.

BUDDHIST & NEW AGE PANTHEISM

CREATION	FALL	REDEMPTION
The origin of all things and ultimate reality is the Absolute, the One, a Universal Spiritual Essence.	The source of evil and suffering is our sense of individuality.	Our problems will be solved as we reunite with the Universal Spiritual Essence from which we all came.

THE NEW MILITANT ATHEISM

CREATION	FALL	REDEMPTION
A self-originating universe and natural selection account for everything.	Pre-scientific mystical and religious systems brought irrational thinking and dangerous behavior.	The world will be saved when all religion is debunked once and for all and we accept that life is its own purpose.

ISLAM		
Allah created all things, animate and inanimate, physical and spiritual.	Man is born innocent and subsequent sins do not corrupt human nature. Sin results from external influences.	Individual entrance to the Garden by faith and works; redemption of Earth by eliminating un-Islamic influences.

CREATION	FALL	REDEMPTION

SOCIETY'S PERSISTENT ATTEMPTS TO MARGINALIZE RELIGIOUS TRUTH

Adapted From *Total Truth* by Nancy R. Pearcey, ch. 3.

The most pervasive thought pattern of our times is the two-realm view of truth." The thesis of Pearcey's book *Total Truth* is that a legitimate worldview must offer a whole and integral truth that addresses ***total reality,*** not just half of it. Pearcey defends biblical Christianity as indeed addressing all of reality, contrary to Stephen Jay Gould's theory of *Non-Overlapping Magisteria,* and the contentions of many others that religion in general and Christianity in particular only speaks to issues of *meaning,* or *values* and not to matters of fact and scientific reality.

The irony is that thinkers long for a GUT, a *grand unified theory,* whether in the field of physics or philosophy. Something within us longs for a principle that ties all truth together in a unified whole. Biblically speaking, that principle is a person, the Way, the Truth and the Life, Jesus Christ. For that message to reach our neighbors, though, we must clear away the false impression that "Christianity isn't about facts."

Here are some ways that a false dualism of truth (secularization) has been hoisted upon our culture, sometimes in a witting or unwitting attempt to "keep religion in its place," and sometimes in a misguided attempt to defend belief in the supernatural and in human dignity:

THE ENLIGHTENMENT	DESCARTES
ROMANTICISM Religion and the Humanities	MIND Spirit, Thought, Emotion, Will
ENLIGHTENMENT Science and Reason	MATTER A Mechanical, Deterministic Machine

KANT

FREEDOM
The autonomous Self

NATURE
The Newtonian World Machine

SOCIAL SCIENTISTS

VALUE
Socially Constructed Meaning

FACT
Publicly Verifiable Truth

STEVEN PINKER

THE ETHICS GAME
Humans Have Moral Freedom and Dignity

THE SCIENCE GAME
Humans Are Data-Processing Machines

SECULAR LEAP OF FAITH

POSTMODERN "MYSTICISM"
Moral and humane ideals have no basis in truth, as defined by scientific naturalism.
BUT WE AFFIRM THEM ANYWAY.

SCIENTIFIC NATURALISM
Humans are machines.

MORRIS'S PRINCIPLE OF BELIEF CONSERVATION

In *Philosophy For Dummies,*[1] Tom Morris shows that "certain basic beliefs can be accepted rationally without evidence or proof." He explains that all rational people engage in a procedure of reasoning that, consciously or unconsciously, operates on the principle of inflicting the least damage upon one's already held framework of beliefs. In Morris's words it goes like this:

For any proposition, *P:* If

1. Taking a certain cognitive stance toward *P* (for example, believing it, rejecting it, or withholding judgment) would require rejecting or doubting a vast number of your current beliefs,
2. You have no independent positive reason to reject or doubt all those other beliefs, and
3. You have no compelling reason to take up that cognitive stance toward *P,*

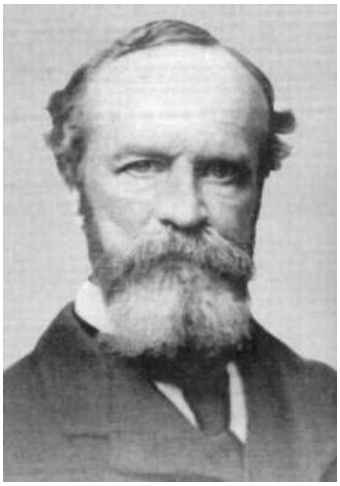
…then it is more rational for you not to take that cognitive stance toward *P.*

Morris continues:

> In other words, it is most rational, as we modify our beliefs through life and learning, to do the least damage possible to our previous beliefs as we accommodate new discoveries that we are making along the way.
>
> Your current beliefs are like a raft or boat on which you are floating, sailing across the seas of life. You need to make repairs and additions during your voyage. But it can never be rational to destroy the boat totally while out on the open sea, hoping somehow to be able to rebuild it from scratch, or else swim without it.

This principle of Belief Conservation serves us well in the face of radical skepticism. It is the rational basis for rejecting Bertrand Russell's *Five-Minute Hypothesis,* or for that matter the idea that life was planted on earth by a highly advanced race from another galaxy. At the same time, it helps us understand part of the mental process that creates resistance to the gospel for someone for whom belief in Christ would result in the destruction of an entire, consciously held worldview.

1 IDG Books Worldwide, Inc., Foster City, 1999, p. 73.



THE PRECURSIVE FAITH PRINCIPLE OF WILLIAM JAMES

Evidentialism demands "proof" for everything that isn't self-evident or evident to the senses. It proposes that *it is irrational for anyone, anywhere, to believe anything without sufficient evidence.* While the insistence that we have evidence for our beliefs is commendatory, the absolute stance of Evidentialism is self-refuting because there is no sufficient evidence to believe its own proposition. There are rational beliefs, like Morris's Principle of Belief Conservation for example, for which evidence is not even possible. This fact prompted Morris to suggest, for the sake of argument, a modified Evidentialist demand:

> **Modified Evidentialism:** It is irrational for anyone, anywhere, at any time, to hold any *evidence receptive* belief without sufficient evidence.

Enter American psychologist and philosopher, William James (1842–1910). In Morris's words, James proposed that:

> …there is one kind of evidence receptive belief that it is rational to have in the absence of sufficient evidence.…Sometimes something like the positive state of belief, however tentative, helps to create a situation in which evidence is more likely to be forthcoming. In such circumstances, it is not more rational to wait on evidence before granting a measure of belief, but it is rational to launch out with what James called *precursive faith,* faith that etymologically, "Runs ahead of the evidence."
>
> James discovered that championship level endeavor in any sport was typically based on precursive faith. Champions are regularly challenged to do something they've never done before …. If they just look at the evidence they have concerning their past performances, it will never be sufficient to prove that they are up to the new challenge and will prevail. But James came to realize that what sets champions apart is their ability to engage in precursive faith and launch out with belief that runs ahead of the available evidence, believing in themselves up front.[1]

James did not believe that precursive faith was always appropriate. He said that "**it is rational to believe beyond the available evidence if the option so to believe is a genuine option.**" And an option is only genuine if it is one that is ***live*** (you can bring yourself to believe it), ***forced*** (not to choose brings the same results as a negative choice) and ***momentous*** (something of importance is at stake).

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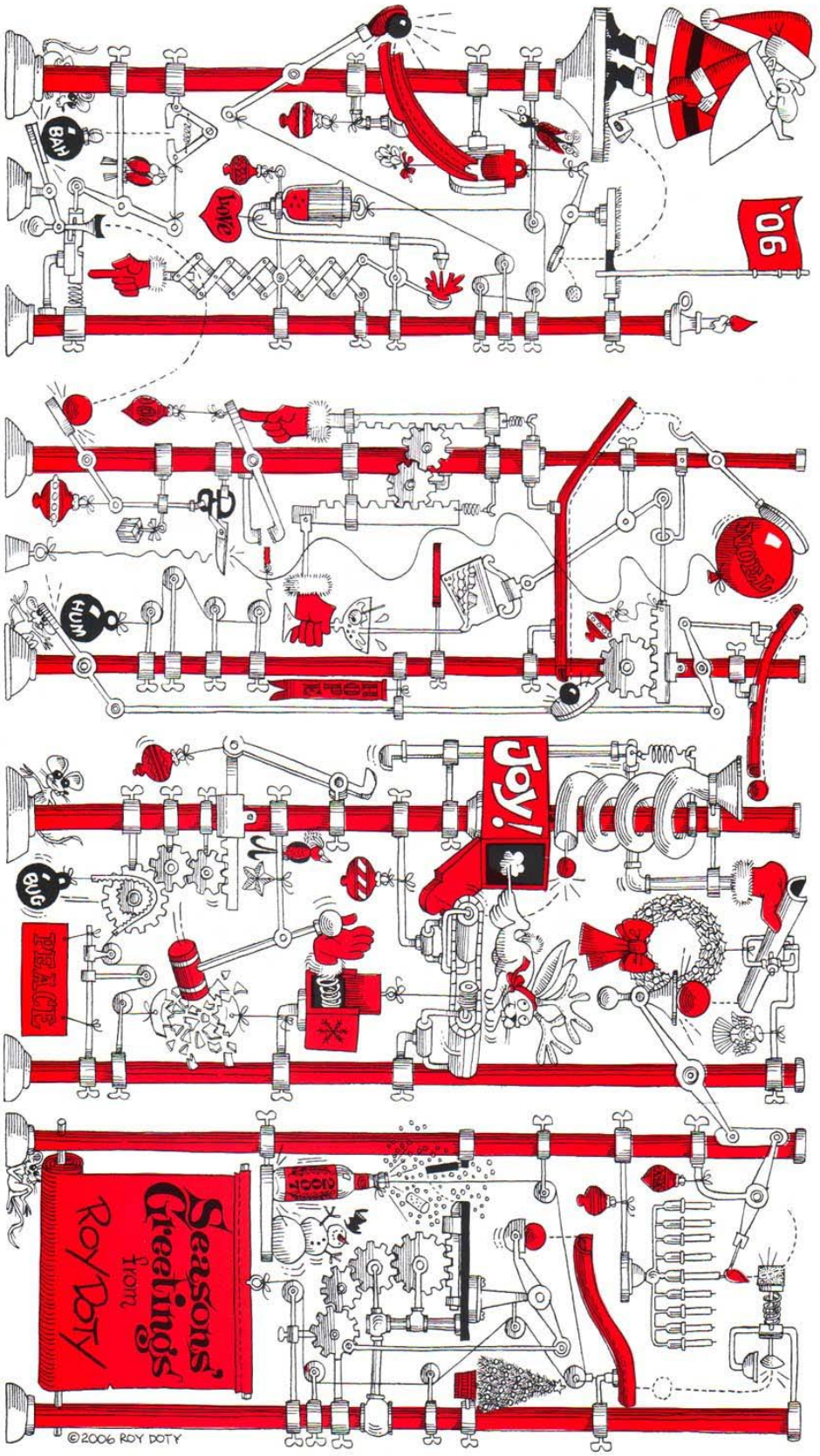
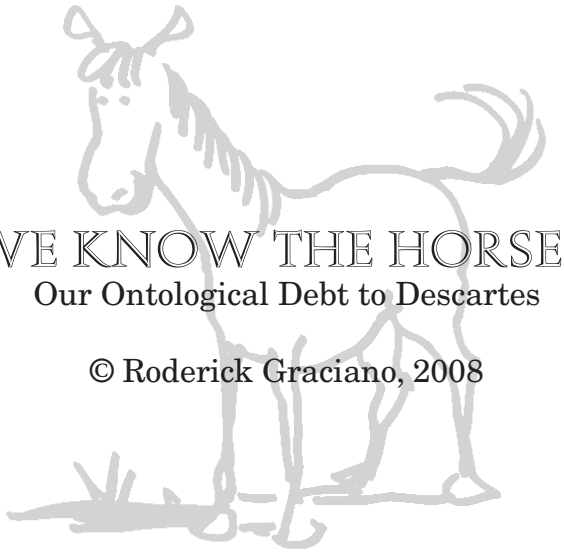
1 See *Philosophy For Dummies,* (IDG Books Worldwide, Inc., Foster City, 1999), pp. 76-80. I'm not sure why James didn't use the more standard term *precursory.*

THREE ARENAS
IN THE QUEST FOR TRUTH

ARENA	THE LAB	HISTORY	THE MIND
EXAMPLES	Math, Technical Experiments	Courtroom Trials, Historical Religions	Logic / Mystical Philosophy
INITIAL RESULTS	PROOF	EVIDENCE	PROOF / PERSONAL SATISFACTION
FINAL RESULTS	TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE 	INTELLIGENT FAITH 	ASSURANCE / BLIND FAITH 

A GREAT EXAMPLE OF A RUBE GOLDBERG MACHINE





HOW WE KNOW THE HORSE IS REAL

Our Ontological Debt to Descartes

Imagine a field in the countryside. Let's put a horse in the field.

Now let's say you drive by the field and see the horse. As you drive by, a question enters your mind: "How do I know the horse is real?" You begin to ponder this. "Is it possible that the horse is a mirage, a trick of sunlight on my retinas? Is the horse a delusion due to my medications? Is the horse an illusion perpetrated upon my mind by some equestrian demon? Or worse, is it an imaginary horse in an imaginary world all created by my own mind?"[1]

I know it's hard for people with good common sense to put up with such questions. We say, "Of course the horse is real! You wouldn't be driving if you were on those kinds of medications, and a horse in a country field is a perfectly common and rational thing." But philosophy teaches us that we shouldn't take such things for granted. If we're concerned about the ultimate issues of life at all, then we must think through some of the most fundamental questions, like "How do I know something is real?" If we're going to live a thoughtful life, we can't let our common sense just put a real horse in the field and leave it at that. It really is a valuable exercise to ask if the horse is real. However, that question leads to the question of whether anything at all is real!

This is where the French mathematician and philosopher René Descartes (pronounced *dayKART)* helps us. We all know at least the last half of his famous saying, *Dubito ergo cogito, cogito ergo sum:* "I doubt therefore I think, I think therefore I am." Descartes endeavored to doubt everything he could possibly doubt, in order to find a foundation of certainty. Descartes was a great doubter; he could have doubted the reality of our horse in the field with half of his skepticism tied behind his back. But Descartes found that the one thing he could not possibly doubt was his own existence, because *somebody had to exist to do the doubting!* And this is indeed a foundation of certainty from which to explore the reality of the rest of one's world. We are indebted to Descartes for this proof of our own existence, *I think, therefore I am,*

1 Have you ever heard of solipsism? Solipsism is a theory that the self is the only thing that really exists and the illusion of the outside world is only self-perpetrated effects upon the self's own mind.

because it allows us to verify the reality of the rest of our world.

Here's how it works: If anything at all exists, it had to have a cause. Philosophers and good scientists say, *ex nihilo nihil fit,* "out of nothing, nothing comes." So if anything at all exists, it had to come out of *something,* i.e., it had to be caused by something. Thanks to Descartes, we know that something does exist, namely *me.* Therefore, *I* had to have a cause. That presents me with three options:

1. I caused or "created" myself.
2. I'm self-existent, i.e., I've always existed and therefore am the exception to the rule of causation.
3. I, or at least my first ancestor, was created by something that is self-existent.

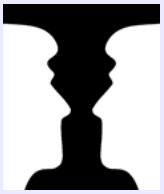
The first of these options is logically impossible. I can't have created myself because that would require that I had existed before I existed. Option 2 is ruled out by my sense of finiteness and my experience of aging. If I'd always existed, I'd have a much longer memory and my body would be crumbling to dust. That leaves only option 3: I, or at least my first ancestor, was created by something self-existent.[2]

So, Descartes' foundation of certainty, *I think therefore I am,* has led us directly to the realm of theology. **I know I exist, and I know I was brought into existence by the creative work of a self-existent entity.**

What can we deduce about this Creator entity? Well, besides the fact that it is self-existent and apparently eternal, it must be super-intelligent. I know I exist and I'm quite intelligent compared to the reasonably smart horse in the field, so whoever created me must be super intelligent, and by implication of that intelligence must also have personality. Furthermore, for this Creator to go to the trouble of creating me implies purposefulness; this personal Creator must be doing things *on purpose.* And two more things: if this Creator is personal, purposeful and super intelligent, its reasonable to conclude that this same Creator made everything else in the universe and made the universe *rationally intelligible.*

If the universe is rationally intelligible, then we can have assurance that the horse in the field is indeed real. But philosophically speaking, we owe this assurance to Descartes and his foundation of certainty, *I think therefore I am.* The bottom line is that we cannot put the horse before Descartes.

2 Cf. R. C. Sproul's discussion of the cosmological argument on p. 126 of *The Consequences of Ideas*.



Below is a stunning example of contemporary ontological madness. Are brilliant physicists philosophical dunces? Please see the analysis that follows the excerpt.

THE COMPREHENSIBLE COSMOS

Where Do the Laws of Physics Come From?

Victor J. Stenger
Prometheus Books, Amherst, 2006

The most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it is comprehensible.
— Albert Einstein

WHY IS THERE SOMETHING, RATHER THAN NOTHING? (Pages 170-172).

Now, you might ask, if the Universe has the global properties of the void, then why is it not a pure void? The answer may be that the void is less stable than a universe of matter.

We often find in physics that highly symmetric systems are not stable as ones of lower symmetry, the states of broken symmetry. That is, the less symmetric state has a lower energy level, and a system will naturally tend to drop down to its lowest energy state. A pencil balanced on end has rotational symmetry about the vertical axis, but is unstable and loses this symmetry when it topples over to a lower energy state (see fig. 5.5. p. 103).

The snowflake is another example that bears reviewing. We are accustomed to seeing snowflakes melt, but that is only because we live in an environment where the temperature is usually above freezing and energy is available in the environment to destroy the structure. Place a snowflake in a completely insulated vacuum, far out in space, and it will, in principle, last indefinitely.[4]

The void is highly symmetric, so we might expect it to drop to a lower energy state of lesser symmetry spontaneously. Calculations based on well-established models lend support to the notion that highly symmetric states are generally (though not always) unstable.

Nobel laureate physicist Frank Wilczek has written the following, which nicely sums up the picture I have been attempting to draw:

> Modern theories of the interactions among elementary particles suggest that the universe can exist in different phases that are analogous in a way to the liquid and solid phases of water. In the various phases the properties of matter are different; for example, a certain particle might be massless in one phase but massive in another. The laws of physics are more symmetrical in some phases than they are in others, just as liquid water is more symmetrical than ice, in which the crystal lattice distinguishes certain positions and directions in space.
>
> In these models the most symmetrical phase of the universe turns out to be unstable. One can speculate that the universe began in the most symmetrical state possible and that in such a state no matter existed. The second state had slightly less symmetry, but it was also lower in energy. Eventually a patch of the less symmetrical phase appeared and grew rapidly. The energy released by the transition found form in the creation of particles. This event might be identified with the big bang. The electrical neutrality of the universe of particles would then be guaranteed, because the universe lacking matter had been electrically neutral. The lack of rotation in the universe could be understood as being among the conditions most favorable for the phase change and the subsequent growth, with all that the growth implied, including the cosmic asymmetry between matter and antimatter. The answer to the ancient question "Why is there something rather than nothing?" would then be that "nothing" is unstable.[5]

Does this imply that we have explained how the Universe came from nothing (assuming that it did)? The meaning of the word nothing is a source of endless debate. How do you define nothing? What are the characteristics of nothing needed to define it? If it has any characteristics, any properties, then would it not be something? In his book *Why There Is Something Rather than Nothing,* philosopher Bede Rundle concludes, "[T]here has to be something."[6]

I have defined the void as what you get when you remove all the matter and energy. No physical quantities are measurable in the void. The void does not kick back when you kick it. If this void is not "nothing," then I do not know what is. But if the void is unstable, then we have "something" existing as another phase or state of nothing, the way ice and steam are different phases of water.

NOTES

…

4. In practice, cosmic rays would eventually tear it apart since we could never completely isolate the snowflake from them.

5. Frank Wilczek, "The Cosmice [sic] Asymmetry between Matter and Anti- matter." *Scientific American* 243. no. 6 (1980): 82-90.

6. Bede Rundle, *Why There Is Something Rather than Nothing* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2004), p. ix.

AN ANALYSIS

Of Stenger's Explanation Of The Universe's Origin

By Roderick Graciano, April 2008

This two-page explanation, by one-time professor of physics at the University of Hawaii Victor Stenger, of why there is something rather than nothing is one of the greatest examples of doublespeak I've ever seen. Notice first the language of speculation: *may be, the notion, might be, one can speculate, the answer… would then be.* Notice secondly how this speculation is based not on laws of physics, but on inconsistent possibilities: *We often find, … symmetric states are generally (though not always) unstable.*

Stenger's biggest problem throughout this short piece of gibberish is his inability to decide on a definition of *nothing.* His example comparing a symmetrical (and unstable) pencil, which has physical forces acting upon it, to the idea of nothingness with nothing acting upon it, has absolutely no explanatory value. His example of a snowflake, which is also symmetrical but can in theory last forever in a vacuum, seems to contradict what Stenger is trying to say in the preceding paragraph. Huh?

Then Stenger quotes MIT physics professor Frank Wilczek who appears to share the same confusion about the word *nothing.* Wilczek "speculates" that the universe "began" in a state in which "no matter existed." That word *began* is problematic! We're trying to answer the question of how and why the universe began, not what happened after it began. But Wilczek just imagines the universe beginning without explanation in a matter-less state. Well, it's possible that in its first moment the universe had no matter, but it had to have something, or else it hadn't yet begun. I assume that Wilczek envisions a universe without matter but *with* energy, since he is describing massless *particles* (a photon is a massless particle that nevertheless involves energy). Okay fine, but then he is logically wrong to conclude this excerpt by saying that the *nothingness* of the initial state of the universe "is unstable," because energy is not nothingness. Wilczek realizes this contradiction and puts "nothing" in quotation marks. The final sentence of Wilczek's excerpt should read:

> The answer to the ancient question "Why is there something rather than nothing?" would then be that [the initial symmetrical phase of the universe in which only energy existed was] unstable.

However, pared down to its real meaning, this final sentence says:

> The answer to the ancient question "Why is there something rather than nothing?" would then be that [the state of the original something was] unstable.

This of course is utter nonsense. An answer that *begins* with something does not explain why that something is there. What Wilczek may be trying to say, and could say rationally, is something like this:

> The answer to the question "Why is there a *material* universe?" is that [the initial phase of the universe in which only energy existed was] unstable.

But of course this is an entirely different question from the question of *why is there anything at all.*

Finally, Stenger concludes with further waffling on the meaning of *nothing.* He questions whether there was ever a time when there was nothing. After all if nothingness has properties, like symmetry and instability, then it is something rather than nothing. Stenger quotes Rundle, "[T]here has to be something." Now, on the face of it, both Stenger and Rundle are correct in this paragraph. Both these statements are true:

1. If an entity has properties, it is something rather than nothing.
2. There has to be something, in the sense that there was never absolutely nothing.

However, Stenger quotes Wilczek to propose a universe *without matter* as something that has properties, but then concludes his own remarks by assuming a universe *without matter and without energy,* i.e., a complete void as having properties! This is surely a misinterpretation of Wilczek — I only hope not a deliberate one. Nevertheless, whether supported by Wilczek or not, for Stenger to propose that the original and utter void, which according to Big Bang theory predates the laws of physics, has the property of instability, is to speculate like a madman. Only madmen talk about "another phase or state of nothing"!

Rundle's statement, "There has to be something," is true, but only metaphysically true. The something that *has to be,* is not something within the material universe (like Wilczek's massless phase), but something that precedes the universe. There is nothing inherent in the material universe (matter and energy) that requires it to exist. Big Bang theory states that the universe began, so the universe obviously didn't always exist of necessity. However, if there were ever absolutely nothing, if there were ever a point at which absolutely nothing existed, nothing would exist now. *Ex nihilo, nihil fit:* "out of nothing, nothing comes."

So, the real answer to "the ancient question 'Why is there something rather than nothing?'" is Genesis 1.1.