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Title: What is the Universe?

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10/22/2019—Bernard Lonergan asks, Is the universe on our side? It is a big question. But, before we can even begin to think about it, we have to ask, what is the universe? For most people, the universe is what we can know with the senses, however enhanced by the tools of science. In fact that is all there is. There are invisible forces and matter—gravity, dark energy, dark matter—but even these can be indirectly measured by their effects. This is materialism. And, as Alfred North Whitehead points out, it leaves out a lot of human experience. The self. Time. Causation. Therefore, this account of reality must be incomplete. There is another sense in which materialism is incomplete. There is a blueprint that underlies the sensible universe. All that we see participates in this blueprint. You could call this blueprint God, but it would not be a God who talks and wills like a person. This God would be less personal than that, although I suppose we humans would sometimes experience the blueprint in personal ways. Is referring to a blueprint a metaphor? Yes. But I believe it is a close one. How about, “it is as if there is a blueprint underlying everything?” Martin Heidegger in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, indicates the blueprint. Heidegger is meditating on language. The poem is spoken purely and can help us understand language. (come into the neighborhood of language). The poem Heidegger chooses is *A Winter's Evening* by Georg Trakl. The speaking of the first two stanzas of the poem “speaks by bidding things to come to world, and world to things.” (202). And later, “The difference lets the thinging of the thing rest in the worlding of the world.” Heidegger stretches language here to show us a deep ordering of reality. This is appropriately how things are. How things are in relation to everything else. Humans have a lot of names for patterning like this. I guess Jung's archetypes are another example. The point is that reality is not just one thing after another. It is not chaos. It is ordering all the way down. That is a good thing because that is the only kind of reality that humans could possibly inhabit. Materialists have a term for this human need—“false pattern recognition.” But at the level of metaphysics, they have no basis for supposing that these patterns are false. The claim that ordering is made up is a kind of faith. A faith in materialism. Not a persuasive faith. And one that is killing us.