Core 1: Weekly Response Week #5

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Due in hard copy and/or on turnitin.com the first discussion section class following lecture.

Name: Majok Ring Date: 2/22/15

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Lecturer: Guy Consolmagno

Lecture Title: “Cosmology and Religion, Ancient and Modern”

**Lecture’s Central Argument**:

Contrary to popular belief, religion does not in fact exist to renounce all science. These two elements can be used in unison to strengthen both faith and scientific understanding. Within the Catholic viewpoint, Vatican astronomers believe that since the universe and its workings were in fact created by God, it is their duty to connect closer with God by observing his creations and exploring the known universe. By doing this act of research and furthering your understanding, you are essentially engaging in an act of worship and grow closer in faith. Another essential point that Consolmagno brought up was that religious text was primarily based upon science of the modern day. Although we may look back at the claims presented such as the world revolves around spheres and is contained within separate globes and view it as entirely foolish, we still must make note that this was based off of the scientific views that were available and was not merely made up as many would believe.

**Lecture’s Supporting Evidence/Examples**:

The mediaeval view of the universe is often misinterpreted through our texts. They did not actually believe that the world was flat or other unrealistic things such as that. This was simply the Victorian idea of a mediaeval model as within every society we view the past with less reverence due to our current advances. They wanted to hold themselves to a higher standard so they thought less of the previous ages without context of their resources and advancements. He also stated the God of the Gaps argument which states that gaps in our scientific model are used to prove the existence of God. This model is discredited because these gaps are constantly decreasing with increased study and research.

**Three questions you have with respect to this lecture**:

* Should we view past civilizations with less scrutiny due to the context and resources that were available?
* Are there any conflicts that arise as science and religion continue to share more and more similarities?
* Is this simply another case of ‘shifting our origin’?

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Narrative Response (½ single-spaced page): Examine some aspects of the lecture in relation to the weeks’ readings and to other course subjects (lectures or readings) of interest to you. (Generic prompt)

Within his week’s lecture, “Cosmology and Religion, Ancient and Modern” by Guy Consolmagno, we shift our focus towards the similarities between religion and science and how one influences the other. Essentially, he states that questioning and curiosity are beneficial to both aspects of life and can lead to increased self-understanding and a closer connection with God. Within our text “What About God?” by Carl Zimmer, we focus on the same circumstances of religion influencing our viewpoints on science. This is evident through this quotation “Where is God’s place if everything does have a natural cause? I’ve wrestled with that quite a bit” (Zimmer 382). Here we can have trouble establishing meaning if the universe was created by God and ask questions such as “What is our place?” or “Where do we belong?” Many view God’s existence through the clockmaker theory in which God creates the entire universe and establishes all of its laws and behaviors and simply allows it to run. His tuning of the clock and maintenance can be equated to the natural laws of the universe and its forces that allow us and to interact with our surroundings the way they do. With this type of understanding in mind, many will end up pondering the significance of our lives and question the meaning of God’s existence or even our understanding of his existence. Here, we have an example of how some would refute our theories/beliefs of creation as we were not necessarily meant to follow God or have faith in him, but simply live within the universe. With contrast, we view individuals such as Consolmagno who allow God to influence his viewpoints in a completely different direction. Using the understanding that he has created the universe and all in it, many can look to explore his creations as a form or worship and an act of endearment similar to that of exploring your grandfather’s accomplishments and creations.