

## In the Throe of Wonder Condensation and Summary of Chapters

**Preface:** Matters of the Heart

**Prologue:** Wondering about wonder. Wonder is a rupture of a world experienced in time and is to experience the wholly unknown as unknown. To trust and surrender to the throe of temporality is the only way to enter it. The experience of unknown otherness becomes accessible to us in and through our amazement. Wonder is the opening through which we gain access to all our insights. Unrestricted inquiry, throe of questioning, shatters our ordinary world, leads us to that mysterious source in us from which all wonder springs, radical transformation. Common sense treats meaning and truth as givens and criticizes as irrational the process of wonder. But such appeal to the given betrays intelligence itself and restricts rationality. To be fully rational requires surrendering unconditionally to the throe of wonder instead of clinging to the given, allowing oneself to be thrown into the abyss of unknowing. Being rational has little in common with the drive to plan and control, manage and organize, systemize in order to master and control the unknown without exposing our "weaknesses and vulnerabilities." "Method methodicalizes the destruction of the other." To allow the other to be requires relinquishing all goal-oriented method. But neither should we merely take a stance of objective indifference, merely observe the other, reduce it to an observed object. Such objective observation already reduces and represses its very difference. To engage the other is to become vulnerable to its difference, to enter into the unknown as unknown instead of trying to colonize it, surrender fully to the throe of questioning which requires leaving the given behind and recognizing and embracing our ignorance. No way to prepare for this. One must trust and surrender to the deepest vulnerability that is at the core or heart of each of us. One may have a direction but no method that leaves behind the given. It is a conversion that seems like a death from the perspective of the known, but it is the birth of genuine thinking. For thought to be courageous in the face of wonder and the dread it always entails, is to be open to it and even willing to be devastated by it. Being is the general term for an all inclusive grasping of otherness.

**Chapter 1: The Love of Wisdom and the Consolations of Fallibility:** Undermining the myth of given and metaphysics of presence, philosophers have come to recognize the inescapability of interpretation the centrality of its role in the constitution of meaning. The metaphysics of presence and myth of the given are based on an illusion that we are able ultimately to come "face to face" with truth.

Previously, wisdom was seeing the very principles that support and constitute a system of knowing the world. But such intuitions though they can be used to justify a system cannot themselves be justified within the system they constitute. They are now shown to be prejudices disguised as intuitions. This is something worse than ignorance. It is a prejudice that makes its lack of knowledge the dogmatic starting point. Postmodern: there are only disguised and undisguised prejudices.

In the face of the loss of any absolutes, wisdom may seem now to be a relic of the past. However, to give up on the pursuit of wisdom is itself a symptom in the belief that these were the only ways to pursue wisdom. We are not left with utter skepticism, hard pragmatism, or relativism, on the one hand, and certainly not an attempt to retrieve or generate any dogmatic absolutisms. How, then, do we genuinely pursue wisdom in a postmodern condition? It is clear now that wisdom never was something dependent on the myth of the given and the metaphysics of presence. The hermeneutic of suspicion deconstructs all structures of thought at their very base by showing their groundlessness. We can no longer look to some foundational standpoint, some in-itself, as a starting point to then assimilate everything into this known. There are no privileged, unprejudiced starting positions, no obvious grounding observations or intuitions. Thus, we now recognize that we live in a multiplicity of "worlds" and the *myth of the given*, the myth of absolute grounding no longer has coherence; we recognize it as a myth. A way of expressing this previous belief in absolute knowing is "The Ocular Ideal": The belief that there is a way to have a perfect seeing, the

possession of the thing known directly, wholly, and immediately about which we could not possibly be wrong. The awareness of not being immune to error is a disturbing possibility we dread when wonder opens us to a multiplicity of answers or responses. But to THINK means precisely to let this array of possible answers emerge and to not attempt to escape from this aporeia. To raise a question is to simultaneously to put oneself in the radically precarious position of being wrong. We want to bridge the gap between our question and the right answer to close the chasm. The ocular ideal of an ideal intuition that is foolproof is an attempt to escape this precarious situation. Such an intuition, however, would make the process of inquiry unnecessary. The act of inquiry itself belies the fact that there is no such intuition. REAL WISDOM lies in realizing that the distance between our questions and the right answers to them is not traversable. We are always on the way, knowing that we do not know. Even if one is reconciled to never attaining the goal of such an intuition an always receding destination, we remain caught in the habit of seeing in terms of goals to be reached. Closure remains the governing objective. Instead of this horizontal two dimensional ideal, we can entrust ourselves to the eros of questioning itself and plunge into the abyss. An alternative to pursuing answers as correct is to judge our views in terms of their usefulness instead of their rightness, helps us do what we want. This therapeutic pragmatism does not pretend to offer a way to leap over the abyss as the wisdoms it critiques claims. Rather, it simply walks away from the abyss to return to what we were doing before we made the mistake of taking our questions seriously and seek true answers to them. But one can only stop asking questions by refusing to wonder. To no longer wonder is to no longer do philosophy. Every theory is a possible strategy for achieving some result. This does not offer any more than intuition did a kind of wisdom that takes seriously the possibility of being wrong.

The pluralistic situation of the postmodern condition has always been inherent in the ordeal of inquiry itself. So it is here in the throe of wonder and inquiry that we are led to seek an understanding of wisdom in this condition of inescapable fallibility. The flight or escape to the ocular ideal, myth of the given, and the metaphysics of presence are attempts to leap over the abyss of unknowing and possess truth whereas skepticism, hard pragmatism, and relativism are retreats from this condition as if there were no truth to pursue. The recognition of inescapable fallibility is at the same time a recognition of that toward which we aspire in our inquiry even though our fundamental fallibility makes possession of such truth unattainable. Metaphysics that begins in wonder and the recognition of fallibility presupposes being that even though it cannot be made immediately transparent and known it also cannot be erased or avoided (unless we repress our capacity to be questioners). Being is that which becomes accessible to us only in and through the throe of inquiry which is the throe of being itself. Therefore we can know being only by surrendering to the throes of inquiry and embracing fallibility to which it exposes us. When we try to escape the mortifying danger of fallibility, we sever our relationship with being and wrongly identify it with presence. Our fallibility, far from being a barrier to our knowledge of being, constitutes our only possible bond with it. (24) We would have to argue that being can only be known by repressing our inquiry into it. The act of trying to answer a question opens us up to being itself as that which is to be known by questioning. I must choose between the metaphysics of presence or the throe of unknowing and must depend on my judgment and on it alone. There is no way to check my judgment against reality. The fact that I can be caught in the throe of inquiry indicates that such direct acquaintance with being is not available to me. The realization that we have no access to being outside the throe of inquiry is the beginning of wisdom that requires giving up the hope of ever standing on a foundation. This may seem like exposing oneself to nothingness itself. But only suffering such exposure does one give oneself over wholly to the throe of questioning and it is only by surrendering completely to the throe of questioning that one is caught up in the throe of being itself. Any attempt to escape this condition of fallibility closes us off from being, instead of opening up a way to it. If we stop looking for an exit out of this condition of fallibility, we will find that it has a momentum of its own. We no longer judge an answer to be right because it conforms to a reality which is accessible to us before our inquiry begins; we just it right only because it fulfills that intelligent desire for INSIGHT set in motion by inquiry itself. It is the demand set up by the question, as intelligently raised by the questioner, which constitutes criterion against which all possible answer must be checked if we

are to judge which of them gives us access to being. (27) Judgment does not mean merely a proposition or claim arrived at at the end of the process of considering a number of theories absent the question they purport to answer. It refers primarily to the judicial process itself during which we try to appreciate the particular merits of a theory, the scope of its explanatory power, the reasons for and against it. The act of making a judgment is a firsthand exploration of wholly unknown territory to which we cannot gain access in any other way. There is no other authority than the skill and whole hearted deeply responsible firsthand exploration itself engaged in with deep humility that is engendered by the constant awareness of one's inescapable fallibility. **The condition of fallibility presupposes a truth So we are in possession of at least one truth.**

Performative inconsistency at the heart of wisdom: **Fallibility** is precisely the condition of being always in relationship to truth but never in possession of it. (29) But this is not an affirmation of a truth but an acknowledgment that truth has an unbreakable hold on us. We cannot escape our relationship with truth except by terminating the activity of thought itself; it is not a claim to be in possession of truth but our confession that we have been caught irretrievably in its throe. We are fallible because we can neither possess the truth nor escape our relationship to it.

Wisdom arises from the responsible development of the skills necessary to make good judgments together with the inescapable recognition of fallibility as a permanent condition that will emerge from such skill when given over completely to the throe of inquiry and it is the attitude of humility engendered by this recognition. One must surrender to the throe of inquiry and the pursuit of truth in which one can have no doubt about there being something that is being pursued nor any doubt that one will never possess it. Only someone secure in his or her fallibility knows how insecure he will always be his relationship to truth. We can contrast this with mere cleverness motivated by desire for control in which A) skill is developed for the limited purpose of achieving the possession of truth and closure instead of the unending openness of inquiry, or B) to achieve success in getting what one wants. Both of these are forms of arrogance: the arrogance of dogmatism which professes A) to possess truth or B) the arrogance of believing you have demonstrated there is no truth and that the pursuit is unwarranted, even foolish.

We must be very careful, however, about what we construe truth to be in the sense of the surrender to the throe of inquiry. It is something we have no understanding of except that it is the *toward which* of inquiry. It cannot be merely understood as the truth of the logic of propositions that presumably is completely governed by logic. Reasoning understood as merely following the rules of logic and grammar is much too narrow and counter to the notion of Thinking that exposes itself to self-undermining in its complete surrender to inquiry. It is better to understand it as the *toward which* of inquiry such that if the inquiry is engaged in as a surrender to the throe of wonder, then it can lead to an exceptional level of skill in judgment that leads to the deepest humility. Such humility arises from insight that undermines all claims to truth. Such deep humility is engendered by the recognition of the mystery that there is anything intelligible at all and that we can make judgments at all. This recognition is a kind of aletheia or unconcealment that cannot be reduced to propositional judgment, but which cannot be pursued apart from language, meaning and propositional judgment.

## Chapter 2: Wonder as Hinge

All inquiry has its origin in wonder. It is the hinge between ignorance and knowledge, between oblivion and insight, between past and future. What gets it started? Will we ever arrive at the place to which it leads us? This *in between* or hinge is what Heidegger says is time itself. Inquiry is a venturing and risking of oneself. As children we did not yet have the illusion of understanding what being means.

What is the phenomenological structure of wonder as exemplified by such venturing? It is the unknown as unknown that fascinates and terrifies us at the same time. It is the inability to picture or make known this unknown. Wonder is already the rupture of the same by the other where the other is simply the unknown itself in its difference from the known. It is being in a position of not knowing where you are

going. We are neither on the side of the known or the unknown but exactly in between. **Relation of wonder to temporality (as experienced and understood through the process of wonder and inquiry):** p. 36-40: To be situated between *the present, the from which* and the *toward which* of wonder, Wonder engages us in the throe of temporality, it suggests that time itself is a kind of exploration and longing in which we are permitted to actively participate. We are caught between the past and the future, known and the unknown, the same and the other in a felt sense of withdrawal and venturing, retreat and longing, reluctance and urgency, delay and hastening. The future is not merely another yet to be present or presence which is the same to come and is homogeneous. It is heterogeneous, radically other. Wonder is a response to what is present but unknown. It is both present and as yet unknown. It is the opening to another meaning or world that can only come through inquiry: What is it? Wonder opens up the absolute future, a future that is not another now, a future so different from now that opening the door to it is really the beginning of a new world and a disruption of the same by the other.

The *from which* and the *toward which* of wonder: Being comes before our understanding of it. Knowing comes after.

Failure of the correspondence theory of truth and the representational model of knowing.

### Chapter 3: On The Way between Heidegger and Lonergan

Being: not the given, but that toward which wonder beckons (49-50) fascination/longing vs. dread/horror (intimation of death/loss of self). The world of Being is discoverable through inquiry and mediated through meaning. Wonder frees language from the given for a higher calling (p47). Being itself is not the given, it is what is to be known through enchantment and exploration, wonder and inquiry.

#### The given is the whence of wonder, being is the unknown whither

P 56: Rediscover our most primordial condition: wonderers. Original situation: being thrown into an unknown future. Astonishment as dread or wonder founds all our worlds (57).

p58: transcendental condition: the condition of possibility for every mode of consciousness.

p59: **Wonder is not an event that happens in the world.** It is not the world that makes wonder possible. It is wonder that makes it possible for the world as such to happen to us." (p59)

(p 60): We cannot conform our thinking to the world because the world only becomes accessible to us for the first time in and through our thinking it. That is why the world is not reducible to the sum total of entities; it is **the condition for the possibility of there being any entities at all...the unknown precedes them as the condition for the possibility of their emergence.** The world is the unknown itself as a whole from which everything we know emerges, and we become ourselves only by entering it. "

P61-2: things acquire their meaning from their location in boundaries, horizons of meaning, from life understood as a whole.

To be human is always to be situated in a known world from which we can be affected by wonder and drawn to explore. The unknown can only be known as unknown in contrast to what is known as known. The parameters of my horizon are the limits/boundaries of my world. When operating inside them, I feel at home. (p61) We are all world makers because wonder frees us from the given. But this freedom to create is dreadful because it gives the intimation of something other than our world and so we do not operate at the primordial level of wonder and world making. We try to stay in the boundaries of our world, not rupture them with otherness. We are so accustomed to operating within the limits of a particular horizon of meaning that we treat the things which are meaningful us because of that horizon of meaning as things that should be immediately self-evident to anyone. The more exclusively we live within the limits of a horizon, the less aware are we of there being any limits to it. We tend to become so comfortable in our world that we cease to be aware of the possibility of any others, until something ruptures our world, such as falling

deeply in love or a terrible loss, such as a breach of trust or loss of a loved one, etc. Wonder is the only kind of intuition we have of the boundaries, but it does not deliver knowledge but ruptures it. We construct the world through acts of insight. A theory does not accurately represent the world as it is in itself, as if it had direct access to it in experience. The whole purpose of a theory is to make sense of something whose meaning my immediate experience does NOT deliver to me. Thought is an act of making, not looking. How does a theory differ from a fiction?

Lonergan and Heidegger both see the incoherence of the copy or representational model of knowing and the associated correspondence theory of truth in which different theories are seen as competing pictures of the one and only real world. They reject this view, yet they are not relativists or historicists. There is a critical dimension to their thinking. They invite us to undergo and intellectual conversion regarding the meaning of being itself. The meaning of being is only accessible through a kind of intellectual crisis of being caught in the throes of inquiry that engenders a constant self-overcoming of thinking, that leads us beyond our horizons of meaning to an experience of nothingness, a continual dying and rebirth that brings us into relation with being in a radically different way, not beings, not entities of our worlds, but a revolutionary change in our sense of being itself. (69)

**What is the role of critical judgment** in this if not correspondence of our statements to what there is? Heidegger is led to see the drive to correctness in the A/not-A, true/false of the logic of propositions as inherently unable to approach being. It pulls us always back to what is present at hand and our assertions about this. He strives to develop a new discourse of intimations or genuine poetry that opens new meaning at which moments we are least caught in the logic of propositions and whose purpose is to evoke being. Lonergan in contrast sees rational judgment capable of moving in a different direction than the logic of propositions in the role of testing our insights. An insight is thinking that makes sense of my experience, reveals a perfect clarity and self-evidence. "I can know an insight is true if it completely answers the particular question which being, as the unknown, has beckoned me to ask. (p75) by coming to recognize the limits that made this particular inquiry possible and seeing that in those limits the insight is true. Such truth is a revelation of reality through finite insight and judgment that opens a new and strange world of meaning. The role of judgment is testing an insight against what has been made accessible by my inquiry. Mere assertion of propositional correctness is not the goal, rather in calling an insight into question I am reminded that my thinking has not yet finished satisfying the call of being. To think one has arrived at the truth would be the end of thinking but that could happen only if vulnerability came to an end and wonder and dread were no longer possible. Judgment humbles us. An infallible sign of a person with good judgment is her not taking ever her profound insights too seriously. (p76)

**Reality** is not what is in front of us, Reality is that continual renewal and strangeness that is known through insight and judgment and thus is nothing final or fixed. It is the emergence of understanding creatively applied to the finite situation we always find ourselves in (Gadamer).

## Chapter 4: Worlds

Inseparability of life and death, love and suffering

*Postmodern*: Lost capacity for genuinely belonging to or fully participating in any world.

Previous Philosophy: provided a total map of all possible universes, a way of integrating them. Now seems to be irremediably pluralized. The up side of this is that it makes it possible for us to come to a richer understanding of the concept of "world" itself.

A world is not a collection of things. In entering a world, one experiences something like the birth of being itself. A world cannot be observed. It can only be lived in. P 83: One look through the eye of a telescope may be all it takes for a child to become an astronomer in her heart...given access to an

inexhaustibly fascinating world in comparison with which her ordinary world suddenly seems not just uninteresting, but insubstantial. A world becomes accessible only by stepping inside it and leaving the one we previously occupied. This creates a gap in the ordinary through which we must pass if we are to discover the “inside” an artwork, a book, a theory, an experience of falling in love, becoming enchanted with something, becoming deeply committed or dedicated to a cause, a profession, etc.. This world becomes a new center. It is not containable as an object within the bounds of the ordinary. It is a radical rupture, a recentering, the death of a previous meaningful world.

Beginning of a world: revelatory surprise, deep attraction, astonishment, surprise of heterogeneity/otherness of something that stands outside of our world as an unknown that pulls us, is known as unknown. Difference is a constitutive principle of every world.

World as Hierophany (appearance of the sacred): Discovery of a world is intimately related to our recognizing something as sacred, set apart from everything else for which we would sacrifice, for which we feel gratitude for being able to make it the object of our reverence. :

p. 85: In surrendering to a world because it liberates us from the ordinary, are we in danger of being imprisoned anew?

Structural form of a world: complex web of meanings constitute a world around a center that gives it its integrity and order that gathers its multiplicity into a coherent whole. A world is not a collection of things. Its integrity and order that constitutes a whole is not another thing in this world.

Only because we are capable of insight are we able to belong to a world and consciously appreciate it AS a world and only because a world is constituted by an intelligible order is something like an insight possible. There is not world except the world mediated through meaning, and no meaning except that which becomes accessible when an insight enables us to recognize a world as a world. (87)

The coherent order of a world pivots on its center, a sustaining source of power that attracts things toward it. This transformative power then radiates outward and disseminates its light/meaning/insight: It only unifies by disseminating, by expending itself. It has not definable limits/boundaries, is expansive, ecstatic, sheds its light its meaning.

The integrity of a world is entirely dependent on its center remaining in its central place. Any decentering would deconstruct this world. We resist such decentering with all the energy and tenacity of our devotion to it because it means the world to us. Any threat to the integrity of our world awakens intimations of our own nothingness. A threat to the integrity of our world, the threat of decentering it, leads to an intimation of the nothingness of our world. This leads to a TRAGIC QUEST for an undeconstructible world: The end of a world is not a thinkable event in my world, thus I can only feel the intimation of its possible ending as horror. Because the possibility of nothingness is not assimilatable within a world but always deconstructive of it, our only option, if we are to keep it intact, is to exclude that possibility from it. Such an exclusion cannot be effected except by creating a system of defenses. It becomes merely reactionary and this tragically closes off this world and ends its radiance, its ecstatic giving of itself, its light and meaning. It now comes under the dominance of mortal danger and fear, becomes governed by the principle of Sameness or homogeneity which excludes every other and the very principle of heterogeneity that gave rise to this world in its splendor and radiance. Any other becomes suppressed by this totalizing impulse of reactionary defense. This world excludes the possibility of any other and becomes the all-encompassing one, absolute itself. Such a reaction is only possible because of deep dread of loss. When we find something sacred, we want to build a sanctuary to protect it from violation and prevent its deconstruction. There is a terrible irony in attempting

to create such a system. The only way to make the radiant center of a world secure from the threat of nothingness is to enclose inside an impregnable network of defenses. But tragically, this network of defense represses its radiance. It becomes as inert as death itself. We can make what we love invulnerable only by killing it and by making its sanctuary its tomb. A world closed off to the possibility of its own deconstruction is a world that is suffocating to enter. (92)

Thus In surrendering to a world because it liberates us from the ordinary, are we in danger of being imprisoned anew by closing that world off in the attempt to control and possess it. As Nietzsche says: Convictions are prisons. It is not the courage of one's convictions, but the courage to challenge one's convictions that is the sign of true integrity of a vital and radiating world. Irony: We are most alive when we are most vulnerable. The attempt to cut off our vulnerability, protect ourselves from it, ironically is when we are least alive and vital, caught in the reactionary anger and fear of desire for control and possession of truth, rather than the openness of insight and wonder.

93-95 By enclosing what we love in order to protect it, we bring about the very loss we are trying to prevent. As with any love, the effort to possess and keep what is loved destroys it. Such is the case with the love of wisdom that professes itself to be Truth. Instead of opening out like an insight that radiates in all possible directions, it actually cuts us off from the entire open field of thought/inquiry itself. Such a world is a closed system. The only way to prevent the death of thought is to keep thought open to the possibility of its own undoing. The radiance of a world is inseparable from its vulnerability to nothingness... If we are to fully enter a world in wonder, we must be ready to lose it in horror. The very openness that makes a world radiant makes it vulnerable. Vulnerability and radiance are inseparable. The distinguishing characteristic of a real world, as contrasted with a system, is precisely the fact that it does not try to protect itself from a collision with other world or from nothingness, but rather gives us a way of access to the very possibilities of its own deconstruction.

96: Willingness to live w/o a center, absence of eros

98: practical matters most, being in control, love nothing, no danger of loss. In the world of practicality, nothing is sacred.

99: Avoidance- Repression . Of all our worlds, the everyday is the closest to being a completely dead one.

## **Chap 5: Amphibolies of Love and Death**

116 We are not full of life because we are unwilling to stop trying to control it...one cannot remain faithful to a life affirming impulse except by giving up the very other to which one is giving oneself. To give oneself to the other always means precisely to lose the other.

117 The ec-stasis into the future with was originally experienced as wonderful thus leads us directly toward an experience which is devastating. Wonder and horror are inseparable

P 117. To be human means to be an open wound.

120: Death offers us our only fail-safe way of escaping an experience of nothingness... Nothingness "is the meaning of that ec-stasis which is human living itself. When we flee it in order to preserve our lives we smother the animating eros, the spendthrift enthusiasm, which arises within us when we are so in love with life that we do not think of holding onto it."

These ironies are not a philosopher's invention. We can find them operating in those all-too-human addictions which, as they drive us to seek an always purer, always more intense experience of presence, drain us of our capacity to experience the kind of eros that is inseparable from suffering. Such addiction stop only one step short of being literally suicidal, of seeking in the undisturbable repose of death itself a

permanent release from that tension which keeps bringing the experience nothingness alive for us. ...other extreme as well...

Some small child in us, standing at the nexus of all the desire and all longer, knows and has forgotten. There is a way, apparently, for a mortal wound to be a blossoming flower, a way for the most upsetting of experiences to become serenity, a way for the experience of death (of our world) to be the most life affirming of all our celebrations. (p121)

## Chapter 6: Horror and Deconstruction of Self

Horror is not merely a reaction to the loss of the ordinary. It is an intimation or disclosure of something extraordinary. In our defense we relegate it to merely a subjective emotional state as if it were just an instinctual response of terror to danger. But instinctual responses temporarily suspend our cognitive states. We regress back to the kind of inarticulate biological immediacy which would govern us if we did not operate with the universe mediated by language. Such is terror. Horror, in contrast, presupposes operating inside a universe of meaning whose existence is taken for granted prior to horror's rupture. Only a being capable of language who can live in a meaningful world can be horrified. In our defense we reduce the most traumatic events to events IN my world, rather than seeing them as happening TO my world. Horror awakens us to the possibility of losing the center of our meaningful world that makes our lives coherent wholes. Instead of causing us to revert back to a pre-lingual immediacy, it gives us an intimation of a possibility that lies beyond our universe, a possibility of which we are ordinarily oblivious.

Instinct suspends, horror awakens, opens. 126

Philos has often been governed by a totalizing impulse aims to preserve my world, make it impenetrable impregnable. This is in stark contrast to philosophy as an undoing, as a preparation for surrender/death (of my world). Postmodern reveals this basic feature of there being no such given, no such totalizing that can succeed. It prepares us for this surrender as long as it does not have the illusion of bridging or avoiding the abyss of nothingness (see other chart).

The genius of the Therapeutic mentality that animates the totalizing impulse (p125) lies in its capacity for generating one psychological technique after another to help us handle, cope with, manage, deal with and crisis that happens so that we will not be devastated by it.." Some of post modernism is still such a therapeutic attempting to control by reducing everything to an openness of choosing whatever we find useful for our practical purposes.

P130-31 Wonder founds our world, horror deconstructs it. They disclose and conceal at the same time. And yet... (read)

Requires a different kind of courage...

Death is not a biological event, but an ontological event. As beings who live in our meanings, we are subject to an entirely different kind of death...

P 132 How can we know what horror discloses? We only know it AS horrifying in jeopardizing the whole universe of meaning governed by the totalizing project of being-as-presence. It's *toward which* CANNOT be made accessible to make it knowable. But it CAN be understood precisely as that which resists objectification, as that which, far from being includable within the universe of meaning as an object present-at-hand, is the undermining of that universe, the rupturing of the present-at-hand by nothingness itself.

P 133 Any attempt to get closer to knowing nothingness would only prove that one had failed to have the only kind of insight into nothingness that is true...

To speak of the possibility of nothingness...if philosophy renounced the totalizing project...the possible impossibility of being at all.

134-135: anguish/destitution

136: Horror deconstructs the "they-self" and individualizes the person who experiences it.

P138: my own will to be an **UNDECONSTRUCTIBLE SELF** sustains the entire metaphysics of presence.  
Bottom of anguish

139: being is not all the same as myself but precisely what is *other* than me... I never have even my own being firmly within my grasp... I am in myself destitute of being and always the recipient of it... finally embrace our nothingness, instead of evading it.

140 Horror shatters that dream [undeconstructible self and metaphysics of presence] and anguish reveals the truth that dream was invented to cover up: being has never been us but is always our other... It is not, strictly speaking, true to say that, at the moment of terminal anguish, when this is acknowledged, the self appropriates nothingness as its own most possibility [Heidegger]. It is more accurate to say that nothingness appropriates the self and wrings from it an admission of its own radical destitution: I, myself, in and of myself, am nothing.

Seen from the viewpoint of the metaphysics of presence... The affirmation of one's nothingness alone enables one to be appropriated by the truth one has always wanted to keep covered up... the truth which means the end of the metaphysics of presence **means the beginning of a thought freed from the arche of avoidance...what would be the meaning of being in a thought that begins with our nothingness? What intimations lie concealed in the depths of the most upsetting anguish? ... Do they lead, perhaps, up, in the direction of a known unknown which evokes neither wonder nor horror but something like awe?**

**Comments:** If I am both my presence and my possibilities, then so far as I have possibilities, even the possibility of nothingness, I am. But in what sense? When my world is undermined and I am at the bottom of anguish, it is this state, that is the condition of the possibility of my new worlding. Nothing is meaningful or hopeful in my old world anchored in my previous sense of an undeconstructible self. It is in the remnant of my old world and self that I flounder and anguish, am lost, have no meaningful orientation, yet I am aware of this. All that is left of my world is its impossibility which I would not have been able to know when that world was intact. When I experience anguish at the complete loss of orientation and meaning, rather than approach my condition therapeutically to salvage my world or some world, I must complete the process to be reborn. My world must become utterly nothing for this to happen in the most profound way. Only when "therapy" is such a complete process of UNDOING, as opposed to typical salvational therapeutic approaches, is it preparatory for a generative new worlding, a rebirth, only when genuine death and rebirth moves me beyond the remnant of my world from anguish to awe. Such awe is more possible at this time than any other because we are most vulnerable, completely undone and completely open to our sacred core that is far more fundamental to us than any world of meaning what happen to have fallen in love with or become attached to. Traditional therapeutic approaches belie the horror of the therapist at witnessing the horror and anguish of the patient and they are intent on controlling and eliminating the crisis, reducing the confrontation with vulnerability, or worse, such crises merely become the "ordinary" for them in which they carry out the protocol, the routine, the system, that is going to save our world. In the genuine process, my world must become nothing in order for a rebirth to happen, as we saw with the process of stillness and incubation practices by Parmenides as a priest of this most sacred process. It is extremely delicate, but so is

a world. This basic condition of vulnerability that makes us what we are, is not avoidable except at the cost of our very vitality, our very (spiritual) lives.

Only in the abyss are we reborn in this way and only in the abyss do we find the sacred, not merely another world to live in. This is that rare moment when the sacred and the profane become one, the realization that Samsara is Nirvana. **The sacred is the power to make meaningful, the power to “world.”** The sacred is not the world. It is **the power to world** which both **reveals and hides itself**. Being makes the actual possible. But possibility outruns the actual. Possibility, as multiple possible worlds and the nothingness of these worlds, reveals the source of meaning which itself cannot not be said, but makes all saying/meaning possible. The “I” is not this source. Rather, it is the impetus to be an “I” or a fixed point of reference for everything. To relinquish this “I” is to embrace the sacred at the point of nothingness in anguish and destitution which is the only door to the deepest experience of self-overcoming in utter awe in which we confront the sacred in its most revelatory moment.

Only in the abyss of unknowing and nothingness are we emptied out so completely that there is nothing left to experience but the complete loss of an ordinary sense of self that makes possible then the deepest and most sacred experience of awe, and experience that radiates, not from a newly formed world, as in wonder that can also move to awe and loss of self, but from becoming one with the nothingness that we are, the most complete experience of awe is possible and the most profound openness to our **sacred core** takes place. It is from such a moment of complete undoing that we can reach out from the barest finitude, with the least remnant of self, that **sacred core**, to the absolute other, the infinite, the unsayable, the felt sense of the source of our existence and being that no religion can capture. Such an experience it utterly transformative and is what is spoken of as entering into Nirvana in Buddhism or the Holy Spirit in Christianity. One is now **“in the world, but not of the world.”** The ordinary motivations from desire and aversion, fear of loss and desire for control, and self-preservation no longer animate this MOST vital way of being-in-the-world. We are fully present for the first time.

Enlightenment would be a transformed RELATION to nothingness that frees up rather than inhibits our relation to being. The ordinary world is not being. It is an artifact of the “I”, the self in its drive for security, it’s drive to be the fixed center, an undeconstructible self. As a worlding self, I am a recipient of being. Worlding indicates the power of the sacred, of being, but immediately hides it behind an enframed world. It is not the world that reveals being, but worlding or enframing, the power to world or enframe. I am not this power. I am its recipient. To bind back to the sacred, I must relinquish the illusion of power, relinquish the self, embrace nothingness in order to be open to the call of the sacred. This sacred is always the ultimate other intimated through every experience of alterity or otherness beckoning us to the source. That is the fundamental experience of longing in every human breast that is most often superficially satisfied with attachment to this or that but that always beckons us at those moments when we are most vulnerable, most alive, most loosened from the fixity of the ego driven world.

**Chapter 7: Temporality as Rupture:** Rupture of the present by the radical other of time that operates **in** time. The eternal is not an eternal present. It is the **radical other** of presence that is within time that makes the throe of temporality, the turning from presence toward the future, the crux in which we live, possible.

**Metaphysics of Avoidance:** Dream of presence: traditional onto-theology: a dream of eternity as time without death, without rupture Versus a philosophy which acknowledges its own vulnerability to the throe of temporality, that undermines all saving faiths and admits our irreparable brokenness.

The future is not homologizable to any previous presence. The post modern loss of the consoling dream of progress has allowed us to encounter the future in its inconceivable, unanticipatable, unimaginable otherness.

**Time:** the turn of temporality, this turn is always in the present of consciousness of the “from-which” or past and the “toward-which” or future, this turn is the *in-between* of a sense of past and future... *the past* or the already non-existent present that has passed, does not exist except in this in-between and *the future* or the not yet that does not exist except in the in-between.

More fundamental than the past in its character as past and the future in its very character as future, is the TURN we make from one to the other, in its very character AS a turn. We are always already caught in the throe of the turn, with no way of escaping it. The word eternity is the term that reveals our flight from the turn and death is the term from which we flee. Eternity is our always already lost past, that never existed, death is our always inconceivable future.

**Turn of temporality:** *Our way of conceiving it determines our understanding of all other matters.* Thus, it is **the arche of thought**. But being grounded in such an arche is not any traditional grounding in something static. It is to always be in the turn from the “from-which” to the “toward-which.” (This human experience of being in time Plato calls *eros*, attraction, being pulled. Augustine calls it distention, yearning.)

What is the experience of this turn *itself* and the abyss we enter when we make it? Only because we are capable of wondering and being horrified are we able to encounter in what is already wholly present to us a portent of something not present, an intimation of something which beckons or horrifies us by virtue of its radical otherness. (147)

That unknown is *inaccessible* but that we can know it *as unknown* means that we are NOT held in the grip of presence. In so far as we are wonderers, we are always already *situated in between* the presence of what is present and the unknown of which wonder makes us conscious. We are always caught between the given and the unknown, familiarity and mystery, same and the other, immanence of the now and the transcendence of the future. The rupture caused by our awareness of the unknown as unknown creates a fissure in what would otherwise have been a universe of unbroken presence and unmarred plenitude (this can only be conceptualized, never experienced or imagined). The given can never be used to heal the break caused by wonder because it is precisely the given which can become mysterious to us.

It is the equation of the given with being which the event of wonder requires us to question and give up. The given is always more than it gives itself out to be. This more is given to us in the rupture which wonder enables us to recognize in the experience of the rupture (experience of the unexpected extraordinary that is not an event in my world, but something that happens TO my world, transforms it, abolishes it). This turn leads to an over turning of our very sense of being itself. We are always in the process of being revolutionized by this overturning. From the point of view of the given, this *more* is precisely *nothing*. The *toward-which* of wonder calls the given into question and disputes its claim to ultimacy. Between them there can be no bridge at all, only irreconcilable difference and the rupture of a throe. To mitigate that difference would be comparable to treating death as an event *within* one’s world. Death is not something that happens in one’s world, but something that happens TO one’s world. The rupture of the given by the *not* which wonder introjects into it, is itself the original event of death, the original radical disruption of presence. For the irreconcilability of the from-which and the toward-which of wonder makes the turn from one to the other an irreparable break, an experience of irretrievable loss even though in undergoing it we forfeit *what we never really possessed*.. We do not have to wait for death, as for an event that lies in the future, at the end of our lives. Insofar as the turn from the given to the *toward-which* of wonder is an

irrevocable and mortal breach in our being, we are always already dying. (p.149) And it is only because of the fact that we are always dying *in this sense* that the future, in its very character as future, is accessible to us. (150) (Remember to distinguish this from biological death explained many times previously).

**According to Heidegger:** death is the paradigm of the future, because it is the toward-which that will never become a present actuality for us... we are capable of explicitly thematizing the possibility of our own nothingness only because we are always already projected toward the future in its radical otherness from the present. Our being-toward-death is simply the consummate illustration of the human experience of temporality.

**Miller:** The inseparability of death and wonder requires rethinking death as the *toward-which* of our being, as Heidegger sees it. We can experience death as our future, as the *toward-which* of our anticipation, *only* because we are already caught in the throe which orients us toward the *toward-which* as such; and that throe is itself a radical disruption of the given, an introjection of *the not* into being—in short, a death. Death is not the destination of the turn because the turn itself is the original event of dying. Wonder, when it ruptures the given, brings about the end of the world as presence, even though the world thus terminated was never our home but only the universes we would have lived in if we were not born to be wonderers. We are always already suffers of the primal loss. Death is our end but our end happens at the very beginning, as the beginning of our being as inquirers. Death is always already happening as the even constitutive of temporality itself. Without it, our kind of time could never begin. Time itself is, for us, the mortal rupture which situates us in between the *from-which* and the *toward-which* of wonder; to be caught in the throe of that in-between means to be always already dying. (151)

There was no original primal time. Such a time could only have existed before time, before the rupture that constitutes temporality itself. If we have always dreamed of such a timeless time, it is because it would release us from our dying throe and supposedly restore us to the plenitude we have never had. All golden ages are images by means of which we try to re-present the original presence as it was before any future happened to it. In that original plenitude, without time, without otherness, without *the not*, being would be what it has never been for us—unbroken oneness.

**Diagnosis of religious consciousness:** Religious consciousness is within the metaphysics of presence. It is governed by the myth of presence (the given) insofar as it tries to find some way of returning to or retrieving a pre-lapsarian metaphysical condition conceived in terms of an ineffable mystical gnosis (knowing). There is no otherness, no in-between, time is abolished in the original saving condition of permanence, original presence, unity, oneness. This would have to be a “mystical knowing” because ordinary discursive knowing in time would be impossible in this timeless undifferentiated condition. In order for being to be experienced as pure presence, it must be identical with the One as it is prior to all differentiation. For only the ONE that is prior to differentiation excludes that otherness which is disruptive of presence. This is the dream from which religious longing itself seems to be born: we would like there to have been no difference, no otherness introduced into the oneness of simple presence. We would like there to never have been anything but the pure presence which we think existed once, before the rupture of temporality happened. Where do we locate the One? Always in the past, always already behind us, always as the *from-which* we have fallen. Religious consciousness is the attempt to abolish: otherness, abolishment of time and the in-between of temporality, and establish a “time before time” an original presence, unity, and oneness.

*Spiritualities of retrieval* try to carve out a path that will lead one back to that original oneness...it is an ascetic withdrawal from the throe of temporality and whatever might cause one to be caught up in this throe. That means detachment from everything that wonder draws us toward and everything that might serve as wonder’s starting point. Such a transcendence of temporality is construed as death...a severing of one’s very self from its being-in-the-world. It proposes to **release us from the very condition of**

**vulnerability, which makes an experience of death possible.** But far from constituting a death experience, in such an experience, we deaden ourselves in order to not suffer the dying which living in the throe of wonder requires us to undergo. Such a spirituality of withdrawal attempts to go back to the *from-which* of the original One and makes it a *toward-which*. Thus a “toward-which” is inescapable under any condition for a human being. Rather, it is a choice to escape from the throe of wonder instead of entering and suffering it. (152-153)

#### THE TOWARD-WHICH OF TEMPORALITY (153)

Being-toward-death is an *intentional act* which presupposes a breach or rupture of the present by the future that makes it possible for us to be beings in between the *from* and the *toward*. We are not projected toward the rupture, we live *in* it. But we do not ordinarily realize that we are always already in the throe of death, and must come *to* this realization *from* our avoidance of it. We try to turn our back on *the turn* which is **constitutive of our being**. Avoidance always takes the form of holding onto that from which we are being wrenched so as to prevent the wrenching experience of loss. We try to head back toward that which we can never return. **Dying is that primal turn, is temporality itself.**

Instead of the metaphysics of presence that views the turn or throe of temporality from the perspective of the from- which (which never was), we can start viewing the turn from the perspective of the turn itself, the negating of presence itself and give oneself fully to it. That turn is fully present to us at any moment, but the dream of plenitude, of the given, is never present to us because it *does not and never did exist*. It is nothing but a projection of the **all out attempt to avoid vulnerability, that is our very core, what makes us the beings we are**. Being is found in and through that dying which is constitutive of the turn of temporality. To make the turn, instead of fleeing it, to die, means precisely to start understanding the *toward-which* of the turn as being.

**What is the toward-which of temporality, what is being?** It is NOT something in the “future” waiting for us to reach it. That would be to view it as another now that will become real when it becomes present to us. That treats it as the same as the present, except that it is yet to come, thus fails to take seriously its radical otherness, heterogeneity. It also treats it as something not in the present. But the present is always already ruptured by otherness of the future that is the turn of temporality that is always now. What is this toward-which such that it creates a radical and irrevocable disruption? It must be radically other than presence, yet be being itself. It cannot be made present and always transcends us. There is no hope of any reconciling sameness of what ruptures the present with the present. Temporality is not self-constituting. It depends on and is made possible by a toward-which that is imminent in temporality as a transcendent disruption of it. So this radical other cannot be nothingness, as Heidegger argued, because nothingness is introjected into presence by this something else that is radically other. And it cannot be a future “now” which has not yet arrived because if it were, it would only add to the present instead of irreparably breaching it. The toward which of temporality must then be being, but being so wholly other than presence that it subjects presence to a NOT from which it never recovers. It must be radically other than temporality, understood as the crux in which we live. We might call it the “non temporal” but this would not recognize it as being. We can call it eternity, if eternity is understood as what contravenes the now and overturns its primacy. Where can it be found? We can only say **within time**; but it is found within time as *the toward-which* that turns time inside out and thus constitutes it as an *irreparable rupture*.

**Eternity** in this sense, must exist because without it time itself, as the rupturing of the present by the radically other would not be possible. Thus eternity does not lie behind us, as a pure presence we have lost, nor does it await us as a distant future to be reached only when time ceases; rather eternity is the radical future whose heterogeneity pries time open and makes what would otherwise have been a closed womb and open wound. The fact that time and eternity are radically other than each other does not at all mean that each is closed in upon itself and shut off from the other, as our ordinary conception of their irreconcilable difference presupposes. Indeed, if eternity, as time’s radical other, were wholly external to it,

if eternity transcended time in such a way that time had not relationship to it, time itself would be the same undisturbed, motionless now, the same unbroken, placid presence, which we imagine eternity to be. *Without a toward-which, time could not turn. **Eternity is the crisis which happens TO time IN time, as radical rupture which is constitutive of it...*** The transcendent is not separate and detached from what it transcends but, rather, is *imminent within it as the disruption of it.*

**Eternity** is always already happening to us—but it always happens as the irreparable disruption of the present by an unpresenceable future, never as an “eternal present.” The “eternal present” is precisely our dream of time closed completely in upon itself and wholly insulated from any disrupting other. If it were, its very temporality would be shut down. There would be no other whose upsetting intervention into the present could make the throe of temporality possible.

How can we conceive eternity if not as unaltered presence? Cannot do this because as the toward-which of the turn constitutive of our being, **eternity is never accessible to us except as a rupturing of what we have already understood.** So it cannot be understood except as the condition of possibility for temporality, which itself is the experience of constant rupture turning us from the given toward this radically unknown other. If being is the toward-which of wonder, then the real eternity, far from being a changeless present, is precisely **that which introduces crisis into time** and prevent us from realizing our dream of imperturbable homeostasis. Rather than an eternal present that would save us from our vulnerability, eternity is precisely the mortally dangerous other we try to escape by returning to the impossibility such pure presence. **Eternity is being that we cannot know except as the devastating radical other of and rupture to presence. We can know it only as that totally devastating danger. Whatever it is, it is NOT the One. The disruption it causes is constitutive of radical difference. It is precisely the dream of oneness which is terminated when eternity intervenes into presence and thus creates temporality. This Other is the death of the One.** (159)

Comments: Time is the rupture of the present, an awareness of a not yet which is NOT present, yet is present as a radical other, presence of an unknown not yet. But future is not only a rupture in the present, an expectation, it is also a hope for greater fulfillment, a yearning for wholeness, for truth. And see notes p 163

A radically different asceticism than the spirituality of detachment and withdrawal asks us instead of severing our bond with time, to sever the avoidances we employ to escape from that bond. It inspires us **not to reject our vulnerabilities, but to embrace them openheartedly.**

P 160-161: whole page, esp: “Surrendering to time, while it may seem like losing eternity, is in fact our only access to it. Because the eternal other is that which sets the throe of dying in motion, we reach it only in and through our deaths. The God who would protect us from that abyss, whose timeless present would offer us a refuge from its nothingness, is precisely that God who does not exist. The death of that kind of God is the return, the rebirth, of the Eternal in its genuine otherness...”

Only when we follow horror all the way into the abyss of anguish that the eternity which is always the toward-which of time becomes open to us. A spirituality grounded in this ontology could there lead us up to the eternal other only by helping us find our way down into time--- all the way down to the moral anguish at the bottom of it.

### **TIME'S OTHER**

The inescapable throe of temporality makes eternity accessible to us. ( P 162 similar to Kingsley) The deepest of metaphysical ironies is that for us whose very being is constituted by the throe of temporality, to be fully ourselves and thus fully alive, we must be fully engaged in dying. ... would be death precisely because it would make dying impossible. By making us die, eternity brings time to life...time is the wound by which eternity afflicts us. We experience eternity not by healing this wound but by keeping it open and suffering it.

## REVIEW OF SOME PREVIOUS CHAPTER MATERIAL IN PREPARATION FOR CHAPTER 8:

*Wonder* summary: p 69 Just as wonder beckons us into the world constituted by meaning, dread leads us, if we do not repress it, beyond our horizon of meaning to an experience of nothingness that makes possible a revolutionary change in our sense of being itself...

*Horror* is our immediate and existential awareness in experience of our radical contingency: That I could not-be. But it is usually an intimation and not an understanding of this radical contingency. It is the liability of our being to nothingness that proves we are nothingness in and of ourselves. If we are nothing in and of ourselves, yet we do exist, then we are derivative of an Other that does not "cause" us to be but in its rupture of our sense of presence calls into awareness of our nothingness and its Absolute Otherness.

Temporality is itself this rupture of the same, is the experience of contingency, that opens us to otherness of radical difference from the homogeneity of our constructed abstract worlds of the ordinary and the theories that explain this. The other is the source of our vulnerability and our capacity for the creation of meaning that we mistakenly take as what there is instead of a reflection of our complete contingency.

When the *primacy of the self is called into question* by a rupture to its world, the awareness that the presumption of the given as being and that reality is presence begins to erode. We flee from genuine enquiry and openness to our fallibility and seek comfort and solace in the myth of the given and the metaphysics of presence.

P70: *correspondence theory of truth* cannot survive after the copy theory of knowledge has been rejected. Correspondence theory: conformity of thought with the reality of the thing itself implies that the thing itself can serve as our criterion of truth because it is right here in front of us, the cold hard givenness of the directly experienced, it is being itself. Without such an anchor, it seems that anything goes, any view is as good as any other. The presupposition here is that the further away we get from what is present to us, the greater the danger of our losing our grip on being. But this cannot possibly be true if it is being itself that is beckoning us. If being is the destination, not the starting point of all inquiry (we are not always already in possession of truth)...

P 26-27: *nothingness and the abyss of fallibility*: We have no access to being outside the throe of inquiry. Must depend on my judgment alone. Starting point of wisdom. Requires giving up any hope of and arche, any foundation. To realize this may seem like exposing oneself to nothingness itself. It is only through suffering such exposure to the throe of questioning that one can be caught up in the throe of being itself and follow it where ever it may lead instead of the usual goal of seeking a magical exit from it that saves us from our fallibility. To find being one must remain in the process of inquiry instead of falling victim to the illusion of the myth of the given and the arrogance of finitude that presumes it can possess truth. Any attempt to escape our fallibility closes us off to being, instead of opening us up to it. Truth is something we can pursue, otherwise inquiry makes no sense, but truth is not something under our control that we can possess any more than we can possess being. Humility must be the starting point of any genuine pursuit of wisdom We start with *the given* but realize through wonder and the throe of inquiry that it is not being given to us in its immediacy, otherwise there could be no such rupture as wonder or horror, the eruptions of new worlding or the intimation of the loss of a meaningful world.

We have nothing but the questions about the given in which inquiry originates, the multiplicity of possible answers generated by thinking about it, the eros that makes us want to find the truth. We do not *judge* an answer to be right because it conforms to a reality which is accessible to us BEFORE our inquiry begins; we *JUDGE* it to be right only because it fulfills that intelligent desire for insight set in motion by inquiry itself. It is the demand set up by the questioning itself, as intelligently raised by the questioner, which constitutes the *CRITERION* against which all possible answers must be checked, if we are to judge which of them gives us access to being. The word "judgment" does not refer only to the proposition which is affirmed after we have completed the process of weighing as judiciously as possible a number of different theories against the requirement of the question they purport to answer. It refers primarily to the judicial process itself during which we try to appreciate the particular merits of a theory, the scope of its explanatory

power, the reasons which give it is plausibility, in addition to critiquing it for possible shortcoming, perhaps for its failure to take into account all the aspects of what is to be explained or for its failure to do so in a way commensurate with the profundity of the issue at stake. Throughout the process there is no authority to which one can defer, and no prior knowledge against which one can check one's assessment. The act of making a judgment is a firsthand exploration of wholly unknown territory to which we cannot gain access in any other way. We can enter it only if we give up the hope of checking each step we take against a map we already have.

**Good judgment** is not proven by adherence to a particular set of propositions or methodology. These themselves are invented through careful skilled thinking to facilitate and sustain inquiry. They are not truths already possessed. Even in science that is so governed by method, no such position has ever been arrived at. Science or rather the processes we call the sciences plural are coherent enough and rigorous enough to sustain and promote skilled inquiry. But they are not immune to rupture and in fact the history of science reveals repeated ruptures that themselves are necessary to continuing the process of the excellent reasoning that lies at the heart of such inquiry. These ruptures or "revolutions" are the moments of the reengagement of the highest level of rationality in plunging back into the *aporia* and the unknown in which inquiry operates. The danger is that the judgments we make in the processes of "normal science" are turned into truths and the methods are seen as themselves indispensable to and revelatory of truth, and worse, those methods of the sciences are too often seen as the exclusive paths to truth, wisdom being relegated to the status of a quaint relic of the past. This is the *arrogance of finitude* at its worst as it also is in the case of dogmatic religion, dogmatic political ideology or in any thought that has arrested the throes of inquiry. It is only in the throes of inquiry that we move toward being and away from the prejudices and arrogance that ignores the very condition of inquiry and having a world at all, a meaningful point of view at all. Meaning is not merely given. It is the collective product of human vulnerability that operates at the core of any and all meaning, is the source of the possibility of any rupture that leads to inquiry out of which new meaning emerges. The histories of science, religion, or any human activity, any attempt to secure and situate ourselves and the world, to know, to move toward and possess truth, are most revealing of this process of the rupture of new meaning then its process of making a new habitable world. A habitable world is a meaning or system of meaning that we call "the world." We always tend to think that people in the past got it wrong and that we now have it right. We are aware of the possibility of getting it wrong, that we are fallible, yet lose ourselves in the myth of the given, the ordinary or its powerful explanatory accounts given in science. Such accounts are purely abstract ways of explaining phenomena, what is present to us in the immediacy or our awareness. But we almost always see "the world" through these abstractions instead of seeing the phenomena themselves. We see an object fall and claim we have witnessed "gravity." Gravity is a pure abstraction that no one has ever witnessed because it is not something that can be witnessed any more than any other theoretical way of understanding phenomena. We say God created the world and we claim that we know this from looking at the world and its order and purpose. Yet we have never witnessed even that purported order, let alone God. We interpret phenomena and organize them in our abstractions.

P 28-31 **Performative inconsistency, Socratic irony, principle of fallibility**: , subordination to truth, fallibility presupposes truth but puts it out of reach. We can only intelligently pursue it. Insight versus truth. Insight is what we can realize in our judgments when we pursue truth in the genuine throes of inquiry. Insight is not just any idea that comes to us, but is achieved only through the long process of developing great skill in careful thinking

pp. 66-69, 132-35 *Nothing and the experience of horror*: the experience of horror presupposes one is at home in the universe of meaning one has developed to make sense of one's life and it is precisely this being-at-home that horror radically disrupts. What we retreat to and try to protect is the meaning of being which our entire way of living and thinking presupposes; what we recoil from and try to prevent is... the experience of nothingness. To call into question the meaning of being on which one's life rests is to raise the ultimate issue than which none more upsetting can be conceived. It sets in motion a crisis, an experience of nothingness, because it undermines everything one thinks about everything. .. ordinarily, we are too deeply

governed by our presuppositions to be explicitly conscious of these presuppositions... yet horror is the intimation that it is our world made possible by these presuppositions that is at stake. Lonergan and Heidegger attempt to reveal that the truth of being is not accessible to us in any other way except through this kind of intellectual crisis and conversion by means for such an experience of nothingness. For Heidegger and Lonergan, philosophy is once again what it was in the beginning for Socrates: an undermining of our ordinary presuppositions which is so radical that it is likened to dying. Or, rather, it would be more accurate to say that this *turn* is so radical that, in the end, dying is likened to it... the turn from the ordinary view of being is not something that happens once for all. To think always means to be caught up in the throes of this turn, to undergo a revolutionary change in one's sense of being itself. To be subject to this is so dreadful that we realize we are caught in the throes of nothingness itself. But it is only by suffering to that nothingness, and the loss of our ordinary way of understanding everything, that *being itself becomes accessible to us*. (and in this, we become aware of the prejudice of the *myth of the given* and the *metaphysics of presence*)

*Horror vs Extreme fear or terror:* Horror is an experience possible only to a being who has a meaningful world. Such an experience is an intimation of one's basic vulnerability and susceptibility to nothingness, utter contingency. Extreme fear or terror is a suspension of meaning where the immediacy of survival instinct takes over. Horror is not possible for animals if they do not have meaning as we do. Horror is the intensification of an extreme awareness of one's meaning or world in the rupture and shock of an intimation of its possible nothingness. One can unconsciously protect oneself from such experiences, can minimize them by letting nothing matter deeply, let nothing become a radiating center as a beloved, as a child to a parent, as a deeply held religious or scientific belief, for example, Einstein's deep discomfort expressed in his claim: "God does not play dice."

(Note: Chapter 8 notes have not been proofed or edited)

**Chapter 8: In the Throe of the Absolute Other** (From the phenomenological recognition of temporality and nothingness to the Absolute Other)

### Nothingness

How does the throe of inquiry that wonder and horror set in motion lead to the Absolute Other for Miller? Why do wonder and horror not take us all the way like awe to the realization of our nothingness then the Absolute Other? What else is needed in affirming the Absolute Other than the experience of awe and nothingness? What role do reason and judgment play from here and how do the experiences of wonder, horror, anguish and awe provide the bases for premises that lead to the conclusion that the Absolute Other (though we can say nothing about it) is a necessary condition for our contingent being, our existence?

In chapter 7, temporality was shown to be the constant rupture of the sense of presence, the constant turn from a "from-which" to a "toward which" that we call past and future. Awareness can only take place as such a rupture, constant difference imposing itself as we constantly try to make it the same, fit it in to the ordinary, into commonsense, into our theories, into our abstract notions of time and space. But the so-called past and future are only ways of talking about immediacy; they are an attempt to articulate something about presence, that it is revealed as an awareness of difference, heterogeneity, objectivity. That we can have abstract concepts of past, present, and future, and theories about time, history, cause and effect, etc., has no bearing whatever on the *experience* that leads to the question of time to begin with. Experience has nothing to do with such abstractions, rather such abstractions are ways of attempting to make the felt sense of the turn of temporality intelligible, manageable, and controllable. A true experience of difference has no identity except as unknown. The basic feature of temporality, of being distended in time, is that it is a felt sense of vulnerability possible only in an already meaningful world, a meaning in which we attempt to bring the rupture of temporality under the control of the same by imposing meaning on otherness making it the

same, even if a “new” but understandable feature of and in our world. But that basic feature of rupture or turning which is temporality, opens us to the possibility of nothingness or radical contingency, that our world or meaning could be completely undone, completely an illusion of permanence and security in the utter impermanence of temporality. That in turn, implies a radical otherness to temporality that makes such turning possible, utter not-time or eternity. Temporality without such rupture would be utterly homogenous and would have no otherness by which to produce the possibility of distinction necessary to a subject/object awareness and thus to any possibility of knowledge in which we can distinguish and make assertions about what is objectively true.

The radical other of temporality can only be eternity (utter non temporality) and such an Other is a necessary condition for the essential turn or rupturing that temporality is *existentially*, aside from any abstract conceptions of time. Temporality is not an abstraction, but the immediacy of conscious awareness as the experience of the constant turn from the “from-which” to the “toward-which” that we experience as fundamental to “the world.” Anything that happens can only happen in a world. “A world” makes the experience of temporality intelligible. That experience is more fundamental than any world we construct to make sense of the experience of temporality. But, as we have seen, we reify this into a metaphysics of presence and the myth of the given of a reality that we can count on being there independently of our meaning so that the objectivity of the world is guaranteed so we do not have to face our basic condition of contingency and vulnerability to nothingness. Our felt sense of vulnerability is itself the manifestation of

Only a being divided from itself, who denies its immediate manifest basic experienced condition as vulnerability destined for nothingness, who instead craves permanence, security, certainty, power and control invents such schemes. Such schemes have instrumental value, they help us get on in the world, but

is not merely a feature of our experience of temporality but

Temporality is the constant opening in which “the same”, homogeneity, or meaning, can be ruptured by otherness, the condition of possibility of the experience of wonder and horror in which an already meaningful world can be ruptured. Otherness or difference does not erupt in a world, but happens to a world. A world is a kind of homogeneity, or sameness and true otherness must come from “outside” be utterly unlike this same. In the most profound way, eternity is this ultimate other of temporality that sets in motion the possibility of any rupture as in wonder and horror. Such is the possibility of being caught in the throe of inquiry when the same becomes most deeply and most rationally questionable (Note that it is NOT a kind of irrationality, but only seems to be such to a consciousness that craves the security of sameness, answers, systems, theories, etc., .

When this deconstruction of a world is taken far enough, the sense of one’s radical contingency or nothingness is no longer an intimation, it is the experience of complete destitution with only the barest sense in which anguish itself can be a possible experience. That in turn sets the condition for awe. Awe is an experience in which one’s world and one’s sense of self has been obliterated and it is only in such a condition that through such nothingness and emptying out of meaning while remaining in the most minimal sense a being to whom things matters, that the sacred is encountered. Most people run from such experiences and are fully engaged in the ongoing task of maintaining an impregnable meaning that would make the self impossible to be nothing.

But since and impregnable world and undeconstructible self are both fictions (this was demonstrated in Chapters 1-7) The Other is a necessary condition for temporality was shown in Chapter 7. These provide the basis for concluding in Chapter 7-8 that we can reasonably posit an Absolute Other as the rupture of time that is the experience of temporality. Chapters 1-7 provide the basis for Miller’s attempt in Chapter 8 to make a judgment about the radical Other or Absolute Other.

Ultimate Other of the subjective acknowledgment of vulnerability and need to be let be, to be free, to be oneself (freedom is God's greatest **gift**, whether you believe in God or not!).

But that objectivity of ultimate otherness is not in space and time as just another object. You cannot get in a spaceship and fly out until you find LOVE. Love comes from "outside" but not in space. It comes subjectively in time in LOVE, not loving and not being loved by another subject, though this may be the way we first come to know it. The possibility of LOVE and its transformative power is a mystery. It comes by the salvation from vulnerability that ultimately does not reside in the body but in meaning and attitude toward vulnerability that is no longer localized in mere physical or emotional pain and can no longer be a **loss**.

Freedom from loss and fear of loss- No desire to possess, to hold on to control. Just the overflowing gift-giving squandering of love w/o expectation, love overflowing, no longer and economy of quid pro quo, but over abundance.

**Arguments from p. 191** (That we are nothing has already been established repeatedly in the text)

If we are nothing, yet exist, then we are derivative beings

We are nothing

We are derivative (We derive our being from something Other)

If we are Derivative, then we are not being

We are derivative

We are not being

Being is not nothing

Since we are nothing

We are not being

If we are not being, then some Other is being

We are not being

The Other is being

If beings that are nothing exist, then they exist only by some Other

We do exist

We have being only from the Other

For the Other to be the source of our being, that Other must be

We are not the source of our being, some Other is.

The Other must be

If there were not the Other, there would be no being

There is being

There is the Other

**If we exist, it is only as the derivatives of a reality radically other than us, being itself.**

AWE: p 188

AWE AS THE TOWARD WHICH OF WONDER AND HORROR

Awe in the face of the sublime can become astonishment that being is the wholly other; our awareness of our poverty can become our confession, that in and of ourselves, we are nothing.

If we could not experience wonder and horror that lead through anguish to awe, we would not be able to be aware of the sublime and it would not be able to overwhelm us. If we could understand it, it would not be superior to us. Awe is possible only because we can be aware of what is beyond us AS beyond us. Whereas wonder can lead us to think that we have awakened to the absolute other itself that becomes the center of our world, as being itself where we worship what we love as ultimately sacred---until we begin to realize that it is liable to nothingness (reveals its contingency and vulnerability). The horror of that recognition drains awe out of our wonder because it makes us realize that what we love is liable to nothingness and that nothingness is more ultimate and more devastating than what we love. \this realization turns us away from being entirely by making us face the nothingness to which all beings are liable. Awe differs from horror in that even when horror exposes us to nothingness, it allows us to keep on thinking of ourselves as beings who are superior to it (we still inhabit a world). Awe, in contrast, instead of allowing us to look down at nothingness from a superior, even if disturbed position , put us in a radically inferior position and requires us to turn toward what is superior to us. But this implies that we cannot experience awe in its purest form, until we are in that destitute condition to which horror can lead. We cannot experience awe fully until we are devastated by the loss of the being which wonder led us to love as being itself. For only in that loss do we experience nothing intrinsic to beings and thus their absolute difference from being itself. The anguish of losing everything is itself the awful breakthrough to being itself.

Awe is thus more profound than either wonder or horror. It radically differentiates being from beings and it does so by requiring of us a confession of our nothingness which even the experience of horror does not ask of us. Wonder inspires us, horror devastates us: but only awe can radically humble us. And while humility is the attitude toward oneself which is developed from a confession of one's nothingness, worship is the attitude toward the Other which develops from the affirmation of its transcendent Otherness. Humility and worship are conceived together in the crux of the conversion that turns on anguish and awe. This experience of awe alone cannot sustain humility and worship. For neither can mature until a conclusion is reached and a position taken on the question of whether the reality of the absolute Other should be affirmed. The experience of awe initiates and provokes further inquiry. Is the wholly Other real? Certainly none of what awe opens up to us is real if one equates the real with what is given, or with what is to be know through analogies to the given. If we try to employ the correspondence criterion of truth, we will find no evidence of what the experience of awe points to. But wonder, horror and awe are not copies of what is already available in the given.

When reason examines the experiences of anguish and awe it finds not merely emotive states but something deeply disclosive about ourselves and from this something deeply disclosive about being.

Awe, horror, and wonder cannot be merely emotive non cognitional states when all the questions we ask and all the inquiries we pursue, originate in the breakthrough to the unknown as unknown which these experiences make possible.

The intimations of awe are more revolutionary than those of wonder or horror because they don't just surprise or devastate us: they call upon us to humbly acknowledge our nothingness and to worship being itself as our radical Other. We can dismiss its intimations as we can dismiss those of wonder and horror only by repressing our own intelligence and the throe of inquiry and refusing to be questioners.

Only the experience of anguish sets in motion the deeply personal question of our status as nothingness, yet we have being, exist

which requires the affirmation of the Absolute Other which is being

Only awe can radically humble us and provides the context in which its full import can be realized.

pp. 178-83 **Nothingness versus absence**: Absence: the experience of losing an object that once was present and meaningful within one's world. Nothingness: the experience of the loss of the center of a world that is the condition of possibility of meaning and orientation. Nothingness is as different from absence as being is from presence. (180) Just as being becomes accessible to us only because wonder draws us away from the present-at-hand toward an unknown other, so nothingness becomes accessible to us only through those intimations of horror from which we would like to recoil. Nothingness is no mere absence because it is not the loss of an object that was merely present. It does not remove an object; it deconstructs a world. For that reason it is NOT experientially, and will not be understandable to, someone for whom nothing matters ultimately, someone whose life is not centered on any being—someone who has no world to lose because he treats everything, even himself, as something merely present-at-hand. **[Comment:** The ultimate theoretical way of doing this is to believe everything, including we ourselves, are nothing but homogenous materiality, for example, atoms. All there are is atoms. Atoms are real and everything else, sensation, emotion, value, purpose, goals, attachment, love, fear, decisions, judgment, etc. are unreal epiphenomena, mere accidental unreal by-products of the motion of atoms in the void. The idea of holding anyone accountable for their actions is an absurd stance from this view and would have to be jettisoned as completely non-sensical.]

If we do not take such a stance, which itself is completely absurd, and instead begin with our immediate experience that things are meaningful which allows such a theory of atoms to even arise at all, then Nothingness has an ultimate significance for us, as the possible end of a meaningful world, since meaning is more basic than any particular meaning we may adhere to, such as our theories and all the habits of meaning we take for granted that our theories are invented to explain... The very desire to explain anything belies the primacy of need and vulnerability over any account we give of things.

**Absence** is something recognizable in a meaningful world as something that was present that is no longer objectively in the world. Nothingness is not something in the world. No world can approach nothingness, certainly not as an absence in a world, which itself is not even objectively available as an object. Rather, nothingness is ONLY something that can be experienced as happening TO a world as a rupture from outside, the shattering of a world by an other not graspable IN a world except as an intimation in the experience of horror. That intimation is only the felt recognition of the POSSIBILITY of the nothingness of a world, not nothingness itself. Even that intimation comes from a rupture of the same, of the ordinary sense of being, by something completely other. Nothingness is the event of the end of a world as a whole. It is the discontinuation of the meaningful context a world provides for the recognition of meaningful events at all. The complete end of a world is the impossibility of going on at all, thus nothingness cannot be experienced in a world. It is the end of a self that operates at the undeconstructible center of a world. Yet, something must be in order for nothingness to be presupposed and that something is vulnerability itself which is present in any and everything that is meaningful, but can continue to the point of an unworlding in which there is almost nothing left of the self and its world, only the barest remnant in which an experience of anguish that turns to awe can take place, which in turn is the possibility of new worlding. Such new worlding, however, may constitute a transformation of one's relation to meaning and to being, the source that makes meaning possible. This might be variously described as the unity of Nirvana/Samsara or dwelling in Christ, being **in** the world, but not **of** the world of mere presence, etc.. in which vulnerability now issues in overflowing self-overcoming love, rather than ego-driven love lack and motivations are fundamentally different. One is still a fundamentally temporal vulnerable being, but this is undergone in a radically different way. One dwells in the nothingness one is that opens one to being, the absolute mystery, rather than fleeing it at all costs that leads to so much damage to oneself and others.

pp. 136-41 Horror discloses the possibility of nothingness but nothing becomes fully one's own only as one become completely one with it. The process of being devastated leaves nothing of one's world intact; it costs, in Eliot's words, "not less than everything." How are we to understand such an experience

philosophically, coming to it, as we do, from that Heideggerian vanishing point between our horizon of meaning and the abyss which the experience of anguish takes away... The shift which occurs when one moves from understanding oneself as being **toward**-nothingness to understanding oneself AS nothingness. Presence itself is completely derivative. It gets its importance, its character as presence, from the I that is experienced as the absolute reference point of the universe, the arche of all meaning falsely experienced and presumed as the undeconstructible center in reference to any radiating center has its power and significance. What is this capacity for something to mean the world to us where we are most alive? What does it open us to if we get to the point that we are no longer absorbed in the object of our love after its loss and confrontation with our nothingness? Rather than just a meaningful radiating center that means everything, you need to address the even deeper and more central issue of the illusion of an undeconstructible self that makes such a radiating center possible. What happens when that self that mistakenly is taken as being itself gets deconstructed by the experience of anguish? The will to be an undeconstructible self underlies and sustains the entire metaphysics of presence which is no longer sustainable once the self has this confrontation with its own illusions through the experience of horror and anguish: the loss of the privileged position of the self opens one to the awareness of one's nothingness that makes one realize being is not at all the same as oneself and all the beliefs and theories one subscribes to in sustaining one's world and one's illusion of the self as the arche.

I realize I have never had even my own being firmly in hand, let alone being itself. I did not know what I am fundamentally but rather thought all my beliefs and the theories I subscribe to captured being and my being as something just given, rather than the radically unknowable other that ruptures and makes possible the temporality of my thought in which I have a meaningful world with all its beliefs and theories that in principle makes everything knowable and controllable. The idea of my nothingness and the experience of destitution is not open to me in my world as long as it does not get deconstructed either through experience of loss or through the throes of inquiry. *The embrace of the metaphysics of presence and myth of the given is the fundamental project of the "I" itself: its desire to be perfectly undeconstructible* (remember Parmenides process of self-overcoming which then is the only possible source of genuine law and justice that comes from this OTHER, rather than the ego driven desire and delusion of the undeconstructible self (one thinks of Stalin and Hitler as high examples of the latter, along with most politicians to a lesser degree). The law givers, to be genuine law givers, had to be capable of a high degree of self-overcoming as a prerequisite to wisdom about human possibility, rather than actual ego driven states that call for immediate narrow judgment.

**Anguish** is the heartfelt acceptance of our ontological condition. In opening to it, we finally embrace our nothingness, instead of evading it. Horror and anguish shatter the dream of an undeconstructible self that fancies itself as being or as just one more object in the being of what is present, rather than the vulnerable source of ordinary finite meaning susceptible to nothingness, and thus not being at all. It opens one for the first time to an encounter with being as the radically unknown other that necessarily precedes and gives rise to the finite temporal meaningfulness susceptible to nothingness that we are. Being thought of in the myth of the given and the metaphysics of presence is an impossibility, logically impossible, and experientially nowhere to be found.

183-86, no being that wonder ever leads us to discover, no world we enter, however radiant its center, will be exempt from the liability to nothingness of which horror gives us an intimation.. **Nothingness** in this sense is deeper than being, horror deeper than wonder, the loss of life deeper than the celebration of it. The end of all worlds is more ultimate than the genesis of any of them. Whatever might begin again from nothingness would still be liable to it and unable to contain it. We would like to think that, in the face of nothingness, that life goes on, but this would be true only if being were presence and nothingness a mere absence. Life can go on as before only for those who lost what did not mean the world to them and thus is a mere absence.

183-86 Is nothingness itself the final ultimate most radical other?

Are our feelings merely subjective in responding to and recoiling from nothingness? Can our feelings be more or less appropriate? Any judgment expressed in a feeling that says “I ought not be liable to nothingness” depends on whether I can justify the implicit claim that I deserve a metaphysical exemption from the possibility of nothingness. But such a claim is indefensible. I cannot recoil from something in surprised horror that is not. Even if I am mistaken about it, the recoil itself presupposes the very thing I deny, that I am susceptible to nothing and feel that it ought not be. Any recoil in horror is an implicit recognition of my nothingness and implicit judgment that it should not be so. Otherwise, I would not have any such horrified surprise and unexpected rupture. What makes such a rupture and surprise possible is that I take being to be presence and nothingness to be merely absence. For I am the one whose absence I can never experience; my presence is the precondition for the possibility of anything being present, and is the foundation without which nothing could exist as presence, as objectively available to me. That is why, in the metaphysics of presence, the existence of the I cannot be doubted without the doubt being undermined by the very performance of the doubting. The I is the be-all end-all reference point more fundamental than anything it can experience or think, as we see in Descartes. Any recoil from the realization that I am liable to nothing is possible because this liability radically calls into question the indubitable givenness of the I itself. (phil 1)

**214n, 215n:** the self’s identity with nothingness: *radical contingency*. This is the premise Miller proceeds from to move toward the Absolute Other. This Absolute Other cannot be experienced but only inferred from its necessity to the *experience of temporality*. ***If we did not experience the rupture of temporality, we would not exist or think at all, would not be, and so the question of this rupture and the implication of eternity can ONLY occur in time for a temporal being.***