

Being is that which we are continuously seeking, the whither to move towards from the stance of our present knowledge, our beginning. Being is a state of living outside of the false reality we have created to protect ourselves from the unknown; one could say that being is moving towards the unknown through the process of inquiry. By allowing ourselves to submit to the throes of inquiry, we allow ourselves to experience the condition of being. However, being is neither steadfast nor stagnant, as it is often out of reach of what we come to know, as what we discover through the process of inquiry becomes part of our knowledge; part of our reality.

By pushing ourselves beyond our experience and the comfort of familiarity, we re-enter the throes of inquiry and once again fall into a state of being. As Jerome Miller eloquently states it:

"[Being]... is that which can never be either presented or erased, since it can never be either immediately known or wholly avoided. Being is that which becomes accessible to us only in and through the throes of inquiry. Insofar as we are in that throes, we are held fast by the throes of being itself."

Comment [DP1]: Being cannot be a state of living. That is our existence. Being is the toward which that our sense of rupture can move us toward. Temporality itself is the condition of ongoing rupture, the in between of the from which and the toward which that can give rise to inquiry, but almost always leads instead to an attempt to arrest temporality and gain security and control to protect us from our vulnerability, for example, through knowledge instead of wisdom.

Comment [DP2]: Just plug in the idea in this sentence that to be caught in the throes of being is to realize through wonder, horror, and an awareness of the nature of temporality (as opposed to abstract conceptions of time as past, present, and future) that presence (including what we call living) is NOT being. You have said the opposite, but I can see where you were trying to go with this. Must be very careful, use words very carefully. Ordinarily we might say that being is a state of living, that being is the objective world we come to know through direct experience with it, etc.. This is the myth of the given that we are addicted to and horrified to let go of.

Comment [DP3]: Clarify. This could be right but could be wrong. Not sure what you mean by it. Need to carefully introduce the distinctions Miller uses to work his way to his powerful insights so you can reveal them in this paper.

Comment [DP4]: Again, this is very garbled. Being is not merely often out of the reach of the known. It is the radical unknown itself. To say you ever can reduce it to knowledge is to be talking about the given and not being. You need to set up the movement of Miller's thought to this insight that you quote next.

Comment [DP5]: This seem to say the opposite of what Miller is getting to. By looking more deeply INTO our experience we can perhaps see the difference between what is always present to us in our lived experience as opposed to the almost complete overlay of the conceptualized ordinary world and the theories we use to explain it to ourselves as if we are getting at being. What we are getting at is what we have reduced being to and that is what is present to us through our habits and of thought and meaning. Phenomenology is just the opposite of going or pushing "beyond our experience." The comfort of the familiar is in not looking carefully at experience and instead mistaking our meanings motivated by the desire for security for what is most revealed in any experience, but especially experience of wonder, or horror, or temporality itself in which these ruptures occur and with which temporality shares its basic features of the rupture of radical otherness, what is NOT in the world of meaning, not knowable, not controllable, not safe for our meaning. This is not a matter of safety IN our world but safety OF or FOR our world. This is an attempt at escaping from the liability to nothingness of our worlds, being undone altogether. Pursuing our truths for the sake of this security cuts us off from what phenomenology can reveal prior to any conceptual overlay. An example is the abstractions of past present and future instead of the experience of temporality or the abstractions that any theory imposes in the attempt to explain. Focus on the core issues of vulnerability and fallibility to move toward a grasp of being as the "toward which" of rupture. Try to understand what a rupture is and what it tells us about ourselves.

Comment [DP6]: Go ahead and show what Miller is saying here. You have not done it yet.

The sacred can be encountered once we leave behind all of our defenses; once we abandon our truths and allow ourselves to experience the throes of inquiry. When we are able to let go of what we think we know and embrace the vulnerability we work so diligently to protect, we can expose our core to a childlike wonder of the unknown; we can create a light through the darkness before us instead of running from it.

Comment [DP7]: This works.

Wonder is liberating yourself to a true state of being. It is through wonder that we are able to separate ourselves from our self-inflicted limitations; safety nets that we employ to protect our core from feeling truly alive. As Miller states, “We become wise by letting go of our secure foundations and abandoning ourselves to the abyss opened up by our questions.”ⁱⁱ Wonder is the door to the other, the unknown, the genuine self. Wonder is the key that unlocks the safe holding the transformative emotions that the sacred provides. Wonder is the moment when what is behind us collides with what is before us, seizing us to pause in acknowledgement of the new knowledge we face, and the whence we can never revert to. It creates a new world and steps into the other, creating a new other which must then entice us to further inquiry and wonder. The sacred is that which is attained through this throes of wonder. It is an innate sensation that can only be felt when we release all and allow ourselves to lose control and open up to nothingness.

Comment [DP8]: Wonder is not something we do, not liberating ourselves. It is a complete surprise, an unexpected rupture of the unknown into the usual sameness of the ordinary such that the ordinary is no longer possible. A new meaning, a new world has emerged. Yes it can be a “liberation” from a previous world, but the way you put it here is misleading. The point is to look carefully as such experience so it tells us something far more basic about us than our ordinary world can. A world born in wonder can become ordinary or can be lost in some other way eliciting an experience of horror and intimation still IN one’s world of the possibility of the nothingness or loss of one’s world. You suffer from an incautious use of language OR you really do not understand some of this, I can’t tell which.

Comment [DP9]: Explain these metaphors

Comment [DP10]: Better to say the new world in which knowing is made possible. Distinguish knowledge that can arise in a new world that originated in wonder from a recognition of the unknown as unknown that occurs in wonder or horror. Knowledge always arises IN a world, wonder and horror happen TO a world. Wonder and horror are NOT knowledge. They are experiences that happen to a world in which we have knowledge. If they go far enough and take us in the throes of inquiry, that is not a process that leads to knowledge but can involve judgment. We cannot say we know God or being, as Miller indicates, but Miller believes we can judge God or being to be and to be the radical unknowable unknown that ruptures and makes possible a world (not by causing it, but making possible meaning and the rupture to meaning that happens in temporality. The Absolute Other is the radical other of time in time according to Miller, the eternal or not-temporal in time.

Comment [DP11]: explain

This elusive state of nothingness is a difficult state to reach as we are in our everyday sameness. Nothingness cannot be realized unless we permit ourselves to relinquish control. We have built up defenses and prejudices to create a managed reality we feel secure in; a reality that protects us from feeling anything that is too agonizing to endure. It is much more appealing for us to slap a bandaid on a wound, to soothe ourselves into unconsciousness, than to face the anguish or work through the suffering. To the majority of people, the state of nothingness is only attained when their world is ruptured, when something at their core is thrown into such upheaval that all else ceases to matter; the cords of everyday anxieties dissolve as their unimportance is exposed. This often happens in the death of oneself or a

loved one. The noise of daily life quiets as one focuses inward, on that which they now realize is their world. This opens one up to nothingness. As Socrates is known to have said, "Death is the mother of wisdom." It is through this nothingness, through the rupture that opens our heart, that we can experience the peace and grace of true existence. These cannot truly be felt or found under the pile of preconditions we impose upon ourselves in order to carry out our concept of ordinary, our façade of reality. When our world, our hearts, are ruptured by something that shatters our idea of reality, that exposes the lies we have lived as false truths and compels us to examine the real 'is' of our genuine self, only then can nothingness be attained. When we release ourselves in such a way that there is nothing, simply nothing, we can freely understand and find peace with ourselves. Again, as Miller states:

Comment [DP12]: Distinguish the experiences of horror and anguish in relation to nothingness.

"This nothingness we have so dreaded to face or have seen is our only self. Because of our avoiding it, we have never been at home, have never known, even with all our comforts, the kind of serenity that comes only by being completely at peace with oneself."ⁱⁱⁱ

This newfound peace enables oneself to encounter the sacred and finally grasp the other that we strive to embrace but often fill with substitutes that fail us. We must remain in this peace; stay open and exposed in order to feel profound joy, horror, awe, and wonder. It is within this state of being that one can sense an undeserving love, for when one realizes that one is nothing, only then can one be penetrated by a love that is undeserved. It is here that a person who is homo religiosus can be present with the God they believe in and fully understand an unmerited love. Here is where one is in the presence of the sacred.

Comment [DP13]: Right, because the self or ego is decentered or obliterated, reduced to nothing at least momentarily, and never recovers its previous status as center. Just the opposite of what many religious practitioners engage in which is an attempt to secure and save the self and its beliefs.

Though the concept of achieving nothingness appears to be the easy choice, the palpable goal, it is exactly the condition we strive to avoid. Our nothingness obliges us to recognize that our version of reality is unreal, that we are essentially living a lie. It is easier to go through our chosen motions than to experience the true power that is buried within. The potential of our power frightens us. The unknown frightens us. Suffering is not something we find appealing,

yet we must work our way through suffering to achieve nothingness. This is not the type of fix we embrace. We prefer to cushion our wounds and bury ourselves under layers of protection. The exposure of one's core is disconcerting, as is the feeling of vulnerability. Working against these emotions produces a further divide from the chasm of nothingness. We are too blinded by our falsehoods to realize that nothingness is, in fact, our self. We are literally afraid of our self. "It takes only one short step to fall from (the edge) into the abyss itself, but taking it costs not less than everything."^{iv} Letting go of everything to accomplish that which is nothing is a daunting threat to life as we know it, and most of us are simply content with life as we know it.

Comment [DP14]: A decentering of the ego and ALL its beliefs. To think one can "go" there with any beliefs whatever, is to actually be going toward the opposite pole of securing the self. The experience is prior. What judgments one makes of this come after and will simply fall short of the unknown except to recognize it as the unknown sacred Other that makes possible all worlds but cannot be contained in any of them as a meaning, a truth. The Other does not cause anything but nonetheless is the source of the gift of existence, our derivative or contingent being and the ever-turning rupture of temporality in which wonder and horror erupt and to which we respond by embracing this vulnerability or the fleeing from it.

Works Cited

ⁱ In *The Throe of Wonder*. Miller, Jerome A. State University of New York Press, 1992. Pg. 24

ⁱⁱ In *The Throe of Wonder*. Miller, Jerome A. State University of New York Press, 1992. Pg. 30

ⁱⁱⁱ *The Way of Suffering*. Miller, Jerome A. Pg. 31

^{iv} *The Way of Suffering*. Miller, Jerome A. Pg. 33

Comments: the last part of the paper goes pretty well. Some problems earlier in the paper as I have pointed out. Please read the other examples online to get more insight into how to handle these most important insights. You are on the way and I can see that you have read at least some of the material.

B-

You can rewrite this to improve it for your own benefit and for a better grade and turn it in with the original by the end of the semester OR move on to focus on the next assignments, since the grade here is not a bad one.