

4. Dr. Miller recasts the traditional question of god; he seeks a much deeper meaning of the arguments for and against Gods existence which the traditional way of contemplating them does not seem to justify or bring about any relevance. Dr. Miller suggests the whole process of argumentation tends to overlook and *ignore* the deeply personal bearing which the question itself (of Gods existence) has on the life of the persons who ask it. Faith or belief in God are true matters of the heart and live felt experiences which have nothing to do with the rational traditional arguments of Gods existence. In Taliaferro's book a mere intellectual exercise of the issue is taking place; Dr. Miller suggests it ought to be matters of the heart and human experience, the issues must touch our core values. As Augustine has stated himself, "If you haven't noticed were not just intellect..." Believing in the magnificent other if you will, can not merely depend on rational, intellectual arguments; being a believer is a result of a change of heart which isn't unreasonable itself. Wonder and horror may be in fact genuine, logical and rigorous movements toward the unknown other which are prior to *all* argumentation and presupposed by all method. The traditional arguments for the existence of god tends to neglect the profound human experience of the issue; such traditional questions/arguments of God do not surrender to the throe of which provoke it. It is vital to understand that our philosophical means of reasoning and our deep felt experiences of the heart can work simultaneously in addressing the questions that arise in regards to the ultimate other. Having our critical minds of reasoning and true matters of our heart coinciding will allow the question of Gods existence to emerge into its original awefulness and prevent us of taking it for granted. Dr. Miller points to many flaws in the traditional arguments of Gods existence like those in Taliaferro's book. The traditional arguments take for granted **[the myth of the given]** and disregard the fact that reality is *not* the given, reality is not the object or thing right here now in front of us **[rather, is a deconstructible interpretation]**. Their direct accessibility, if you will, presupposes the argument. The fact remains that the traditional arguments hold a basis that being is equal to that of presence. Dr. Miller has addressed the myth of the given time and time again; instead, yielding to the throe of wonder will allow us to be lead to rethinking our ordinary understanding of being itself. The traditional arguments for Gods existence presuppose and undermine the very framework of objectivity. Dr. Miller has elaborately argued throughout his book that the nature of wonder itself requires us to deconstruct the metaphysics of presence and the ordinary understanding of objectivity; Dr. Miller believes it is a necessity that we as wonderers bring into question the equation of being with presence which the traditional arguments of God's existence seem to undermine and neglect. These traditional arguments for God tend to lead us toward the immediately given which is merely present at hand; such direction turns us *away* from the sacred not towards it. Wonder rather leads us to that which is not given, not merely presence. When we ask how the answers that satisfy our intelligence and rationality go *beyond* purely subjective satisfaction and enable us to know the universe of being will we be able to breakthrough towards that of the sacred. A move toward the sacred is a rupture of our ordinary world; this turn is a radical transformation which is an end of our mundane world as we know it. This rupture is a live felt experience of a kind of death. The traditional arguments for Gods existence in no way make a person to take this turn and have their world unravel from under them. Instead of allowing a person to make the radical transformation, the traditional arguments seek to find the foundations

**Comment [DP1]:** Why is the God of metaphysics dead according to Miller?

**Comment [DP2]:** I understand your point, but you express it a bit too strongly. As Guerriere points out, such speculative arguments may have value, but not independently from the existential condition from which they arise and not without recognizing the source of all "disinterested" inquiry as it arises from precisely what matters to us. The question of God is not merely a propositional issue. The question of the truth proper to religion is one of "aletheia" (or verticality, as Steinbock points out).

**Comment [DP3]:** Good. This is well said. At the same time, Guerriere and the New Atheists rightly warn us of how often religion goes off the track of its own proper truth and leads to great harm, isn't genuine religion in the sense of the truth proper to religion (outlined in Guerriere).

**Comment [DP4]:** Nicely said. Miller does a good job of showing how the heart and reason work mutually, inseparably at a much more profound and reasonable level. If reason is not limited and not misguided by the prejudice of the metaphysics of presence, motivated by our deepest fears and our desire for control, and is actually caught in the deeply upsetting throe of inquiry, then our reasoning can be revelatory or disclosive (aletheia), through our deepest experiences of rupture. All deep insight begins with such a rupture, not a syllogism, not speculative arguments. But that rupture is always a rupture of "the way the world is" that matters deeply to us, hence it is so prevalent that we run away from what is unsettling, or try to make it homogenous, make it fit into our world, so we do not take reason deep enough to complete self-overcoming.

**Comment [DP5]:** Need to restate this. It says the opposite of what you intend, given what your line of thought is here. Just change "presupposes the argument" to "is presupposed by the argument."

**Comment [DP6]:** There are exceptions to this, as Miller points out, such as Aquinas. But even Aquinas can be updated by the postmodern insights that Miller brings to bear. (See Miller's footnote on Aquinas on p. 214 showing how Aquinas in not under the sway of the metaphysics of presence or an objectivist ocular epistemology.)

**Comment [DP7]:** How do they do this, i.e., undermine what they presuppose?

**Comment [DP8]:** Restate this. It is clearer if you strike out the unnecessary and misleading words.

**Comment [DP9]:** You can state this more clearly.

which seem to crave to find an immunity deconstruction. A rupture of our world is brought about by our wonder and horror which we must follow and not recoil from; we must follow the path of that which wonder and horror pave. The traditional arguments seem to do the exact opposite and set up barriers in which people feel secure in but are actually cutting us off from experiencing such awe. In assuring ourselves that there exists a being which is presence itself helps us to put to rest any insecurities which as a result recoil us from questioning our most basic ontological assumptions. The traditional arguments for God prevent such a rupture to even take place and instead drive us away from such a radical turn. We must follow where our horror might lead us instead of recoiling and craving to secure ourselves from it; such path can help guide a break through towards the sacred. Dr. Miller has suggested that our wonder causes us to realize that the unknown is more real than can ever be present to us, and therefore directs us to treat that which is right here in front of us (the present) as less real than the unknown; our wonder calls presence itself into question and raises the possibility that presence is *not* to be equated with being. Wonder, unlike the traditional arguments of god direct us away from the given and toward that which is only available to us in and through its throes. Only by letting ones old world die so to speak, can the world of any other in its otherness be manifested; the traditional arguments keeps our original world intact and immune to rupture which turn us away from such an experience. To be stung by the eros of inquiry can one experience the sacred; once wonder awakens in us a passion to know that other which under the sway of wonder, we begin to think of being itself. The awakening to the sacred allows one to see it as reality and treats it radically other than and more significant than the things we *ordinarily* experience in their givenness. The sacred experience is achieved not by accepting the present at hand but to recognize that it, and *not* the present at hand is constitutive of being; the traditional arguments for Gods existence leaves our ordinary sense of being as presence undisturbed which will prevent from our insight of truly understanding reality thus moving us in the opposite direction of the sacred. This discovery will no longer allow us to equate anything within this universe with the given in its mere givenness. To move toward the sacred is to give up all orientation, all truth, and all sense of the ordinary. The absolute other derives from our acknowledgement and knowledge of nothingness which ask us to overturn our original presuppositions about ourselves as being which the traditional arguments tend to completely contradict. Many are not willing to give up their "truths" in order to truly breakthrough to the sacred. The sacred is not concerned with any "truths"; living in such a world, one does not crave truth or seek to find such. The move toward the sacred is to risk everything, give up all security and presumption to truth.

**Comment [DP10]:** Need to work on eloquence of expression as well as significance of what you are saying. Restate this last phrase so it is clear, not so cumbersome, and is grammatical.

**Comment [DP11]:** Again, there is a place for speculative arguments and they are not equally helpful or useless. Some can be complimentary to our basic experience of vulnerability and fallibility. Must take them on a case by case basis. But your general complaint about them is often appropriate.

**Comment [DP12]:** Ungrammatical

**Comment [DP13]:** Say something specifically about what this is. What do you mean that the sacred experience is constitutive of being?

**Comment [DP14]:** Grammatical problems

**Some of this is a bit redundant, says the same things a little too often, which is OK if each time you add further argument or clarification. Need to say a bit more about the sacred from Miller's standpoint.**

**You also need improvement in your use of language, especially such basic issues as proper grammar. You can improve your precision of thinking as you move forward with your philosophical development. These two, carefulness and clarity of language and clarity of thought, go together.**

**GRADE: A-**

5. Wonder and horror are anticipations of awe which is more upsetting than any other dread but yet more joyful than any other live felt experience. This experience of awe becomes manifest whenever we are dumbstruck by something sublime in its character. Awe, similar to wonder and horror beckon us and expose us to the unknown in its very character as unknown which is beyond us; in the same regard, awe, wonder and horror are possible because we are aware of what is beyond us as beyond us. Wonder can lead us to awe by awakening us to the absolute other itself and awe, like horror, awakens in us a fear of nothingness. But the intimations of awe are more revolutionary than those of wonder and horror; awe does not just merely surprise us or devastate us, it can radically humble us and help us to acknowledge our nothingness. But refusing to be questioners and repressing our own intelligence can dismiss its intimations; we must remain open to the possibility that being is our absolute other and it's up to us to judge with well reasondness for affirming the reality of such. Our anguish can set in motion such questions. Following our inquiry is being in the throe without having an agenda. The experience of wonder itself inspires us to make the journey to the other and make it our center and thus worshipping what we love as sacred. We can begin to realize that what we love is liable to nothingness which awakens in us horror that devastates us. But such horror that arises from within us when we are exposed to nothingness still allows us to keep on thinking of ourselves as beings that are superior to it; we remain in our secure elevated position. Awe, on the other hand, instead of allowing us to look upon nothingness from a superior perspective places us in an extremely inferior position; it is a radical transformation. But we must realize we cannot fully experience awe until we have been engaged in and follow where wonder and horror lead us. To realize our absolute difference from being itself one must be devastated by the loss of being which wonder had lead us and to experience giving up what means the world to us. It is in that loss that we truly experience nothingness intrinsic to beings. But if we are in all sincerity open to it, that anguish of the loss of everything is the breakthrough to being. Wonder invites us to being, but awe requires our confession to nothingness and profoundly differentiates being from being. Wonder inspires us, horror devastates us and awe humbles us and opens a feeling within us overwhelmed by a reality of the Other. All three are not enough but can *initiate* inquiry if we choose to honestly answer the question that arises within us: *is the wholly Other a reality?* If we are to check and judge the reality of our awe we must refrain from the myth of the given; no reality will manifest if we equate the real to what is merely given. Such experiences of wonder, horror and awe opens us to the possibility that the absolute Other is a reality, but our intelligence moves us to ask further questions to affirm such reality; awe opens up a potential of the Other but it is up to us to judge whether there are good reasons for affirming the reality. Craving the myth of the given would prevent us from realizing that, in and of ourselves, we are nothing, not being. Our being is itself other than us; our being must be derivative from a reality Other than us. The Other, which is in and of itself being, makes our existence a reality; if we exist, it is only as the derivatives of a reality radically other than us. We in and of ourselves are nothing. Such judgments are made by our ability to reason and to address the questions which have been motivated out of our anguish and experience of awe to which it leads. Anguish sets in motion a deeply felt need to ask such a personal question. Allowing our ordinary ways of thinking and having our basic presuppositions upset by nothingness can lead us to realize that we are nothing in and of

**Comment [DP15]:** How can this go wrong? What if what I love is contingent and susceptible to nothingness?

**Comment [DP16]:** Right, the self is still somewhat in control in wonder and horror, but not in anguish and awe where the self and its world have been lost to the point where only the experience of destitution is possible. But that is the very condition in which the deepest awe can be awakened where there is no world to be created or protected and we come most immediately to our radical contingency and therefore the radical other of our temporality, namely, the eternal which is not available to us except as the rupture of temporality itself. The rupture of temporality is the condition for the possibility for wonder and horror. At the bottom of the selflessness of awe is the deep humility that opens one to the sacred Other according to Miller. The only possible radical other to time is not-time or the eternal that shows itself only as an experience of rupture in time, which is what we are always caught in, the from which and the toward which that we abstract into concepts of past and future.

**Comment [DP17]:** That is the question

**Comment [DP18]:** But only as radical other, not in any way knowable or thinkable as presence. Yet, Miller following Lonergan, says we can *judge* this to be so, not in the sense of knowledge which can only arise IN a world, but we can judge God to be as the necessary condition and radical other of temporality, of "worlding" at all that arises in the rupture of temporality. The other of time can never be experience in itself, but only as the necessary Other and rupture of presence that temporality is. God is not presence but the radical Other of presence.

**Comment [DP19]:** This is the key issue for Miller

**Comment [DP20]:** i.e., are radically contingent

ourselves , and that our being is derivative from the absolute Other. Nothingness overturns and ruptures our ordinary presuppositions about ourselves as being. Anguish is more devastating than horror; awe is more uplifting than wonder, but all have potential to provoke a radical breakthrough to nothingness and devastating joy. Escaping the throe of the Other, which undermines presence as being, is a craving of our insecurities of being vulnerable to the absolute Other. Once we see through the myth of the given we no longer identify being with presence. One must not abandoned reasoning; rather by following reason unrestrictedly to its most radical undoing of what we thought we knew shows itself under this scrutiny to be illusions driven by insecurity. If we embrace and affirm our fallibility and deep vulnerability, we move out of these illusions and toward true being and the sacred.

**Comment [DP21]:** So it is only such radical experience that sets the condition for making such a judgment in and by reason. But without the experience of radical contingency which requires radical self-overcoming, such a judgment cannot be genuinely made. THAT is the main failing of speculative theology. As Guerriere says, it MUST start with such an experience before theism is a genuine stance, rather than just a commitment as it is for most religious people. Without that core by a founding personal experience and some recurrence of such experience made possible in remaining true to the originating experience, a religion degrades into fetishism, fraud, superstition, mystification, ideology, illusion, etc.

**You address the main issue of Miller’s controversial claim that judgment can enter in at the point of deepest rupture and nothingness and support the claim that “God exists” as the radical giver of the gift of utterly undeserved existence. Miller takes us to the core of our deepest vulnerability, to our existential suffering of radical contingency and argues that reason can put us, not in possession of any truth or knowledge, which themselves are as radically contingent as any world of meaning, but in the position to make the judgment that our radical temporality and contingency presupposes God as being. So you have arrived at the starting point of genuine philosophical reflection and inquiry about such a claim... It deserves our attention and reflection because it is carried out by Miller with such a high level of intellectual integrity and skill grounded always in a phenomenological and existential recognition, that is, from the point of departure of all thought and meaning: our experience of vulnerability and that things matter. It in no way is a claim to knowledge or truth, nor is it mere speculative argumentation. Whatever one’s response, this entry into the throe of inquiry has brought us to a radical encounter with the spiritual core.**

**Grade: A**