

Phil 23 Study Questions & Writing Assignment (Exam 3)
Taliaferro and Miller

Directions: Very short answers for 1, 2, and 3. Try to keep these to one page or less. OK if you go over. Numbers 4 and 5, two to three pages each. These are due by May 20. Ponder number 6. We will come back to it in the last week or two when we address current critiques of religion made by Hitchens, Dawkins, and other.

1. Select two of the 4 arguments for the existence of God given in Taliaferro and give the strongest version of each, then the strongest objections you can find or develop to each.
2. What is the problem of evil? What are the best arguments for solving this problem presented in Taliaferro and what are the strongest objections given or that you can develop?
3. What is time based on what you read in Miller Chapter 7?
4. What does Miller think of such arguments as those we find in Taliaferro (and why) and what is his reasoning about God in Chapter 8 of *In the Throe of Wonder* (show how this is connected to or is a culmination of the previous chapters)? What does he say about our ordinary beliefs in God? Why is *that* God “dead” and in fact, never could have been? How is this connected to the implausibility or rather even complete irrelevance of the arguments you just laid out in questions 1 and 2? What presuppositions do the traditional conceptions and arguments about God and the traditional ordinary beliefs in God share in common that make them beside the point such that even the most brilliant arguments are superfluous and the ordinary beliefs in God are counter-productive escapes and lead AWAY from the sacred and not toward it?
5. 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 can to the realization of our nothingness then the Absolute Other? What else is needed in affirming the absolute Other than the experience of nothingness and awe? What role does reason 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 is a necessary condition for our contingent being, our existence. (All of chapter 8 but especially pp. 188-194)
6. Having arrived at this point in the semester, what do you think is at the core of religious experience that survives the reductionist sociological and psychological accounts of traditional religion? If nothing, support this with good reasoning (this would partly entail showing that Miller is completely wrong about his arguments you presented in number 4 above.)