

**Philosophy 23: Exam 2**

**Due November 1**

**Directions: Two choices: A) Do number 1, 2, & 3 or B) do number 4.**

**Approximate length: 8-12 pages. I prefer that you email it.**

1. Eliade: How does the notion of the sacred provide a way of understanding the religious? What is *homo religiosus*? What kind of experience is this and how is it a more basic condition of possibility for all the world religions with their conflicting truths about and approaches to the sacred? Include the ideas of Hierophany, Ritual, Myth, Symbols, Sacred Space and time, and Axis Mundi in your account of religion as a deep engagement with the sacred. Discuss the Pickard Comment, Note, and Question. What is the ironic predicament we are in with regard to the sacred and the true? Why do our beliefs about the sacred and our refusal to question them ironically prevent us from connecting with the sacred? (2-3 pages)
2. Miller: What is the "postmodern condition" and why has it tended to undermine yet make more available a genuine connection to the sacred by better understanding what a "world" is? What is the throes of inquiry? What intimations are there of the sacred? What are wonder and horror and why are they openings onto the sacred? Explain how wonder, horror, and temporality are "ruptures." Ruptures to what? Discuss the following passages: "Nothingness is no intruder, no trespasser, no other. It is what I am, in and of myself." (186) "Awe is more profound than wonder or horror." Wonder and horror are anticipations of this speechless awe which is at the same time more upsetting than any other dread, and more joyful than any other ec-stasis. In this sense, all of our experiences lead us to intimations of being itself as the ultimately sacred, the absolute Other." How does the throes of inquiry that wonder and horror set in motion lead to the Absolute Other for Miller? What is the rupture and the absolute other of time? 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? (3-5 pages)
3. Guerriere: What is the truth proper to religion and why? Flesh this out with the issues of the essence of religion, the essence of religious truth, religious truth and nontruth, and religious truth and untruth? Why can't we start with speculative questions and arguments but must begin with phenomenology? What are the ways religion can be false (falsity for religion, falsity in religion, falsity of religion)? Why is most religion not genuine even though all religion has a genuine source? If most people are not truly religious, what do you think they are doing? What can you draw from Russon or any other source to explain this? What does the truth proper to religion come down to? Why are atheism and agnosticism not possible views to hold? What has love got to do with religion? (3-5 pages)
4. The Greek philosopher Parmenides said that to pursue wisdom about the true nature of things, one must journey to the gates of death and enter (without actual biological death). It is an awareness that comes from an experience a kind of spiritual death and only afterwards can one articulate something about our condition that puts us on the true path of wisdom. What do Eliade, Miller, and Guerriere say about the deepest experience of the sacred that would support Parmenides claim? Include their insights about how we miss and misunderstand the sacred. What might the sacred be apart from the inadequate and finite expressions in religion? How do religions generally miss this and what is the deep tension in religions over this? Why is the sacred unsayable and must be expressed in symbols? Why do belief and "truth" fall short of grasping the sacred? Why is "aletheia" and phenomenology the starting point for what we can say, but more importantly, a path toward transformation? Show how each author moves from a disclosive awareness (aletheia) at the vulnerable core or heart of each of us (our finite determinate erotic/linguistic nature, according to Russon) to an articulation that points to but cannot capture or possess any truth about what is most important/sacred? (8-12 pages)