

# John William Miller and the Problem of Freedom

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In our times, if one adduces anything of the heritage of idealism, it seems as if one must do so with qualification, if not apology. Has not idealism, after all, been shown by Hegel, its onetime arch-defender, to come down to the proposition that the real is the rational and the rational is the real? Everything is subject, then, to the demands of rational mediation, whether or not this is dialectical as a matter of procedure, and the claims of immediacy carry no intrinsic force. Even the term “immediacy” is an artifact of unfactual thinking, a word of disparagement concerning anything empirical, anything, in fact, *real*. To be realistic is to be naive, and perhaps a little backward. Meanwhile, the idealist is a self-styled denizen of the transcendental ozone of a priori truth, a zone brimming with too much intelligibility, with self-assurance to the point of complacency. One does not have to be a logical positivist to demand a test for such an attitude, or at the very least a non-tautological clarification of what is meant in the assertion of its truths. But how would one put such a claim to the test? And, presuming one’s methods to be rational, where does one find the assurance that it is not one’s own methodology which has, by projection, insured this result? And while there are certainly those who still dogmatically cling to this idealistic posture, they are seldom found among those who are now considered the more philosophically sophisticated. Those who have kept open their eyes, and reflected on these matters deeply and with conviction, have now taken seriously a century in which, in human terms, the real has been anything but rational, and the rational has over and over again fallen short of realization. Even the question of what the rational is has, for practical human purposes, become so problematic that one can, in reflection, only take on a little at a time, and at best aspire to “regional” intelligibilities. Long gone is the sanguine hope for the system that will seamlessly explain all.

Therefore we might say that, even if it is seen that in idealism proper an accommodation to a living nature is actually effectuated, and that this nature is at the very least pre-rational, this does little to ameliorate the view that idealism itself is but an overblown posture of a dated Enlightenment rationality. Even Schelling, Hegel’s onetime collaborator and idealist of established repute, though also a sometime progenitor of Existentialism, eventually defected to what he called a “higher realism.” It was in this capacity he was driven to say: “One must admit that [Hegel’s] philosophy, when it is really carried out, . . . is a good deal more monstrous than the preceding philosophy ever was.”

The thought of John William Miller, being, among other things, an avowed idealism, therefore begins to look already like a thought out of season: at best a curiosity, and a quaint glimpse, perhaps, of a supple mind at work on yesterday’s problems, and at worst an atavistic monstrosity all the more dangerous for being naive. What I wish to argue here, however, is that it is none of these things is true, and that Miller’s deepest and most sustaining theme, which I here identify as freedom, is not only the central signifier of the idealist project from the beginning, but one still today very much

in need of thought. This argument will soon be shown to be concomitant with another, namely that thinking itself, which always feeds off of necessities, precisely loses its moorings in the dizzying vortex of freedom, and can be rescued only by a kind of reflexion which begins by admitting its loss. Whether this loss also entails the loss of freedom itself will be the central point at issue. At the level at which we need to press this analysis, there are few philosophers whose thought is nuanced enough to mark out what is essential. One is John William Miller.

The originating moment of reflexion here is already a synthetic one, taking freedom as ontologically real, functionally efficacious and psychologically fundamental. This thought, and single thought it must be, is unabashedly metaphysical at its core. And it is in precisely this metaphysics—conceived in the way that it is—that qualifies Miller’s concept of freedom as one that comports with existential themes. The primary theme is the doctrine of human self-making. It is here that freedom rises to its height, both in terms of its portentous possibilities and the overwhelming responsibility that accrues to an entity that, in order to be said to *have* a nature, in the final analysis must stand up, and stand surety, for that very nature as its own creation.

It is clearly a challenge of the first order to achieve a conceptual core able to include these various considerations, including the last and most radical formulation. There is, however, one conception of freedom, sometimes also considered radical, that Miller’s view does not include. That is the so-called “legislative” function of pure reason that one finds emphasized in Kant’s treatment of the problem. There are two difficulties with this approach. The first is the fact that it makes the fate of freedom rest entirely with reason, and the second, depending from the first, is that it places the entire problematic outside of the order of nature, where, even according to the Kantian view, a considerable portion of the psyche still dwells. Even if we forgive the excessive rationalism of the construction, and the exclusively moral context of its presentation, the larger problem with this point of view is that the duty it renders present to the mind is altogether too thin, motivationally speaking. The rational agent here is, as the first avatar of freedom, confronted with a sense of duty registered as command, but the *struggle* to rectify the motivational life is given no sway within the freedom that is here adduced. Kantian duty is simply too abstract, too sharply delineated, too clear, in fact, to serve as a characterization of freedom as it is actually lived, let alone freedom as the site of radical becoming, or the experience of a new good coming into being. For Miller, on the contrary, freedom is to be found in the *midst* of that nature which reaches into the heart of the human condition—in desire, in purposive activities, and, indeed, in all the confusions and the psychic turbulence that goes with these. Freedom, in short, is experienced for the most part as struggle. Nevertheless—and this is the idealistic moment, and the moment he comes closest to Kant—freedom itself can never be recognized by looking at the product of its struggle or as something that must have struggled in just this or that way. Freedom defines its purposes, but is never defined by them. Freedom is indeed already of its own nature a metaphysical act, a self-positing, or living within a self-positing, that cannot look beyond itself for support precisely because to do so would be take up a passive realtion to this very act which is its own. The primordial act of human being, the defining act as it were, is the act whereby it comes into being under its own signature.

We therefore only theoretically confess what we must in any case practically presuppose when we conclude that we are by nature active and originary. But it requires an additional act to recognize that, in this capacity, we are already abroad in the world, moving it even as we imagine ourselves to

be moved by it, this way and that. The essential ambiguity of mover and moved in fact insinuates itself into the barest proposal of any act, so the idealized self, as moral or a purely cognitive as we might wish it to be, still has little chance of absolute autonomy, for no represented self that it could tease out of the miasma of experience could hold fast against the real tide of change. Here it appears that we have veered away from merely formalistic conceptions of autonomy, on the one hand, as well as those conceptions such as Schelling attributed to Hegel, where any real freedom, which does after all need precisely its individual autonomy, was swallowed up in the relentless march of world spirit.

Purely formalistic autonomy leans toward experience not at all, but tends to languish in the sterile status of mere declaration or presupposition. If we could induce a Kantian of less than strict persuasion to speak on the matter, one could in a more muted way perhaps invoke the legislative function metaphorically or heuristically as a kind of primary self-assertion of value, and in this way sidle up to an important moral dimension of the problem of freedom. But still the value here is always put forward as something *conceived*, clearly circumscribed, and therefore as distinctively tied to the rational function, which always imputes clarity even where the existential circumstance does nothing to merit it. Some accounts still moving in this general vein aspire to give freedom more life and more free play, by adding considerations like the importance of context, but these, again, are present primarily in a decidedly rational reconstruction, and in any case it will turn out that Miller is utterly opposed to bringing context in to save freedom from itself, or from the terrible vacuity of its existential self-origination..

All of the hesitations we have expressed here in the name of Miller are sufficiently well known to a critical mass of philosophical thought, so to speak. Nevertheless the greatest tendency in thinking the problem of freedom *remains* that which ties it to rationality according to a conceptual bond that is almost definitional in its effect. But what other choice is there? The problems of freedom have to be worked out upon a rational level: that is, after all, what we philosophers do, as rationality is our stock in trade. To be sure, once the heavy lifting is safely done, and we have our thesis standing stoutly upon the table, one admits readily enough that actual circumstances are never quite so clear as one might have hoped. No doubt certain philosophies have prepared us for this realization better than others. The young Schelling, for example, had shown that freedom and nature could be, and should be thought together. This of course gives us already the basis for saying that that which is pre-rational can yet be free. But having said that, there is simply not much more to say, for in mobilizing the concept to our present purposes, it is always the rational which comes into focus. This is an especially difficult matter when the irrational dimension in question happens to be within our own selves.

Thus again and again, and often despite ourselves, we *functionally* distinguish free choice from instinct, or from behavior which we describe as “impassioned,” that which has caused us to be “beside ourselves.” There is in all such cases an implicit giving-back of passion or instinct to nature, once again the land of the unfree. What we are trying to fathom is how this propensity cuts off the vital core of human agency from the core of vitality itself, as if somehow reason in its supererogatory role could only be carried along in the energy of a morbid Thanatos, an aggressive death drive out to kill instinct itself. Meanwhile Eros, the living innocence of natural becoming, is perpetually re-imprisoned, if not now in “the universal reign and sway of causal law,” then surely its second cousin.

From a practical point of view, even if we hem in our rational function with a myriad of qualifications, while of course still keeping it fundamentally at the center of our discourse on freedom, we wind up with a sense of freedom that is no better than a watery gruel, lacking the dynamism that characterizes real motivational life. Here is the thought that is needed: One is indeed confronted with criteria rationally generated, and though these are often more multiple and diverse than we are inclined to suppose, still they have the capacity to configure in a living consciousness a sense of what is needed, what is appropriate, what is desirable. But what is too seldom given sway is the whole force of the *struggle* this act of valuation portends, the way that this struggle precisely colors freedom as it is experienced. Only when this is accounted for can freedom be seen at work in the ordinary meaning that gives it the possibility of futurity, of life itself. Therefore, whether it is a matter of duty or prudence that is held out as the ideal, a freedom conceived in relation to it, but stripped of its associated relation to the pre-rational, is simply too abstract, too sharply delineated, too clear, in fact, to be of service. And we must include in this concept of the pre-rational a real factor of resistance to the ideal itself, which is as much a part of the dynamic of free activity as anything else. Freedom *can* become the site of radical self-becoming, or the experience of a new good coming into being, only if its struggles and resistances are factored in essentially.

For Miller, freedom is to be found in the midst of precisely that nature which reaches into the heart of the human condition—in desire, in purposive activities, and all the confusions and the psychic turbulence that goes with these. Freedom, in short, is experienced for the most part as conflict, and indeed, often in such a tortuous way that it does not *feel* free at all. And this is not even a struggle which can be identified as the collision of already extant forces: for all the elements of the conflict are essential determinants of freedom itself. And yet freedom can never be simply and solely a self-catalyzing process. The ideal of self-making does have its limits. So there is, after all, world. Miller can say this in full confidence, even though we hardly yet know what world, now, in freedom, can mean.

Meanwhile, even while entertaining the thought of the myriad sources of confusion and misdirection that lead astray a human life, Miller holds fast to the one salient idealistic moment: freedom must be given the range it needs to be in its essential self-assertion. Miller simply tries to release the concept complex here from the strictures that have typically bound it to unwanted conclusions or overestimates of the cognitive function. The key is to keep freedom in the element of free play, not to reify it. Freedom cannot, for example, be recognized by looking merely at the *product* of its struggle. Freedom, we say, defines its purposes, but is never defined by them, but now we must add that, without them, freedom would lack all relation to what makes it meaningful, and even the means by which it can take up a relation to itself. One wants, I know, to expand upon this point, and to drive relentlessly toward a world of contextual relations, living meanings, in fact. But here Miller will take a hard stand. There is at stake here the irreducible moment, the ultimate signifier of human life. In this capacity, freedom is, in Miller's term, radically "unenviored."

What all this means from the standpoint of any possible phenomenal representation is that freedom remains necessarily elusive, always as ephemeral in announcing its source as it is its destiny. Thinking it in its completeness or totality is harder than catching an entire flock of birds on the wing. With every new reflexive glance, one finds that freedom has already retreated back into its principle, leaving behind a memory of effort expended, an aftertaste, perhaps, like the perfume of a distant

spring borne on the wind. But this is how life itself is lived: it will not be called to stand still, but is ever running past itself towards an indeterminate future that, in its fascination, easily beclouds the indeterminacy of the past.

Therefore, when one says of Miller that he is a voluntarist, and means by this that he emphasizes the role of free *will*, one knows in advance that one can intend this in only quite a special way. Will is no “faculty” to which a distinct representation attaches. It is a concept complex involving primarily the problem of responsibility. But this is subject to many nuances. I become responsible for my acts by owning up to them. I routinely press this responsibility past its normal reach, however, as I discover it to be continuous with other initiatives and to harbor unsuspected motives. I thus find myself already bound to other actions. In the face of this I can resolve to be more responsible. But I can also seek to be more responsive, or find that I have not been, or find that I have been so in a way that is emotionally reactive. And then I may wonder where my tendencies actually have come from, why I have responded the way that I have, what it says about me that I should behave in this way. I now become the subject of an investigation into myself. And Miller insists I must do so without hypostatizing the self, taking it as ready fact, a substance immune to change, to development, to growth. But there *is* here still something to investigate, to penetrate, to contemplate, freely, reaching ever deeper into the vexatious heart of freedom itself.

In taking up a relation to these questions from the standpoint of freedom, voluntarism as a philosophical position has typically been split, Miller thinks, into two camps, and has done so immediately, that is to say, in such a way as not to advertize any common ground by means of which the two points of view may be united. One camp is that of pragmatism. The other is psychology. When one attempts to take up singly either of these two strategies for achieving a representation of will in its active freedom, one finds that it has already slipped through one’s fingers, and has retreated back into what Miller likes to call its “form.”

Form, for Miller, is indeed a central concept, one that is decisive for thinking the role of freedom, and yet most uncooperative when it comes to any attempt to represent it. There are no components of the form of freedom, there are no permanent and stable markers by means of which it can be circumscribed or defined. But without it nothing of the human condition can be rightly conceived, and reality itself, no doubt nebulous enough in the best of times, becomes utterly unreachable. For the real, according to Miller, is reached only within the condition of the free struggle for effective and significant action, local control as he calls it, and is there encountered strictly as the conditioning factor in the struggle itself. As such a factor, however, it remains something that continually solicits reflection, and has the potential to reward such reflection as nothing else can. In this regard, it is not unlike what Schelling called the “higher realism.” It is a realism devoted, to be sure, to the real, but this is conceived in a sense in which the real not just something there, thrown into the world, but rather it must take into account the dynamic of reaching for it, a vanishing interior in the generation of the real. But here is where the dynamic has precisely split in two. Form has been deformed by the division between the pragmatic and the psychical, which want nothing more than to get back together, to function harmoniously and in a co-ordinated way. Yet repeatedly these two angles of approach to the primordial encounter with freedom reveal their divergent interests, and reinscribe themselves as oppositional, antithetical to one another.

Notwithstanding this, however, surely we can come at least to a superficial accommodation. Voluntary action can be seen as directed on two fronts; or rather there are two modes of investigation that can be invoked to take the measure of its integrity. The pragmatic is external, directed towards achievement of results in the world; the psychological is internal, and reveals the condition of the subject itself. Surely the two dimensions cross over each other both in intent and effect, and it ought to be possible to frame divergent orders of intelligibility with respect to each without making a war of it. So let us give them their head for just a moment.

The pragmatic realm enjoys an initial advantage. It is the domain of engaged interest, and of great doings. The psychological, by contrast, reveals the condition of the subject itself, often in a state of disarray. This already suggests a psychological motivation precisely to give pride of place to a pragmatic life, which, for its part, is only too happy to oblige. The stronger the motivation to escape the self, the more conviction is available to the means of effectuating this escape.

The practical outreach of purposive activity is fueled by conviction, and, riding the crest of this wave of energy, the kind of philosophical reflection that is attendant to this constitutes an ever renewed source of discovery, both with respect to the order of the world, and of the configuration of human affairs within it. One gazes in wonder at the heavens, and articulates this wonder with ever finer degrees of precision coordinated to ever greater degrees of functional capacity. We ogle the moon in wistful longing, and in the fulness of time we find a means to walk its surface. There is nothing in the furtherance of genuine capability, or the element of local control that it entails, that is anathema to Miller. A cardinal function of intelligent life resides here, and for Miller no a priori considerations drawn from interior life need to be invoked to reign in the enterprise.

This does not mean, however, that we should be overawed by the effectiveness of our capacity for local control. The mastery of nature is not by itself an unqualified good. For one thing, it does not necessarily speak to social issues that might be occluded by the very enthusiasm for discovery, mastery, and productive effort. How much of the human treasure do we appropriately devote to building a pyramid, a cathedral, or mounting an expedition to Mars? How, in the meantime, might we quell the unrest in Harlem or Mogodishu? Where does the factor of social justice intervene to unsettle the sleep of sovereign authority or, for that matter, disrupt the experiment of the scientist?

These are questions not susceptible of easy answers; and they are made more difficult because different orders of value are at play among different orders of intelligibility. The social plenum, always more than the sum of its parts, displays a complexity that redounds inwardly as well as outwardly, a complexity that resists any treatment that would reduce it to an order of the sound arrangement of rational beings, if only they would, after all *be* rational.

But what does it mean for a person, endowed constitutively with free agency, to *aspire* to rationality? If a voluntarist is one who grants pride of place to will before reason, where, then, does reason find its place? This is not an easy question in the best of times, and Miller never allows it to become any easier. As a descriptor, reasonableness suggests that the person can be held in esteem, an upstanding citizen. But this is not an indication of a standard of behavior which may be brought forward once and for all time. Instead, it suggests that the person in question is able to hold a multitude of factors of the personal being in a state of balance, in a condition of readiness, and this in such a way as to answer to primary needs that are not in their inception of the order of reason at all, and may not

even be of such a nature that reason is able to penetrate their source. In short, the person is a many splendored thing. When entered in that complex of relations that constitutes even the simplest gathering or group, let alone a city, a nation or a world, personhood already is so compounded that reason itself must, in the best of times, quail to gaze upon its many faces, and, in the worst of times, must abhor the impenetrable depth of its dysfunctionality. Reason is not a criterion of which it can be said that one size fits all. This seems on its face to support a kind of pluralism. And indeed in the world of pragmatic enterprises, pluralism seems to go a long way.

Nevertheless it would be a mistake to call Miller simply a pluralist. In order to understand why not, one would have to bring the domain of psychology more directly into play. Here we have an order of interiority and a matrix of arrayed energies that is not only complex in itself, but inevitably a site of trouble, an inner discord, is *registered* as such by its frustrated relation to what is *not*: namely a self that is whole, integrated and harmonious. If there is an absolute to Miller's thought, it lies in the siren call of integration. It is here that the order of aspiration finds its native terrain, and it is here that the first disturbances, even in the cosmic order, are always most profoundly encountered. So interwoven are Miller's psychology, his ethics, his ontology and his cosmology that one best identify his central signifier by the name of *microcosm*. And it is psychology which, in some significant respects, gives the most direct window into this realm.

By the psychological Miller does not mean to invoke the regimen of explanation employed by behaviorists. Models such as that of the stimulus-response system, while they can no doubt yield a kind of working framework for predicability in behavior, block more than they give access to the key element, the real motivator and beacon of lived experience. This experience is configured in relation to norms. But these, in turn, are not to be seen as conditioning factors so much as ideals of a certain kind—ideals which may well be so concealed or overgrown with other concerns that they are hardly recognizable. But in every case, for psychological purposes, one would have to say that they involve an implicit dynamic of answerability, a value. And this value cannot be circumscribed without reference to the psychological conditions requisite for its coming into manifestation, and its maintenance within the broad range of human affects. These, in turn, run the gamut from fear to joy, from hope to sorrow, from confidence to despair. So when the ameliorism of an outward-looking pragmatism gives way to the normativity of the psychological sphere, the problem of value takes on a complexity and a nuance that defies easy rendering. Complexity by itself contributes to the potential for dysfunction, which is never in short supply. We seem perpetually to find ourselves out of sorts, conflicted, angry, despondent: in short, dealing with the negative affective register. Any account of the person that fails to give this point its due misses the mark decisively. Only with this kind of reflexion in place might we begin to contemplate what an actually functioning ideal, a real norm, might look like. Let us listen to Miller, then, as he brings these factors into focus in relation to our central problem:

Psychiatry must offer men freedom, or else it must present them as victims. It can offer them freedom insofar as it can capitalize upon conflict . . . conflicts occur as states of consciousness. Their occasion is specific and psychological . . . But their meaning is never specific. Their meaning is the disclosure of the real, the nonpsychological, the norm. For there is no way of thinking the normal except through the disclosure of these terrible forces and demands.

The normative here will not stay confined to the sphere of personal affairs, where ethical questions typically hold sway. It reaches beyond to the entire order of human enterprises, where the pragmatist also dwells. Terrible forces are very much alive here as well. Among the norms that dominate our social complex, in fact, is that of rationality itself, not just expressed in the form of trying to get the right conception of it, but of actually *becoming* rational. Here, however, one must again ask: What would it mean for a person, endowed constitutively with free agency, to *decide* to aspire to rationality in the first place? The voluntarist is one who, in contemplating the human condition, grants pride of place to will in its relation to reason. This leaves reason to find its way to any dominance it could seek to achieve in a contest with other urgencies and exigencies of the person. It begins to look like a bit of an upstart, another faculty on the make. But it gets worse. Ever since the development of the “behind the back” motif in Hegel, the haunting horror is that some alien force has infiltrated the rational process itself, and is blindly leading it to destruction. Even Kant did not deny this possibility, to which he gave the name of the “terrorist” construal of history, a construal he had to admit was as “rational” as any other.

But this is the point where there must rise up within will itself a fiat: Let not reason be the plaything of an arbitrary will, but let will find its way in relation to a reason that is also given *its* freedom. In this way each of the two, reason and will, have their day, their own proper freedom, and can hope, at least to achieve balance. In order to leave reason unencumbered, one does well to posit that reason and will occupy different dimensions, but one must also counter this claim by adding that these must be dimensions that of themselves seek to converge, if never to merge completely.

The point of synthesis in all this is an exalted creative activity invested, deeply, in self-discovery. But Miller eschews the reduction to a rational formulation of the point of contact, the fructifying moment. Neither reason nor will properly dominates the other; nor is there a third point of reference to which both must answer. One might think of it as a dance, with will and reason in ever changing counterpoint to one another. The two dimensions, when all is well, rather interlace than interlock, and their complex interactions, possibly harmonious but often not so, are the very stuff of living freedom.

Nevertheless, the truth is that we have come to live in a world in which a certain kind of rationality already holds sway in an unbalanced manner. The will function has receded into the background, or rather, because it can never *really* do so, it simply slides into occlusion. Experiences in which will faces itself starkly and alone, like those described by Kierkegaard, are rare events, and generally discouraged, when the opportunity arises, as being unlikely to yield a productive outcome. Naked will never shows itself in polite company; rather it seeks to clothe itself in reasons, plausible motivations and justifications. Only when there is a disturbance, when things are not quite right, when perhaps a pathology obtrudes into the flow of habitual life, does the native dimension of will come perforce to attention. It is then seen as the source of a problem. And it is with regard to problems that psychology comes into its own, a marker of the pathology of voluntary processes. The importance of this cannot be downplayed, for reality lurks here, too. Miller clearly thinks that a positive voice can and must also speak from deeply disturbed regions. It is just that the voice must take shape so as to emerge *out* of the experience of disturbance. Miller still never plays down the pathos of such events. He writes:



The central contribution of abnormal psychology to the theory of man and nature is probably its discovery of conflict within the natural. But to make full use of the discovery, the conflict needs to be seen as the occasion whereby each individual discovers reality. There is not reality and then, incidentally, psychological conflict. There is no account of reality possible except through the tensions of conflict. For these disclose the profoundly definitive demands of an ego or personality.

If personal demands are profoundly definitive, it would seem that no society could call itself good that did minister to these. But the briefest survey shows already that this is not true: society can *call* itself good no matter what attitude it takes towards its individuals. And, for their part, individuals can decide to relate to society as an opportunity to serve others, or they can resolve to serve only themselves, manipulating social resources to further their own ambitions.

This is the one point where I take a little distance from Miller's thought. The issue is the problem of evil. After the events of the twentieth century, we see that evil can be more than an individual phenomenon—that there is what might be called corporate evil. Even to the level of the state itself can such evil rise. Disorder and confusion are *not* the inevitable marks of evil in such a configuration. It is, rather, order—one might say an *excessive* order—that characterizes totalitarianism. And the same point can be made with regard to an individual, with the necessary allowances made. So one cannot rest on the presumption that a process of resolving the sundry conflicts and confusions in the willing process of a citizenry in such a way as to bring order out of chaos will, by itself, deliver a nation to a blessed condition. One knows, of course, that Miller himself did not go so far as to believe that. The point of our divergence, as I see it, pertains to the question of pathology. For Miller, real evil would have to exhibit this as a dominant trait, whereas I think of evil as something that can be gathered to cold and deliberate intent.

Now, however, we must again give Miller his due. He in fact touts the virtues of a democracy that honors the freedom of its individual citizens, and promotes the confidence that working through the various conflicted circumstances that stand in the way will in fact lead to greater harmony. In this conception he offers both an inspiring vision and a happy template for community-building. His strongest point lies in his recognition that the metaphysics of freedom he posits at the core the human estate cannot realize itself without a manifest correlate in what is often called political liberty, and here he has strong meliorist propensities. In short, the vision of the good stands over all, and diversely draws all toward such unity as may be expressed in civil cooperation and accommodation. To pull back willfully from this, deliberately and in full consciousness of the implications of so doing, is simply not a possibility that Miller contemplates.

There is, if I am right in situating Miller's thought, a dimension where will may gather itself, readying for the spring into action. And having sprung, it becomes amenable to rational reflection. How do we think value into this new dimension, this place of convergence, what Miller calls his "midworld"?

The genuine indicators of direction are norms. These are ideals of a certain kind—ideals which may well be so overlaid with other considerations that they are hardly recognizable for the value they carry. But they do involve an implicit criterion of answerability. To be sure, this is a domain of value that cannot be assayed without reference to personal conditions and the stops and starts of an often vagrant desire trying to find its way. We are, all too often terribly confused in our essential sense of

purpose. Any account of the person that fails to give this point its due misses the mark. To honor this, I move toward a conclusion by letting Miller himself speak to the nature of the task at hand:

Psychiatry is the general theory of the genesis of the form of the will. And this form of the will is also the form of the real. It is the form of that reality wof which it has beensupposed the person is out of adjustment . . . And where could one encounter that form and the defects of its apprehension except in the violent disorganization of an outlook?

The will, then, is as deeply embedded in the real as the real is discoverable in experience, shot through again, precisely with will. And will discovers itself not simply in a moment of vision, but in its own rhythms, its own felicitations, and also equally in those fractures and fissures in its innermost being, most often visible, when visible at all, in the manifest disturbances of will gone awry. But it must be understood that this latter condition is always will in its failure, that genuine will can never say out loud, or even whisper to itself, that the dark picnic of pain is its glory. Will carries with it the hidden but strong imperative that it should be whole, integrated, and hale. If there is to be a transcendental doctrine of will for Miller, then, it needs to contain as part and parcel of itself a transcendental doctrine of healing. And here is where Miller must in the end make his stand: there can simply be none so constituted as to look the prospect of healing full in the face and say "no." If that is the measure of his idealism, and if idealism is by itself an excess, then let it be said that Miller's excess lay in optimism. Whether any correction to this optimism would begin to appear as pessimism, or rather as a somewhat sobered realism, I invite *you* to decide.