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God, the Enigma

When Daniel Miller was asked to draw a picture of God as he felt God to be he produced the drawing below (fig. 5). The outline of the face, eyes, ears, and mouth was drawn in blue. The hair, the eyebrows, eyelashes, and beard were drawn in brown. The halo was done in light yellow.

Explaining the picture, he wrote at the bottom of the page: "This represents my image of God. Extremely wise but sad at men's inhumanity to man. Also patient and sensitive to [the] suffering of mankind."

In presenting Daniel Miller I will attempt to demonstrate the following propositions, conforming to the schema proposed for all cases.

1. In relation to his belief in God he belongs to category number three, that is, those who are amazed, angered, or quietly surprised to see others deeply invested in a God who does not interest them.

2. In relation to the developmental level of the representation Daniel Miller's God portrays a well-defined separated person with a wide range of emotions and characteristics. In descriptive terms the representation belongs to the period when full object representation is possible. This statement, however, must be modified somewhat, for the representation indicates that although Daniel Miller is capable of representing all the descriptive characteristics of God, he cannot understand the psychological motivations and inner workings of God's "personality" which make him the way he is. I propose that this stage belongs to the latency period, when careful observations and descriptions of persons are based on well-established reality testing

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Fig. 5

but do not include psychological elaboration of motives. Developmentally, the latter is the task of adolescence.

Libidinally, Daniel Miller's God representation has no appeal to him.¹ Furthermore, he knows that he cannot even consider the emotional implications of his God representation. A lifelong defense or process of a schizoid nature isolates the representation from its emotional consequences. This man knows that his representational potential remains only an intellectual task, "a concept," an empty representational shell attractive only as a concept. In terms of pathological levels of representational inhibition, Daniel Miller's God finds his limitations in the young man's need for protection against fantasized annihilation (Guntrip, 1969)² and narcissistic injury (not to be taken into consideration).

3. As for its connections with parental objects, the God representation takes its characteristics exclusively from the father, as seen and experienced by a latency boy in need of protection by an aggressive adult male, who is admired for his own aggressiveness and efficiency. The child's need for identification with that male is inhibited by a terrified perception of him and his potential destructiveness, should the boy appear to be competing with him. The father in this image is very much the terrifying father of the primal horde hypothesized by Freud; he cannot be killed by the growing young man because the father will kill the youth at the first hint of anything less than total submission.

Two direct quotations from Daniel Miller give full support to this hypothesis and indicate his compelling psychological need to remain a latency child: "For me to come out of childhood is like being a fish out of water," and "It is as though I haven't entered adolescence yet." The compelling nature of his predicament is illustrated by the simile "like a fish out of water": sure death awaits him if he leaves his position as his father's child.

4. In relation to the type of elaboration and transformation of the paternal representation into a God representation, Daniel Miller is aware that he has avoided the task of dealing with the question of the existence of God because he is not ready for the possible consequences of an emotional encounter with his God representation. His way of avoiding the task is through intellectualization. He says this explicitly: "The feeling I get from my relationship with God is more one of intellectual inquiry than anything else because I am unable to approach the subject in any other way." Even at this level, however, he is noncommittal: "I have not formulated any specific ideas on God because the need to do so has not come up." Intellectually, he acknowledges some interest: "The *concept*³ [of God] appeals to me in that it is a plausible explanation for the meaning of man's existence." This conceptual attraction happens only at the defensive and wishful conscious level. Unconsciously, the God he has avoided dealing with is identical to his father, and has not been elaborated at all. Even at this level, however, God is a full person he happens not to be interested in.

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itation has no appeal to him.¹ Consider the emotional implications or process of a schizoid emotional consequences. This man sees only an intellectual task, "a task attractive only as a concept. In the absence of inhibition, Daniel Miller's mother's need for protection against narcissistic injury (not to be

infringed), the God representation takes on a form, as seen and experienced by a passive adult male, who is admired for the child's need for identification and the perception of him and his potential competition with him. The father is the original father of the primal horde, identified by the growing young man best of all, a hint of anything less than total

isolation. Miller give full support to this psychological need to remain a latency like being a fish out of water," and "I am not yet." The compelling nature of "like a fish out of water": sure as his father's child.

and transformation of the paternal. Daniel Miller is aware that he has a sense of the existence of God because of an emotional encounter with God; the task is through intellectualization; I get from my relationship with God anything else because I am unable to. Even at this level, however, he is not specific ideas on God because theologically, he acknowledges some internally that it is a plausible explanation. Conceptual attraction happens only unconsciously, the God he has seen. Unconsciously, the God he has seen, and has not been elaborated at all. In full person he happens not to be

5. To avoid an intellectual or emotional encounter with his God representation, Daniel Miller utilizes isolation of affect, intellectualization, withdrawal into himself, avoidance, and a general state of passivity and waiting. These defenses serve to protect him from an unwelcome encounter with himself, inadequate and afraid as he experiences himself to be, and an overpowering, critical, destructive God incapable of any consideration for him. When he had to draw a picture of God, he utilized idealizations and reaction formations as defenses. He drew a man very similar to his father but attributed to God a wisdom and kindness that are totally foreign to his father. He wrote under the picture: "This represents my image of God. Extremely wise—but sad at man's inhumanity to man. Also patient and sensitive to the suffering of mankind." This is defensive intellectual idealization, colored by his wish that God could be that way, although he is totally unaware that this is the case. He also assumes that his mother believed in a God who is benevolent: in actuality, his mother has never shown any signs of belief in God. His system of defenses is at the service of protecting his schizoid positions of a tremendous wish for closeness and an overwhelming fear of the object of his wishes. When confronted with a final choice of being alone and alive in the afterlife or being with God, his fear of total loneliness is stronger than his fear of God. He said hesitantly: "I choose to be united with God. It just occurs to me that it would be lonely to be there in heaven by myself."⁴

6. His prevailing use of the God representation is a paradoxical one. He does not use it. He ignores it, behaving as though he does not know or feel what God is like: "I do not have any explicit feelings about God. I am not sure I believe in God." Again, "There are no personal feelings by me about God. I have never personified God." His ignorance of God, however, is not the result of repression but of avoidance and of isolation of affect: for him "God is a subject for conjecture and deep thought about the meaning of life." Here is the paradox: he does not know whether he believes or not (he never says that God does not exist), but he is constantly preoccupied with a God he cannot understand ("I find it difficult to love something I don't know or understand"). The conclusion of this state of profound ambivalence is that "I consider God as an Enigma⁵ because I have no clear-cut attitudes about God."

7. The cumulative trauma that interfered with his normal development was his mother's inability to provide adult mothering and protection from his father, as well as her failure to sustain a real relationship with the developing child. She provided, faithfully and good-heartedly, in a simple and routine way, for the needs of everyday life. But she failed to provide another adult presence in the house to balance the overwhelming and tyrannical presence of the father. She too submitted to him by withdrawing in passive fear, leaving the children totally at the mercy of the father. From the beginning of Daniel Miller's life the father was the central figure in the household, the sole ruler. He was the only one permitted to have a will of his own.⁶ His father's

invasive, controlling, ambitious personality permeated every corner of the household, taking almost full possession of things and people.

Add to this frightful picture his feeling that his inability to fulfill his parents' dreams of success and brilliance for him was a good reason for them to try to get rid of him. He grew up fearing that sooner or later he would be abandoned by them.⁷ This fear deepened the submission his father demanded of him, while adding power to an already overpowering father. The final result was a profound fear of the father, linked to a total need for him as the only guide in life. That predicament—intense fear, love, and hatred of an indispensable, powerful object—is the same predicament Daniel has with his God. His conditions for belief are two. God must "be capable of only love," and "I could not believe in a God that punishes." This echoes exactly Daniel's painful predicament with his father. His father loved and hated him equally, while punishing and criticizing him mercilessly.

8. In relation to official religion, the God offered by his Jewish faith was unfortunately too similar to his father: "The biblical God was a bit too revengeful to suit me." "I feel," he said, "that God should have more compassion than he is portrayed in the Bible."

The religious education offered him did nothing to lessen the fright about God he brought to the door of his Hebrew school. Under such circumstances it was impossible for him to have any wish to be involved with a God who offered nothing to alleviate his longing for a protecting and loving adult who would listen to him and appreciate him.

9. As for his need for a God, he feels profound ambivalence. He wishes for a good, compassionate, loving God, but he feels the impossibility of permitting himself any emotional contact with his God representation. The psychic conflict is insoluble, because his unconscious representation of God as a replica of his father offers no possibility of satisfying his longings. To avoid the painful discovery of a God as bad as his father, and unable to form other emotional elaborations of that representation, his only choice is not to face God, and to remain in the mildly painful limbo of not knowing whether to believe or not. In the process he feels surprise that others can be so certain or so involved in their beliefs.

I predict that unless this man resolves in part his problem with "his father in the flesh," finding him to be more caring than he has experienced so far, he will never be able to believe. His inability, given the situation, is not a shortcoming but an indispensable protection against overwhelming frustration in a lifelong wish and experiential terror of a sadistic invader who violates the protected nucleus of bearable self-experience.

If a religious zealot were to try to give this man a direct experience of God, he could, I propose, precipitate a psychotic break.

10. In APA terms Daniel Miller is a schizoid personality who, having to face adulthood and its tasks at the end of his professional education, reacted

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His inability to fulfill his part was a good reason for them to wait sooner or later he would be submitted his father demanded overpowering father. The final result to a total need for him as the result of fear, love, and hatred of an predicament Daniel has with his father "be capable of only love," finishes." This echoes exactly His father loved and hated him mercilessly.

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to put his problem with "his father in heaven" he has experienced so far, he says, given the situation, is not a fight against overwhelming frustration but a sadistic invader who violates the peace.

For a man a direct experience of God, a break.

Personality who, having to his professional education, reacted

with massive regression to the childhood period of latency, hoping for his father's help in practical ways and wishing delusionally for identification with him through an organ transplant.

THE STORY OF DANIEL MILLER

Daniel Miller, a twenty-seven-year-old physician, had insisted on being admitted to a hospital for yet another medical evaluation. Under pressure from his examining physician, he accepted the referral to a psychiatric in-patient unit after being repeatedly and carefully examined for evidence of the lethal illness he insisted he had.

He is an appealing, soft-spoken, smiling, friendly man, who went through college and medical school uneventfully. Two weeks before graduation he developed the first symptoms that caused him to withdraw both from the practice of his profession and from social intercourse. He complained of lower abdominal pain, back pain, and an intense conviction that he was affected by a slow, killing disease. Six months before the onset of these symptoms he had witnessed a medical emergency in which a man of his age with a similar condition narrowly escaped death. After onset of the symptoms Daniel Miller consulted his father's internist who, after careful examination, attempted to reassure him that his fears were unfounded. He accepted the results of the evaluation and asked to be referred to a psychiatrist. He immediately began weekly psychotherapy with a male psychiatrist. During the course of the first six months he seemed to improve, but then he began to withdraw more and more. Eventually, he stopped all his activities and spent a year and a half at his parents' home doing nothing, though continuing to see a therapist. Four weeks before his admission he insisted on having another physical evaluation, even though he had had several during the two years of psychotherapy. He was admitted to a general hospital where, after being told he needed a psychiatric evaluation, he told his doctors that he had decided not to go back to his therapist. He refused to talk about the motives of his decision, but it was hypothesized that since he had been talking with the therapist about homosexual longings, these may have interfered.

Dr. Miller was the older of two children. His "upwardly mobile" parents placed great hopes in their children. The father, a self-made man who had left his own home at fourteen, was a representative for a drug company, thoroughly involved with his work and literally immersed in the medical profession he served. The mother had been an elementary school teacher. She stopped working to marry. Both had married in their twenties and Daniel was born a year after the marriage. The child was a chubby, precocious, fairly active baby who did a lot of crying as an infant and as a small child. His parents had wanted the child, but the pregnancy was difficult and the mother had unpleasant feelings about it. The delivery too was difficult and found the mother unprepared to deal with the needs of a newborn baby. She had to have

a nurse for six months to help her care for the child. Both parents agreed that Daniel had been a "bad" child from the start. He was colicky and frequently had eating problems and wet his bed until the age of five. He was precocious too—walked early, talked early, and had a remarkable memory. In her pride and joy at having a bright and promising child his mother would bring him to neighbors for them to hear him repeat nursery rhymes.

When Daniel was born the Millers had little money, but the father was determined to build a good economic position for his family. He worked long hours and often came home late, tired and irritable. He would easily get into arguments with his wife and child and frequently had attacks of intense rage, shouting and throwing things. Daniel grew to fear his father and his rages. The father was the one who punished him when the mother reported bad behavior during the day. Both parents seemed to take some pride in the fact that he feared his father. There was an unusual gleam in their eyes when, during the hospitalization, they reported with a smile that Daniel and his sister had hated their father and were still afraid of him. The mother was herself a fearful woman, incapable of handling even minimal emergencies. She was totally dependent on her husband. She was terrified of unpredictable events and worried excessively about her child. The parents, a solid, intensely attached couple, clearly differentiated themselves from the children. Themselves they defined as adults but the children as "people who needed direction and help."

The Millers' marital relations seem to be limited to the practicalities of life. They have little capacity for intimacy and real communication. Their roles are sharply defined, with Mr. Miller as the disciplinarian, the decision maker, the breadwinner, and the one who always knows best. The entire responsibility for the family and most dealings with the rest of the world are in his hands. Any emergency, no matter how simple, is his responsibility. He sets himself up as a model of knowledge, effective aggressiveness, and efficiency. The mother's role is one of extreme dependency, with no life of her own; her only responsibility is and has been the routine care of the household and helping the children in small difficulties. Anything like a crisis would find her helpless, and she would turn to her husband in a frenzy comparable to paralytic panic. Physical illnesses or injuries terrify her.

In the context of such a family life, Daniel became a shy, quiet, lonely child who was even afraid of other children and would not play with them. If his mother invited neighbor children in, he would hide under his bed and refuse to play with them.

He was five years old when his sister was born. He was terrified that his mother would leave him, but he looked forward to a sibling and welcomed her. "The birth of my sister was a positive experience. It was an exciting event. I was fascinated by the whole thing. I really enjoyed seeing my sister coming home from the hospital and playing with her." Soon after, he started

he child. Both parents agreed that he was colicky and frequently cried. He was precocious at the age of five. He had a remarkable memory. In her pride she told his mother would bring him to recite lullaby rhymes.

There was little money, but the father was the main provider for his family. He worked long hours and was irritable. He would easily get into arguments and frequently had attacks of intense rage, which were due to fear of his father and his rages. When the mother reported bad news, he would take some pride in the fact that he had an unusual gleam in their eyes when, with a smile that Daniel and his sister could not understand, she told of him. The mother was herself a person who could handle minimal emergencies. She was not as terrified of unpredictable events as the father.

The parents, a solid, intensely attached family, protected themselves from the children. They were seen as "people who needed direction

and were limited to the practicalities of life. There was no real communication. Their roles were clearly defined: the disciplinarian, the decision maker, the one who knows best. The entire responsibility for the rest of the world are in his hands. Daniel sets himself a high standard of aggressiveness, and efficiency. The mother has no life of her own; her only concern is the care of the household and helping Daniel. In a crisis she would find her helplessness, a helplessness comparable to paralytic panic.

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come out, he was born. He was terrified that his mother would come forward to a sibling and welcomed the experience. It was an exciting experience. I really enjoyed seeing my sister playing with her." Soon after, he started

kindergarten and suffered from separation anxiety and conscious fear of his teacher and classmates. He continued to go, however. In first grade his situation grew worse. His father and mother, ambitious for him and dreaming of a brilliant professional future, were convinced that he was a bright child. He could not read at grade level, however, and finally his teacher called his mother to talk about it. His mother, also a teacher, involved herself in an argument about Daniel's intelligence, whereupon his teacher informed the mother that Daniel was not a bright child. Her maternal disappointment was intense and lasting.⁸ Meanwhile Daniel went through school as an average student. Emotionally he remained different, a loner, friendly and cooperative, but always afraid of others. He said: "I remember myself as skinny, on the shy side, afraid of school, intimidated by my teachers." At home he grew close to his small sister, so that one could almost call their relationship symbiotic. They were together most of the time and, having no friends, played with each other and protected each other. He also teased and intimidated his sister frequently. His mother disliked this behavior and would report it to his father, who would shout at him and frequently slap him.

The year after his sister's birth his parents decided that he had to go to summer camp. Daniel was terrified but did not dare resist. He expressed his hatred of camp but in spite of his profound dislike he went every summer of his childhood. Part of the dislike was his feeling that his parents wanted to get rid of him.

When he was about twelve, the economic situation of the family had become very comfortable. They took their first vacation together, much to Daniel's joy. They also decided to move and bought a house in the suburbs. The school in the new district was more progressive than his previous school, and Daniel again felt the fear of having to compete, achieve, and express himself. He managed, however, to cover up his fears and blend with his classmates.

The time of his bar mitzvah arrived. He had attended Hebrew school and deeply disliked the picture of the Old Testament God whom he felt to be vengeful and lacking in compassion. On the other hand, he liked the feeling of a "certain solidarity with the rest of the congregation." He also liked his bar mitzvah because he felt "linked with the past" and "mature." As a child he probably experienced a good feeling during religious services and perhaps a certain closeness to God, he later asserted. His religious confirmation was a routine event because neither his father nor his mother professed any religious belief or gave any indication of having religious feelings. They kept the Jewish holidays as family celebrations with minimal religious overtones. The parents never talked about religion to the children or to each other. During moments of anger and cynicism his father laughed contemptuously at religious practices and beliefs, saying that religion was superstition. (Although Daniel's mother never gave any indication of belief, he nonetheless attributed

belief to her. Verbatim quotation of what he said will later on throw light on the meaning of these attributions: "My mother is more of a believer than my father. He does not believe in religion at all. I have the feeling that my mother, although she does not participate in religion in any formal way, has deep beliefs; the extent of them I am not sure. Probably she believes in a benevolent God.")

He was now entering adolescence. Physically he matured slowly and kept his worries about it to himself. His parents made no mention of his sexual development, but his mother gave him a book entitled *Being Born*. In his middle teens he experienced his first psychosomatic symptoms: "I developed pain around the area of my heart. I didn't think I was having a heart attack though I was quite concerned about it. I thought I was having some kind of pain related to my heart." The family physician disregarded these pains as "growing pains," but Daniel was fearful and "all shook up." The pains lasted for a year and seemed to have some connection with his maternal grandfather, who had had a heart attack and recovered from it.

Much to his father's irritation, his school record remained average, suggesting that he would not be able to go to medical school. When Daniel turned sixteen his father decided that he had to go to a good college and therefore to perform well in the last two years of high school. The father, obsessed with this subject, insisted that Daniel take a number of evaluative and diagnostic tests, and that he repeat the entire series three times because he was dissatisfied with the results. He wanted to know Daniel's I.Q. and intellectual potential. All evaluations found the boy bright but unmotivated, and shut off from people and from himself. He had no friends, saw no girls of his own age, and continued to feel awkward, self-conscious, shy, afraid of failing, and fearful of his teachers. All evaluators recommended psychiatric treatment. His father's frustration was intense, and one day he bluntly told Daniel that he did not like him at all the way he was. In this desperation to fulfill his dream of a physician son, however, he agreed to let him see a psychiatrist. Daniel began seeing a male therapist. Two months after the beginning of treatment his father demanded a report from the psychiatrist. Nobody knows what was said to him, but he was outraged and refused to let his son see the doctor again. He never shared with anybody what the doctor said.

Two years later Daniel graduated from high school and was accepted at a reputable college. He left home and lived on campus for four years. He made a few friends and had some superficial contact with girls of his age for the first time in his life. He felt that this was the best period of his life.

I was determined to do well in college. I seemed to behave differently in college than I did at home. At home I tended to be sloppy. In college I became organized. I organized my time well and took a genuine interest in

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my subjects and just enjoyed myself quite a bit. I enjoyed the freedom of being independent, of making my own decisions and not having my parents constantly after me about doing my homework. I made a number of friends (mainly boys) and we went out together and we had a good time.

At home his father in his impatience had been in the habit of doing the boy's homework if he was too slow or procrastinated for too long.

Now, at the end of college, Daniel did not want to apply to medical school but was unable to offer his father any other professional alternative. He let time go by without sending applications to any schools at all. His father then took matters into his own hands, wrote out applications to several medical schools, flew with Daniel or drove him to interviews after making him memorize the answers to questions he knew would be asked.

Surprisingly, the young man was admitted to a medical school near his parents' home, and he decided to live there, in the school dormitory, and see his parents on weekends. His school work was average and, as before, he blended with the less achieving group of classmates. During the year in which he had to deal directly with clinical work and patients, he experienced his familiar difficulty with people again. He admitted to himself that he was afraid of his patients, afraid of their criticism and potential anger. He constantly forced himself to control his fear and in spite of it was able to carry out his heavy duties as a medical student responsibly.

The episode, previously mentioned, of witnessing an urgent and unforeseen medical emergency happening to a man of his own age, when he was in charge under supervision, frightened him greatly. He began to think about his ability to practice medicine on his own and experienced increasing feelings of depression and hopelessness. A year earlier, he had left the school dormitory and returned to his parents' home, claiming that he was more comfortable there. Now that graduation was approaching, his preoccupation with his professional life became an obsession. He did not apply for internships and began to dwell on his fear that his father, with his knowledge of the medical profession and his need to take over, would run the whole enterprise of his future private practice, again taking over his work as he had done in elementary and high school whenever Daniel was slow in doing his homework. In the context of this reflection, he developed mild lower abdominal and back pain and burning urination. That was the beginning of the series of medical evaluations and his quasi-delusional conviction that he was dying of a fatal ailment which could only be controlled by his father's donating an organ to him. He stopped working and began seeing a male psychiatrist.

The psychiatrist later reported that the first year of Daniel's psychotherapy was filled with tears related to anger at his father. After some time Daniel worried that a dam of sadness had been opened and he could not control it any longer. His concern about his physical health returned and new evaluations

followed. Finally one day just before he stopped seeing the psychiatrist he went to his father's office and, using some medical instruments that he had obtained from the hospital, not knowing exactly what he was doing, decided to have a sexual experience. He introduced a tube into his urethra and insufflated his bladder to the point of pain. He did that in a compulsive, driven manner, knowing he had to do it. Subsequent elaborations of that action, which he called "injuring myself," indicated that one of the fantasies involved was being a woman in face to face intercourse with a man. He was frightened and surprised when he bled from the urethra "like a woman." It is worth mentioning that the episode happened around the time of his first intercourse, at her urgent insistence, with a woman. The woman was an adolescent acquaintance who had fallen in love with him and was determined to marry him. He responded passively to her but was able to perform sexually. The woman was loving and passionate and determined to love him. Daniel was frightened of her, experiencing with her the inability to get close to people he had known all his life as his most painful trait. His sexual wishes—at the conscious level mainly heterosexual—and some of his more repressed homosexual longings had awakened during his college days when he saw his friends dating and knew that they had sex with their girl friends but found himself unable to join them. Now he expressed his wish to be able to let people get close and his desire to have "a girl friend, someone I can confide in, someone I could love."

As a result of his psychiatric admission he was referred to a woman psychiatrist. He made arrangements to work at least two hours a day with a senior physician, helping him with routine tasks no different from those a nurse could do. He had no courage for more, but harbored the hope that one day he could lose his fear of patients and work in some assigned job to which his father would have no access. He was incapable of even considering the idea of relocating in another state.

DANIEL MILLER'S GOD REPRESENTATION
AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN HIS
PSYCHIC EXPERIENCE

In analyzing Daniel Miller's God representation I find it to derive at the unconscious level from the paternal representation. At the conscious level, the representation of a possible God, the image⁹ seems derived from defensive idealization of a being who would be compassionate, capable only of love, and who would not punish.

The father representation is the only visible source of this God representation. This poses the difficult question of what happened to the maternal representation and its elaborations. The God representation belongs entirely to the object and does not include any elements of Daniel's sense of self. God has the characteristics of a living object, capable of a willed independent

topped seeing the psychiatrist he medical instruments that he had acted what he was doing, decided a tube into his urethra and he did that in a compulsive, driven frequent elaborations of that action, stated that one of the fantasies in intercourse with a man. He was the urethra "like a woman." It is noted around the time of his first with a woman. The woman was an love with him and was determined but was able to perform sexually. He determined to love him. Daniel her the inability to get close to is most painful trait. His sexual homosexual—and some of his more noted during his college days when they had sex with their girl friends but expressed his wish to be able to let girl friend, someone I can confide

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existence, and totally absorbed in his wishes and personal interests. Daniel does not count to God and he, in turn, cannot understand God at all. His only way of dealing with God is by making sure that he does not believe in him, that for the time being the need to formulate "any specific ideas on God" does not come up.

Interestingly enough, he never said that there is no God. He said only that he does not believe, that he does not know God and that he has no need to take the religious question seriously. But he considers that "God is closest to those who believe deeply in God because that is their faith." Moreover, this God he does not believe in has the capacity to see him objectively. "I think that God sees me as I see myself." In short, God does exist—as one can infer by the nature of the actions he performs—getting close, seeing—but Daniel grants him no belief.

Table 3 shows the statements made directly by Daniel Miller supporting the formulation of the paternal origin of his God representation.

Table 3. Comparison of Daniel Miller's Statements about God and Those about His Father

GOD	FATHER
"If there is a God, then I have dissatisfied him, because I have not made the best use of my abilities."	"My father always insisted I make the best use of my abilities."
"I have never experienced closeness to God."	"I was never close to my father."
"If I am in distress I do not resort to God, because I have no belief in God."	"I do not ask anything from my father."
"I do not formally pray, but I may toss a coin in a fountain and make a wish or think in a hopeful way because it makes me feel good."	"I don't talk to my father."
"Prayer is not important to me because it does not serve any useful purpose."	"The member of the family whom I despise the most is my father, because he was less apt to consider my feelings in any given subject."
"For me the love for God is not important, because I find it difficult to love something I don't know or understand." "God is subject for conjecture and deep thought about the meaning of life." "I consider God as an <i>Enigma</i> because I have no clear-cut attitudes about God."	<i>Psychiatrist's note:</i> "Dr. Miller often indicated that he ruminated all day long about his father and finds himself in despair because he cannot communicate with him or understand him. He does not know how to relate to his father, but longs for a relationship with him."
"What I resent the most about God is that the biblical God was a bit too revengeful to suit me."	"The member of my family whom I felt the most distant from was my father, because he was the most quick to criticize and had the least appreciation of my likes and dislikes."

GOD

FATHER

"I never expressed hate for God but have felt exasperated at my situation or fate."

"Emotionally, I would like to have the insight that God has, because problems are more easily met and understanding of people improves."

"I feel that God expects from me the same as my parents expected."

"I don't feel any punishment comes from God.... I am not sure of the existence of God.... I could not believe in a God that punishes."

"I never thought about God in relation to any event in my life until recently," i.e., associated with death.

[After saying that the father's style of disciplining was rather abusive]: "He instilled in me certain fear of him which has probably remained to this day."

"I do not express hatred to my father." [Both parents said a number of times that the children hate their father.]

"My father was closest to my MOTHER because THE [slip of the pen, which could mean 'they' or 'he'] HAD BETTER communication and deeper insight into each other's personality."

"I was afraid of my father during those times [from ages six to twelve]. He used to come home grouchy. I was a little bit mischievous. My mother used to tell my father how bad I had been during the day and I used to get hell from my father. He yelled at me, he hit me a number of times on the face with his hand. At times my father grew really furious (with my mother) and would throw dishes on the floor."

Psychiatrist's note: "Daniel Miller had a dream: he had a chronic disease which was fatal. His father would donate an organ so that he could live."

The first point needing elucidation is what happened to Daniel Miller's maternal representation, since there is no indication of its being used for any early elaboration of the God representation.

I believe that the explanation lies in the infantile, schizoid, frightened, inefficient qualities of the mother. These make her no more than a privileged but submissive child in relation to the father, who was always in charge and whose physical absence from the home did not diminish the intensity of his emotional presence. The mother was, in her way, a caring person, but she had no power over the father. On the contrary she submitted to him completely and feared him. She herself was frightened and ineffectual, and in any emergency she needed him to function for her and her children as a protective mother would do.

Daniel felt he loved his mother and listed her as the person he loved most in his life, at every age, except during the latency period (six to twelve) when he

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felt that he hated both parents intensely because of their open dissatisfaction
 with him for his performance at school. His mother lost her narcissistic
 investment in him after the argument with his teacher in the first grade. The
 father, in turn, increased his narcissistic investment in him during that period
 and was determined to make him perform even if he had to sit with him—as
 he did—during the entire time Daniel took to do his homework. Sometimes
 his father took over and did it for him. Daniel was also convinced that they
 were always trying to get rid of him and found incontestable evidence that his
 worries were justified in the fact that he had to go to camp each summer for six
 years in spite of his voicing deep dislike for it.

He felt his mother's concern for him, as illustrated in his answer, "The
 member of the family whom I loved the most was my mother. I loved her this
 much because she showed the most concern for my feelings and generally
 showed affection." But he also complained about lack of closeness and com-
 munication with her and the difficulty of relating to her as a person, her
 excessive worrying about irrelevant matters, and her constant fear for his
 welfare in connection with bodily injuries, dangers, or imaginary risks. He
 complained, expressing his wish for a mother who "would treat me more as
 an adult than as a child." At that point he laughed, remembering his mother's
 obviously odd behavior, and said: "I like the little quirks that she has, I like
 her disposition." The "little quirks" were described by the social worker as
 the traits of a person who is "very passive, very sad, depressed, dependent,
 and compliant." "In observing the interaction of the couple," she continued,
 "there is very little warmth or communication between them." For several
 years the mother had a compulsive symptom of picking at her face, which
 would enrage her husband to the point of throwing things while he shouted furi-
 ously at her. His vulgarity and his ability to be totally controlling of other
 women, as he is of his wife, showed one day when he told the social worker:
 "You be a good little girl and get your ass out there and get my son home this
 weekend or I'll take him out of the hospital."

The picture emerges clearly of a childish mother who submits totally to her
 husband and who is incapable of offering any protection to the children
 against a tyrannical father controlling the domestic universe. I propose that
 such a mother could not be used to elaborate an image of God because of her
 submission to an existing superior person. She could, however, be a model for
 a frightened boy to identify with. He said it explicitly: "Emotionally I resem-
 ble my MOTHER because I tend to be shy and overly sensitive." She could
 also be a partial model for a God one wishes might exist, a God capable of a
 certain sadness at his own impotence. I suggest that the statement Daniel
 Miller appended to his picture of God bears some relation to his mother. He
 wrote: "This represents my image of God. Extremely wise but sad at man's
 inhumanity to man. Also patient and sensitive to the suffering of mankind."
 His mother was seen by him as "overly sensitive," and the social worker

wrote that the mother has "some sad feelings about Daniel's situation," perhaps also—I could add—her own. Daniel, as I said earlier, attributed belief in a benevolent God to his mother, even though she never gave any indication of such belief.

I propose that a person in Daniel Miller's situation needs to convince himself about the possibility of a God who is "benevolent" and that it is not enough to think by himself about that possibility. He has to feel that his mother believes deeply in such a God as a way of giving balance to an unbearable home situation. His confidence in his mother's belief, which coincides with his ideal image of God, is a way of maintaining hope against hope. Like a gruesome fairy tale, his world is peopled by an overwhelming father, all-powerful and controlling, and a childish mother as frightened of him as her two children are. That world offers no hope, no way out, no rest, no peace. It only engenders despair and more fear. A witness, however, not a real God, may help the desperate. The God described by Daniel after he drew the picture of God is only that—a wise, sad, impotent witness of "man's inhumanity to man." I suggest that Daniel, caught between his parents, hoped that his mother was such a witness—and sometimes, indeed, she may have been. But most of the time, possibly because of her own fear, she offered up her frightened son to the punishment of her husband. Such an action might have been endured by postulating that she believes in a God like herself, impotent to control the cruelty of others. Such a God has no real substance, and his existence is a mere possibility, a consoling hope that helps a desperate person to maintain minimal psychic balance.

The fact is that the face of God looks very much like the face of Daniel's father (and his own face). It is unquestionably a male face, as is his unconscious God representation. The substance of God, a real God who may harm, punish, reject, ignore, that God who is denied belief, certainly comes from the paternal representation.

Daniel Miller's relation to his father is fraught with contradictory feelings. He hates his father, but he also admires him and wants to be like him. On the one hand, he would like to be rid of him and get a completely different father. On the other hand, there is nothing he would like more than to have the love, understanding, and respect of his father. He longs to understand and love him, but he despairs that he ever will.

For his part, the father has devoted his life to his wife and children, and through his son he seeks the narcissistic fulfillment of being the father of a brilliant doctor. At the same time, he has an overwhelming need to humiliate the son, infantilize him, ridicule his sexuality—in a single analytic word, castrate him—so as to make himself the all-powerful male, the only efficient and seductive male.

When asked to list chronologically the most hated person in his life, Daniel Miller said that from years one to six it was his father; from six to twelve his

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father and his mother; from twelve to fifteen he listed his father again. From
fifteen to twenty-one he listed himself, and after that he claimed he did not hate
anyone "because I have more understanding now."

That hatred went together with admiration of his father's competence: "The
member of my family whom I admire the most is my father, because he is
confident and concerned with the well-being of his family." He also men-
tioned his father's efficiency and knowledge of the world, his capacity to earn
money and to deal with people. He said, "My father has many qualities that I
admire, namely, self-confidence: he is assertive, he knows how to get things
done, he knows what he wants and knows how to go about getting it." He
wished to identify with his father, knowing how difficult that would be. He
said: "If I could change myself I would like to be like my father, because he
was self-confident and is more aggressive than myself." Feeling rejected and
ignored by him, he despised his father: "The member of my family I despise
the most is my father, because he showed bad temper and was less apt to
consider my feelings on any given subject." He also disliked his father's
attitude toward him: "The member of my family I felt the most distant from
was my father, because he was the most quick to criticize and had the least
appreciation of my likes or dislikes."

Daniel Miller was always afraid of his father's unpredictable rages and was
aware of the consequences the experience had left him with: "He instilled in
me certain fear of him which has probably remained to this day, and possibly I
transferred this fear of him to other people." I suggest that God is to be listed
among those who received this transferred fear. The parents enjoyed seeing
both children afraid of their father and mentioned it to the social worker as
something laughable, almost a family joke.

The father in turn laughs at his son's attempts to be a man and seems to find
pleasure in contrasting his own masculine good looks, competence, and
seductiveness with his son's total lack of masculinity (this is the father's view
of him; in reality Daniel is not effeminate but a frightened boy). The social
worker said: "Mr. Miller describes his son as a neuter, sexually, saying that
he has never seen any evidence of any kind of a sexual drive in his son—and
he laughs about it." Interestingly, when the father said this, his son was
overtly involved in one of his first sexual experiences with women, a fact
which points to the father's need to see him as an asexual being.

When Daniel was asked about his unsatisfied needs, a good relation with
his father was at the top of his list, although he said that in general he always
wished for a closer relation with both his parents.

He said, "If I can change the situation, I would like to make my parents
over in some way. I probably would change my father's disposition, to make
him a little more affectionate." He was referring specifically to ages three to
six. He then continued with his wish between ages fifteen and twenty-one to
improve his relation with his father. He said, "I needed a combination of

things: closeness to my father, a willingness on both of our parts to come to an understanding, discussing what my problems were and why I reacted the way I did towards him.”

When I asked him about an ideal father, Daniel said, “I would probably get another father: a father who really likes children, who is not preoccupied with financial success, who is willing to admit he is at fault and who is more open about discussing things with his children.”

In his longing for an identification with his father, he hoped that the father, through the donation of an organ to his dying son, would make him into a man like himself. The organ donation had the advantage of keeping Daniel in the passive position without risking his father’s rage, while giving the father the occasion to take the initiative to show his love for his son and also to demonstrate that he was willing to give part of himself to his son.

Daniel knew that there were obvious things he shared with his father, as illustrated by his description: “Physically I resemble my FATHER, because OUR [notice the pronoun indicating sharing] facial expressions and features are alike.” But his wish was to be like his father internally, not just to have a similar external appearance.

Faced with the impossibility of identifying with his father on account of his intense fear and hatred of him, Daniel remains like his mother, a passive, uncommitted, helpless child, under paternal guidance. I believe the position is defensive: although his ideal is to be like his father, he cannot get himself to compete with such a dangerous being particularly since the father tolerates neither his independence nor his competence nor his sexuality. The solution he created with his illness—which appeared when he had no choice but to become an efficient male—is to be in a suspended state of life; like a small helpless boy who would feel like “a fish out of water” if he left his childhood. He summed it up very well: “It is as though I haven’t entered adolescence yet.”

That is his life situation with his father and the world at large.

With God his situation is more complex. Representationally, God and his father are so similar that the fear of one can easily be extrapolated to the other.

God, however, poses an additional threat. That is his capacity to see Daniel as he is. He has always hated his father but never expressed it overtly; neither has he done so with God—in spite of feeling “exasperation” with his fate. If God exists and Daniel accords him belief, he will find himself in a dangerous predicament. God will know him as he knows himself, and God being vengeful, only peril can attend such an encounter. The encounter accordingly must be avoided at all costs. Although God is represented as a full person, different and completely outside Daniel, he has an invasive potential. If Daniel acknowledges his presence, he risks being invaded and overwhelmed. He defends himself against that possibility as little children do in their nursery games and fears: he does not look to see whether there is a God or not and

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therefore does not have to be afraid of a ghost he does not believe in. Indeed
his efforts must be devoted to *not* having a God. He protects himself from his
father's invasiveness by withdrawing, becoming passive, procrastinating, and
by isolating his affect. He hopes to muffle his father's dominance and to keep
enough psychic distance for survival. The overall maneuver can be described
as a retreat to a schizoid position. I propose that belief in God could destroy
the equilibrium brought about by the schizoid defenses. In childhood the
schizoid withdrawal undoes the childhood belief that the parents see through
the child and learn his private intentions. The child hides in himself as a
protection against destructive invasiveness. But in Western culture (and in
Daniel's personal view: "God sees me as I see myself"), God knows people
internally—bypassing the schizoid barrier. For Daniel to accept the existence
of God would be to be seen in his most intimate and secret self. For him this
would also mean to submit that secret self to God's vengefulness or perhaps,
even worse, to God's lack of interest in him, when deep down he is desperate
to be acknowledged, considered, loved, and respected by God and father
alike. At this moment, belief would be psychic suicide.

The choices left are only two: either God changes or Daniel denies belief
and behaves as though God does not exist or exists only as an enigma. If God
is willing to change, he has to prove himself to be capable solely of love; he
must promise not to punish; he must be compassionate and "sensitive to the
suffering of mankind."

Daniel Miller has no grounds for believing that God will ever be that way.
The Old Testament God he met in his Hebrew school frightened him as much
as his father and offered no alternative to the God representation he had
already formed. The only choice left to him is to profess no belief in God and
ignore the question of whether or not he exists. Daniel knows that there is
something unusual, even abnormal, about never having experienced the need
to solve the problem of God. But it is not simply a developmental lag that
affects him. It is also the tragic tension between his longings and his fears.
From his father he longs for affection, respect, and understanding; he pro-
crastinates and waits passively, hoping against hope that one day his father will
come through. He has remained a latency child, hoping his father will help
him to become a man. He cannot understand his father and it is beyond his
comprehension that he will never have the father he longs for.

The same happens in his relation with God. He cannot say bluntly, "God
does not exist," or "Religion is a big superstition," as his father has said
many times. He keeps God as an enigma, a potentially explorable being
whom he cannot throw away. In his heart he wonders, ponders about this God
who "is a subject for conjecture and deep thought." Caught between his fear
and his wish, he remains in a fog, undecided and fearful, sadly contemplating
those who, unlike him, seem so committed and involved with a God they
claim loves them.

When as part of the research I asked him about an afterlife, he reflected for a while and decided that he preferred to be with God there, rather than there and without God. His answer is most illuminating: "I guess I choose to be united to God. It just occurs to me that it would be lonely to be there in heaven by myself."¹⁰ The importance of God as an overall presence gives him no psychic space in which to realize that besides God "heaven" has lots of people in it and that he does not have to be utterly alone. But in his schizoid way and his lifelong involvement with his father, he has never paid much attention to anybody else, not even his mother and sister. In his scheme of things it is God or loneliness forever. Faced with such a desperate situation, he chooses to be with God, who is in fact less frightening than everlasting loneliness.