Chapter I

Introduction

Expressions of Anarchism

To a question whether he could be called an anarchist, Henry Miller (1891-1980) was quick to answer in the affirmative. He clarified the traits in him that qualified him for the epithet: "That's exactly what I am. Have been all my life. Without belonging. [...] subscribing [...]" (in Andrey June Booth 40). By not belonging and subscribing to the conventions authoritatively imposed by society and its multifarious institutions, Miller acknowledges to have remained an outsider. In being an outsider he experienced freedom, the state of being for which an anarchist exists. "It is usual to see absolute freedom as the anarchist's supreme ideal and their central commitment" (Peter Marshall 36). Freedom has remained Miller's ideal, and his commitment to it has been expressed in the cult of rebellion that his life and works have realized. This study proposes to read the cardinal works of Miller viz. Tropic of Cancer, Black Spring, Tropic of Capricorn, Sexus, Plexus, and Nexus as expressions of anarchism.¹

Miller's life, by virtue of its prolonged struggle and conflict with the authorities that determined the moral and aesthetic codes of literature, has been marked by its assertion of artistic freedom. His literature, in terms of its formal deviance and the intended use of obscenity, has been anarchical in its revolt.

¹ The abbreviations Cancer and Capricorn are used for Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn respectively, in this study.
against and freedom from the socially accepted codes and norms of the literature of his times. As Richard Kostelanetz says:

\begin{quote}
Miller, more than any of his contemporaries, offered images of liberation – both sociopolitical and literary – that would speak to the needs of succeeding generations. By freeing himself from the fear of exposing his deepest self in his writings, he transformed forever what writers could publicly say about their experience. The ultimate theme of his works and his life [. . .] is that freedom of speech is the essence of human liberation [. . .]. (350)
\end{quote}

The central problem with Miller is that his fiction has himself, i.e. “Henry Miller”, as the protagonist. Almost all the facts regarding Miller’s life have become known mainly through his quasi-confessions in his novels. They are ‘quasi’ because it is obvious in the works under consideration that there has been a lavish employment of imagination, which renders them more fictional than factual reports of events in the writer’s life. The composite image of the writer Miller, who is also the central character of his works, is a combined creation of Miller’s selective exposition of certain episodes of his life that are grossly transformed into myths through imagination, and his biographical facts available from objective proofs like correspondence, and testimonies provided by his innumerable friends. Therefore, the acceptance of the biographical details of the protagonist-Miller as historical facts is to be preceded by the task of distilling truth from fiction. But critics have generally not been particular about this, for most of the criticism against Miller has been done under the false assumption that the
words and deeds of protagonist-Miller are authentic representations of writer-Miller's thoughts and actions. However, some of the later publications on Miller conclusively prove that he has been indulging in self-mythification in his novels. This prompts the present-day reader of Miller's works not to take the projected image of "Henry Miller" found in them as doing justice to the real man. The protagonist-Miller is thus regarded here as being the myth of an artist that represents the cult of an anarchist self.

Since the evidence of the argument that Miller has been mythifying himself in his novels lies scattered in a few documents, it would be desirable to record some of the important ones. Perhaps, Miller himself provides the most important one in a letter dated October 1959 (the year of publication of Nexus) to his friend Lawrence Durrell, where he speaks about the fiction that was The Rosy Crucifixion trilogy containing Sexus, Plexus, and Nexus, the three of his six most noted works, which tell about his life in America with his second wife June Smith (called Mona in the novels). The sexually promiscuous life of the Miller of Sexus has largely contributed to Miller's being viewed as a sex guru by youthful later-day sympathizers, and also as a writer of smut by his contemporaries, all under the fallacy of taking the protagonist for the real man. Miller writes to Durrell:

What I feel like saying sometimes – when the whole bloody Crucifixion comes to an end – is “Ladies and Gentlemen, don’t believe a word of it, it was all a hoax. Let me tell you in a few words the whole story of my tragedy; I can do it in twenty pages.”
And what would be the story? That, wanting desperately to become a writer, I became a writer. In the process I sinned. I became so involved with the Holy Ghost that I betrayed my wife, my child, my friends, my country. I fell in love with the medium... I almost fell in love with myself, horrible thought. I recorded what I saw and felt, not what was. (qtd. in Ihab Hassan 106)

The regret Miller expresses in having "betrayed" his wife, child, friends, and country constitutes in itself a prominent evidence of the fact that the real Miller is fundamentally different from the Miller of the novels, because the hallmark of the attitude of the latter is quite the opposite of that of the former. In the novels he is without any sincere regrets about divorcing his first wife and forsaking his daughter and marrying his Muse, Mona. While he is doted on by his friends in the novels, he is free to accept or reject them according to his whims. The thought of betraying his country America, gives him pleasure in the novels; anti-Americanism is the socio-political position that informs his attitude not only in The Rosy Crucifixion but also, perhaps more severely, in the other works studied here. Therefore the regret in these matters that Miller confesses in the letter to Durrell clearly points towards the mythification that has gone into the creation of the protagonist-self of these novels.

Other than himself, the individual that Miller has represented enormously in his works is his second wife, June Smith, whom he presents metaphorically in Capricorn as "America on foot, winged and sexed" (311). June alias Mona's image, the reader gets, is that of a mysterious femme fatale, who is a
pathological liar, a lesbian, and a woman with great histrionic talent. The autobiographical stamp Miller purposely gives to his works has been misleading the readers into taking Mona as a replica of June, until the publication of Anais Nin's Journals in 1966, fourteen years before Miller's death. Nin, who has closely known Miller and June in Paris, testifies how grossly June has been misrepresented in the guise of Mona. Nin reports the shock June experienced in seeing what Miller had done to her in his works:

I saw the ravages which Henry's literary inventions have caused in June's poor vacillating mind. Everything he has written, said, distorted, exaggerated, has confused her, disintegrated her personality, her own sincerity. Now she stands before the bulk of Henry's writing and cannot tell whether she is a prostitute, a goddess, a criminal, a saint. (qtd. in John Parkin 12)

The recent biography of Henry Miller by Robert Ferguson further brings to light evidence of Miller's practice of mythification. The story of Miller's separation from his second wife figures not in his important works, but in an essay "Via Dieppe-Newhaven" published in his book The Cosmological Eye (1939), where he says how he and his wife had decided to separate while in Paris, and how sentimentally softening the final parting had been when he put her in a boat bound for America, after giving her money for the journey with loving persuasion because she had thoughtfully refused to accept it. One is naturally led to believe this description of the scene, because "Via Dieppe-Newhaven" is an essay, and
does not belong to the category of novel which warns the reader of the element of fiction in it. Miller writes quite convincingly in this essay:

And here again I must render her justice. She really didn't want to take the money. It made her wince, I could see that, but finally she accepted it reluctantly and stuffed it away in her bag. As she took the bag she said good-bye again and this time I felt that it was the last good-bye. She said good-bye and she stood on the stairs looking up at me with a strange sorrowful smile. If I had made the least gesture I know she would have thrown the money out of the window and rushed back into my arms and stayed with me forever.

(The Cosmological Eye 201-202)

Ferguson's study of Miller's life unearths the truth of the situation which Miller renders in romantic terms. Ferguson bases his arguments on the testimony provided by Nin's journals. He says:

Nin was baffled by the discrepancy between the account of the incident Henry gave to her in a letter at the time, with its description of a last, ugly scene between June and himself in which June more or less forced him to hand over the passage money, and what Nin called the hard, brassy description of Via Dieppe-Newhaven, which depicted the couple sitting 'drinking merrily and in a fit of drunken sentimentality Henry gives her money etc.' When she put this to Henry he admitted categorically that the published account was 'fiction'. It was through experiences like this that Anais, who
continued to be obsessed by Henry's relationship with June, began to realize that Miller himself practised the same self-mythification of which he accused June. (245)

Miller can also be seen making amends to the injustice he did to June in creating Mona. June had the unrealized ambition of becoming a stage actress. In Sexus, Miller says that Mona performed as actress with the Theater Guild Group. But Ferguson establishes that

[June] almost certainly never got to perform with them. [. . .] was he [Miller], in fiction, giving June the little moment of fame and success as an actress that he knew she longed for in real life, but never achieved. (95)

One feature that largely contributed to the creation of the image of Henry Miller as a literary anarchist is his oft-repeated resolution in the novels – most importantly in Cancer – "not to change a line of what I write" (19). The protagonist-Miller misleads the reader into believing that the novel is grossly wanting in editing, and that the lopsidedness of its narrative art is due to this. But James Goodwin asserts, "Miller undertook three complete revisions of the manuscripts [of Cancer] during the two years it awaited initial publication" (301-302). Parkin reiterates this point when he says:

Miller rewrote and rewrote again, cannibalizing texts out of rejected texts, retelling the same adventures in different episodes and modes, experimenting with authorial intrusion and narratorial
commentary then applying them to experiential reality, both serious and carnivalized. (214)

Though of marginal importance, two instances given by Brassai, a photographer friend of Miller during his Paris years (1930-1939), help illuminate the mythifying tendency of Miller's mind, which Brassai calls "the place in which real events and real people were reborn in his dense, muggy, subtropical prose" (127). In Cancer Miller introduces Brassai as a photographer who wanted to know "if I [Miller] would pose for him with my pants down and in other ways" (193). Miller consents to be photographed for a fee. He goes on describing the places they visited together in Paris; how they used to "play a game of cards in the afternoon before getting down to work" (193). About the reality that probably inspired Miller in the creation of the image of the days spent with this photographer, Brassai says:

It is true that I went on several nocturnal walks with Henry, but the only time we planned to spend an evening together in what he terms the "malodorous quarters" hadn't worked out. Never once did I go to a bordello with Henry; and never did I use him as a model for any pornographic pictures. For one thing, I did not do pornography; I was doing a photographic study of human behavior, and that was why I frequented the centers of pleasure and vice that had so captured Miller's imagination.

It was therefore from my photographs that he imagined we had gone to those "slimy joints" together, not because we had
actually done so. [. . .] And that afternoon game of cards we played
“before getting down to work” – he saw it in one of the photographs
I took [. . .]. (129)

The second interesting proof Erassai offers to buttress the case of Miller’s
mythification is the instance in Nexus where he reports to have taken up the job
of a gravedigger. He calls himself “A Shakespearean digger” (152), and
continues in a Hamletian vein that

it was at the bottom of the grave, shovel in hand, that I realized
there was something symbolic about my efforts. Though another
man’s body would occupy this hole nevertheless I felt as if it were
my own funeral. (152)

Though the symbolic meaning of grave digging lends a romantic aura to the
existential suffering of his “rosy crucifixion” in Nexus, it nevertheless has been an
invention of Miller for artistically embellishing his self-myth. As Brassai says:

Such distortions abound in Miller’s work. Yet another example:
Miller often talked about the time he worked as a gravedigger in
Queens. The truth is that he never dug graves to bury dead people.
He dug holes for the Parks Department, so that they could plant
trees. But a gravedigger is a far more romantic figure than a
landscape gardener. It brings to mind Hamlet, standing over a
freshly dug grave, holding the skull of Yorick and wondering,

What’s it all about? What’s it all about? (141)
Kingsley Widmer was perhaps the first critic of Miller to sense the distortion of truth and the invention of lies on which the protagonist-Miller has been founded. He says:

[. . .] it is unavoidable in discussing Miller's work to call the central figure Henry Miller, as does Henry Miller, though this is not a claim that the experiences are literal fact . . . in all probability Miller's writings about Miller are not true, in several senses. (Henry Miller 8)

The problem, as is discerned in Widmer's discontent, is the ploy by which Miller makes the reader identify the protagonist-Miller with the author-Miller, which is the naming of the character after his own name. Miller "took full advantage of the ultimate inscrutability of both the sex-life and the reading life in creating his myth of himself" (Ferguson 34). The autobiographical status of these works thus stands largely nullified due to this, because the claim of these narratives to be versions of the author's life can be justified only if they are "anchored in verifiable biographical facts" (Paul John Eakin 185). Even when the life of protagonist-Miller corresponds in some detail with that of author-Miller, the reader feels deprived of the absolute truth regarding the life of the author. This obviously is the reader's problem and not author-Miller's. The displeasure of readers like Widmer stems from the preconceived notion that what Miller writes is autobiography and not fiction. The fidelity to facts demanded of an autobiography is missing in Miller's works, and hence they are to be considered as fiction in the camouflage of an autobiography.
Later readers of Miller have come to terms with this problem, and have accepted the truth that the Miller of the novels is not the replica of the author-Miller. Unlike the tone of accusation in Widmer's words above, when the issue comes to the consideration of Erica Jong, we see the calm of the theoretical acceptance of the situation. She admits that there are two Millers – one the historical person, and the other the Miller of the books. She recognizes Miller's mythification of himself in his works, and that there are "disparities between "the truth" of his life and the grandiosity of his fiction" (45). The same perception of the difference between the author and his creation bearing his name has led John Parkin into calling the character of the novels as 'Henry' and the author as 'Miller' in order to avoid the confusion of taking the one for the other. Parkin's method is quite acceptable in overcoming this problem that has marred the critical study of Miller, of which Miller himself has warned his readers elsewhere:

[...] my "autobiographical romances", which, if I have not already warned the reader, should be taken with a grain of salt. There are times when I myself no longer know whether I said and did the things I report or whether I dreamed them up. (Stand Still Like the Hummingbird 83)

Since Miller himself and his critics mentioned here are unanimous in the perception that the thoughts and actions of protagonist-Miller are largely myths,
the works studied here are not to be taken as autobiographies but as fictions.² They can be seen as having correspondence with truth only as far as any novel might be considered as having roots in reality. The question of the historical veracity of protagonist-Miller’s positions is thus irrelevant to the appreciation of these novels, since he exists only as a myth with the artistic purpose of symbolizing an anarchist self.

This is not to disregard critical comments like the one which says that the dissociation between protagonist-Miller and author-Miller is marginal, and that “Henry’s [protagonist] self-referential consciousness gives Miller the means to convey authorial experience” (Goodwin 302). It is beyond doubt that the cornerstones of the life of protagonist-Miller, like the expatriate life in Paris, the social failure in America, and the divorce of the first wife to marry a bohemian woman, are basically author-Miller’s experiences too. But as already contended, based on these facts of the author’s life a lot of mythification goes into the process of the creation of protagonist-Miller’s thoughts, actions, and experiences. “The re-examination of life history is itself creative in that it chooses, modifies, colors, and even changes outright the actual relationships of the events and people in order to create the person the author wills himself to be in the present” (Gordon 52). The re-creation that takes place in the making of protagonist-Miller renders him not marginally but substantially dissociated from author-Miller. Even if Miller’s novels are, hypothetically, taken to be autobiographies, one can see

² This frees the study of these works from the necessity of regarding the theoretical complexities of the representation of the author’s self in autobiography. Eakin’s work is a study on this subject.
what Northrop Frye says about autobiographies sustaining the argument that protagonist-Miller is dissociated from author-Miller. Frye says:

Most autobiographies are inspired by a creative, and therefore fictional, impulse to select only those events and experiences in the writer's life that go to build an integrated pattern. This pattern may be something larger than himself with which he has come to identify himself, or simply the coherence of his character and attitudes.

(qtd. in Jane A. Nelson 117)

This "larger than himself" pattern with which Miller identifies is contended here to be that of anarchism, and that protagonist-Miller is the symbol of a self whose character and attitudes are patterned on the fundamental principles of anarchism.

On the basis of the evidence provided for Miller's self-mythification, this study reckons protagonist-Miller and author-Miller as different from one another—the former a fictional creation, and the latter its creator. To sustain this dichotomy, and to avoid confusion, this study shall henceforward refer to protagonist-Miller as Henry, and author-Miller as Miller, in the tradition set by Parkin and Goodwin.

Henry's self is consistently presented as a symbolic expression of anarchism only in the six works that this study attempts to analyze. The two novels Miller wrote before Cancer, namely Moloch and Crazy Cock, which were published posthumously, do not have Henry as a character, and are written in the third person. Even when all the works by Miller (excepting Moloch and Crazy
Cock) are written in the confessional mode, only Capricorn, Sexus, Plexus, and Nexus "taken together develop the theme of the growth of the writer" (Gordon xxv). Cancer presents the flowering of the anarchist writer who lives out his freedom in the liberating ambience of Paris. Black Spring, even when it is a collection of individual pieces, is considered here as belonging to the class of the rest of the selected works by virtue of the emphasis it lays on the making and expression of the anarchist self of Henry.

Critics generally consider these six works as the most important of Miller's oeuvre. Nelson (163), as well as Isadore Traschen (345), considers Cancer, Capricorn, and Black Spring as a trilogy, along with Sexus, Plexus, and Nexus which Miller himself conceived as The Rosy Crucifixion trilogy. In these works, Henry's identity is that of an artist whose attitudes, ideas, and expressions are emphatically anarchist in nature. None of the other works of Miller, which are mostly collections of essays and correspondence, with the exception of The Colossus of Maroussi (1941) and The Smile at the Foot of the Ladder (1948), of which the former is a travelogue and the latter a brief fictional piece in the third person, has the confessional / symbolically depicting the myth of Henry as an anarchist self as in these six works. Hence the choice of these works for study.

What makes Henry a symbol of anarchist expression is his drive for freedom from authority and bondage of all kind, and the self-realization he experiences in the assertion of freedom. He exists in the novels not as a character in a plot, but as an abstract individual phenomenon that concretizes the psychological and social experiences of a self that seeks and realizes freedom.
from bondage to authority. Since he is not poised in a plot or a chronologically and logically developed chain of incidents, he is not defined as a person who develops in interaction with society. On the other hand, his self is given as anarchist throughout, and the society with which he interacts affects him only as much as is needed for the novel's requirement of demonstrating the constant nature of his anarchism. He passes through events, which are only loosely if not interconnected, that provide Miller with the opportunity of illustrating the characteristic behaviour of an anarchist self. It is the assertion of this study that Miller encodes expressions of anarchism in Henry's thoughts, actions, and responses to situations. It therefore seeks out such instances in these works, and proceeds to substantiate that they are founded on the principles of anarchism.

Given that Miller's thematic and narrative haphazardness is puzzling and has been instrumental in his being academically neglected, the relevance of this study is in that it brings to light that anarchism is a significant tool for an understanding of his work. The blatant and utter lack of consistent commitment of these texts to any set of values other than freedom from them, lends itself to a cogent anarchist analysis based on the premise that the absolute freedom envisaged by anarchism refutes the ultimate authority of all systems of thought or ideology. The ideological inconsistencies of Miller's texts are, thus, symbolic of anarchism. It is found here that Miller is "not fit literary flesh for bland methodologies or for genteel appreciation" (Widmer, Henry Miller 7), because the very anarchist nature of these works does not yield to an analysis founded on literary theory, which needs as a precondition the texts' claim to the observance
of a certain system of representation. Studying these works in the light of anarchism brings out their artistic correlations to a considerable extent.

What demands discussion at this point is the forces and circumstances that might have led Miller into mythifying his self for the creation of the anarchist self of Henry. Since the basic impulse of anarchism is for freedom, the question that naturally arises is what could be the circumstances from which Miller sought to assert his freedom through the creation of Henry. Miller's as well as Henry's formative years were spent in the America of the early decades of the twentieth century. Also, the life of Henry depicted in the novels, other than Cancer, is set in the America of the 1920s. For Miller, an American writer of these times, the factor that most restrained free expression could have been the Puritanism of his society. It also accounted for America's materialism, with its emphasis on work, success, and money, in a life bounc by morals and prudery. From the point of view of art and literature, it was a time when artists were rising against the destructive power of Puritan influence: it was frequently held responsible for all that was materialistic, commercial and anti-aesthetic in the American view of life. Critics blamed the Puritan heritage for much that seemed to limit American writing: its heavily allegorizing disposition, its failure to open out to experience or the ambiguity of the symbol, its lack of inclusiveness, its dull response

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3 According to Marshall "The word 'anarchy' comes from the ancient Greek [... ] meaning the condition of being 'without a leader' but usually translated and interpreted as 'without a ruler'" (x).
to the world of nature, its rigorous moralism and its Anglo Saxonism.

(Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury 31-32)

It is this puritanical and materialistic culture that Miller faced in America during his youthful life. He sought to transcend the limitations imposed by the false morality of such a culture by fighting it through his artistic medium. He struggled through creating Henry, who in his thoughts, words, and action never spared any chance of rebelling at those moral codes of the culture that Miller detested. Understandably, repression of the sexual impulse – the foremost feature of puritanical culture – becomes that from which Henry primarily seeks freedom through a rebellion, which makes a blatant expression of 'biological facts' its most resounding characteristic. As Gordon says:

Miller's hero had to solve certain problems which Miller had discovered in his culture, problems which perhaps he had suffered under, and which perhaps he had not solved. The problem was that the individual's harmonious growth toward inner freedom, toward the use and development of all his powers was impeded by a culture which refused to recognize and accept the simple facts of biological life. (24)

Miller's literary anarchism thus firstly and most resolutely concentrates its expression in the use of obscenity and the presentation of sex, in a way that is free of inhibitions, and shocking to contemporary American society. Gordon effectively brings home this point when he says:
Miller picks almost unerringly what in the American culture has been least acceptable. If in the Victorian world it had always been considered normal (to the extent that sex was considered at all) to have intercourse in only one position, in a bed with the man on top, Miller is careful to describe every other position and every other location. Most frequently the woman jumps into his lap in a straddling position. Such a position de-emphasizes the traditional active-passive relationship and makes both partners active. He varies the locale for sex, takes it outdoors and indoors, in public and private places. He breaks the rule of privacy by having more than one couple present, or having several women, or several men and one woman. He varies sexual practices widely, and goes far outside the professed norms of his culture, especially lower class culture. [...]

His language during these descriptive passages violates openly all of the American conventions. He uses all of the ordinary four-letter words quite frequently. (26)

That this literary anarchist rebellion met with stiff resistance from American censor authorities is history. None of Miller's major works were published in America until 1961, when the ban on Cancer and subsequently the other books was lifted, after a long and tedious trial. That America took upon itself so seriously to keep Miller's books out of the reach of its public on charge of

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4 Wickes, Henry Miller and the Critics 147-92 gives the legal history of Cancer and other works of Miller.
obscenity highlights how deep the roots of puritanical morality had run in its culture. This makes one realize that Miller’s could not have been an isolated voice of anarchism in America, and that the very morally repressive ambience of that country must have largely mobilized lovers of freedom into anarchism, of whom the names like Emma Goldman and Benjamin Tucker stand out prominently.

Though none of Miller’s actions other than his literature can be theoretically and verifiably categorized as anarchist, Henry’s thoughts and actions can be seen as emanating from a consciousness that bears all the marks of philosophical anarchism. Therefore we may now look at how complementing and aiding to Miller was the socio-political milieu of contemporary America in the creation of Henry’s anarchist self.

Though the puritanical culture of America had created an atmosphere of Victorian morality and a narrow materialistic view of life, the very freedom and human rights constitutionally protected in the country had itself been the prime cause in the establishment of a tradition of anarchism in America, believes William O. Reichert who has done a comprehensive study in American anarchism. It is the revolutionary aspect of anarchism that initiates fear and rejection; but according to Reichert “revolution is by no means an alien phenomenon in America but the very basis of the freedom they profess to

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5 Philosophical anarchism "is the view that no one can ever have legitimate authority over another person, and conversely no one can ever be under an obligation to obey. [. . .] It is to say that people should always act on their direct moral assessment of any situation, leaving aside as morally irrelevant any directives they may have received from others" (David Miller 17-18).
cherish much." He maintains, "we cannot understand the genius of America until we have thought out the full social and political implications of the heritage of liberty bequeathed by the Declaration of Independence." He makes a strong plea against the excommunication of the anarchist when he says:

Since the "right of revolution was justified by presidents as well as prophets, by politicians in power as well as by radicals out of it" during the first one hundred years of this country’s existence, it can hardly be charged that the anarchist is outside the pale of civilization when he, too, claims a right to it. If the right to rebellion in pursuit of freedom was an original right of the American people, it remains the most basic of civil liberties, and those who urge its exercise [. . .] are acting fully within the scope of the American conception of freedom. (7)

The American state considered anarchism to be a foreign (European) ideology imported into its soil by immigrants, says Reichert, and thereby went on to regulate the immigration policy during the early twentieth century. It failed in this to recognize that Americans were introduced to anarchism not basically by reading a foreign ideology, but through a process of spontaneous intellectual combustion that was sparked at the precise moment that they first thought out for themselves the full social and philosophical implications of the concept of freedom upon which this political structure was originally formed. (Reichert 2)
All the same, America’s exposure to the libertarian and anarchist theories of Europe through contact with immigrants has had its role in fecundating its intellectual soil that was naturally suitable for the growth of anarchism. Gordon, the critic who in some detail touches upon the anarchist influence on Miller’s thoughts, highlights this point while sketching the intellectual milieu in which Miller had been brought up:

The tradition from which Miller’s peculiar spirit of rebellion flows is the European tradition preserved in the ghettos of New York in the nineties [1890s], which later infiltrated Brooklyn [where Miller was brought up]. It is the spirit of Nietzsche and Max Stirner, of Dostoievski reinforced by the polemics of Emma Goodman [sic]. What happened to this spirit in American history is of some importance, for it shows to a degree why Miller is outside the tradition of American men of letters. (33)

Gordon finds the reason behind Miller’s isolation from the mainstream of the American literature of the twentieth century in his anarchist orientation. He states that theoretical anarchism had its greatest period of growth in America during Miller’s childhood and youth – from 1890 to World War I – and that its growth stopped after the Red scare following the Russian revolution (33).

What makes Miller an anachronism in this respect is that the American writers after World War I turned away from nineteenth century intellectual traditions. [. . .]
His individualism, his desire for freedom, his nihilism have an unfamiliar ring in the twentieth-century world. They are unfamiliar because they have their origins in ways of thinking long dead. (Gordon 34-37)

Miller continued with the anarchist outlook which "looks upon the law and custom, the traditions of society at their very roots, as means simply to deny the individual full access to life", and allied himself philosophically to anarchism, while being entirely apolitical (Gordon 34). He gave expression to his anarchist vision in the creation of Henry, in whose thoughts and actions he symbolically engraved the plight of an anarchist artist in America – his existential agonies of becoming, alienation, individualism, and the urge to destroy in order to create – who identifies freedom from authority with his creativity.

This study attempts, as said earlier, to analyze the selected works of Miller with the aim of detecting the expressions of anarchism contained in them. Though the theoretical support of anarchism is given wherever necessary in the following chapters, a few concepts that serve as the foundation of Henry's anarchist being shall be discussed here. One can see that Henry embodies the spirit of anarchism which Sebastien Faure puts in a nutshell as:

That which exists and constitutes what one might call the anarchist doctrine is a cluster of general principles, fundamental conceptions and practical applications regarding which a consensus has been established among individuals whose thought is inimical to Authority and who struggle, collectively or in isolation, against all
disciplines and constraints, whether political, economic, intellectual or moral.

(62)
The first and foremost anarchist concept imbibed and expressed by Henry is, thus, the desire for absolute freedom. As freedom is not a pre-existent category, but is to be asserted by the individual through perpetual struggle, this process engenders in Henry the anarchist expression of the critique of the existing order, visions of free society and the transition to it, rejection of coercive authority through rebelliousness, and the call for freedom and equality, which are all reference points of anarchism (Marshall 36). The need for freedom that Henry represents makes him a universal human symbol, and renders him categorically anarchist since

the drive for freedom is not only a central part of our collective experience but responds to a deeply felt human need. Freedom is necessary for original thought and creativity. [...] Anarchism further seeks in social life what appears in nature: the call for self-management in society mirrors the self-regulation and self-organization in nature itself. (Marshall xiv)

In rejecting authoritarian institutions, order, and law, anarchists accept the authority of the order of nature. They believe in the vision of Charles Fourier, the French libertarian thinker who had influenced great anarchists like Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Peter Kropotkin, which holds that "behind the apparent chaos of the world, there is an underlying harmony and natural order governed by universal law." (in Marshall 149). Faith in the natural order becomes the second,
most convincing expression of anarchism in Henry. Other than his direct utterances extolling the natural order, we see in the chaotic life led by Henry a symbolic expression of anarchism. Because, in the willful espousal of disorder he is asserting his rebellion at the order imposed by human authority, and declaring his anarchist faith in the higher order of nature. Several of Henry's rebellious positions stem from this essential anarchist trait.

Even while being discontented about the existing order of society founded on authority, the faith in the inviolable natural order has a strange quality of instilling optimism in Henry. This leads him to an acceptance of reality as it is. With an innate self-contradiction, at times he ceases to rebel and accepts the state of affairs. This is the third property that informs his anarchism. It manifests in his being a 'happy rock' even when his endless struggles with life make him "a self-mortifying volcano" (Hassan 49). Gordon considers this optimism and acceptance that lend a carnivalesque quality to Henry's life as coming from the Nietzschean tradition that hails freedom, joy, and the celebration of life (37).

According to him this also accounts for Henry's egoism and selfishness. What Gordon says about Miller is in fact with regard to Henry, and makes a distinct statement of his anarchism:

Nietzsche became for Miller, as for many others who dreamed of a better world, a propheser of the future direction of salvation for mankind. Salvation was to come through internal liberation. Restraints, institutions would fall, not by external attack, but from their own weight. Nietzsche and the anarchists who he influenced
looked forward to a new man who would be the complete antithesis of Western man as he had been up to then. [. . .] it was a philosophy which was entirely oriented towards selfishness, not for its own sake, as in nineteenth-century economic liberalism, but in order that the ideal of greater love might eventually prevail. All that was false had to disappear; then love would come, and that would be the revolution. (38)

Finally, self-contradiction and lack of consistency in his position make for another important trait of Henry's anarchist self. In this he can be seen as concretizing the vision of the extreme individualist anarchist Max Stirner, who saw the self as constantly changing. Hence consistency in the self's positions is absurd; in being consistent one is becoming untrue to the self, and getting bound to one's own set of ideas. In his anarchist vision, one owes allegiance to nothing except freedom (see David Miller 22-23). Henry's self-contradiction and inconsistency problematize the study of these works. (For instance, while glorifying the present moment as the be-all and end-all of existence, Henry could be seen as perpetually dwelling in his past.) None of Henry's positions can thus be given the status of an ideology, unless inconsistency itself be taken as the hallmark of that ideology. The constant change in his positions makes verification of their ideological coherence and validity rather impossible. (For instance again, his typically sexist stance cannot be seen as exclusively existing with the purpose of expressing misogyny and a consumerist attitude towards women, because on other occasions he is seen as worshipful of or even temporarily
slavish towards women with individuality. Therefore, one may see the sexist
purpose as his way of protesting at the submissiveness women subject
themselves to.) Henry is justifiable only as a symbol of a self that seeks and lives
out absolute freedom, and in this he becomes a romantic and idealist creation of
Miller. The study admits this inconsistency and self-contradiction of Henry as a
salient feature of the expressions of anarchism contained in these novels.

**Cancer, Capricorn, and Black Spring** have been treated as individual
pieces in this study, while **Sexus, Pexus, and Nexus** are considered as
components of **The Rosy Crucifixion** trilogy. They have been ordered
chronologically, according to the date of their publications. Though the principles
of anarchism found in all these works are more or less the same, it can be found
that each work lays emphasis on a particular aspect of anarchist expression. The
study too foregrounds that particular aspect of anarchism in each work. Thus
**Cancer** stresses the destructive/creative face of anarchism, **Black Spring** the
alienation to which the anarchist self is subjected, and **Capricorn** the
individualism of the anarchist. **The Rosy Crucifixion** can be rightly categorized as
a *Künstlerroman*; it is Henry's confession of the existential and material
conditions that went into the self-realization of the identity of the anarchist artist
in him. In its course, it underscores the role of Mona, his second wife, in his
making as a writer. The trilogy tells the story of Henry's existential anguish during
his twin struggle for becoming a writer, and for maintaining emotional equilibrium
in the relationship with the distressingly enchanting and mysterious Mona. As the
term "rosy crucifixion" suggests, this suffering is welcome because, according to
Henry, it is voluntarily undergone, and also because its outcome – his becoming a writer – is desirable. The trilogy traces Henry's dual condition of bondage and liberation in his relationship with Mona, who is a born anarchist in her own way. Thus the study of *The Rosy Crucifixion* concentrates on the process of the making of the anarchist writer in Henry, in the milieu of the America of the 1920s.