Chapter III

Black Spring: The Alienation of Anarchism

Black Spring is Miller's second book to be published. It was published in 1936 in Paris, two years after the publication of Tropic of Cancer. It is a collection of ten pieces of typically Milleresque prose, which contain reminiscences of Henry's childhood and youth in America, and that of his Parisian life. Most of the articles in Black Spring are rich in symbols and perspectives of anarchism. The recollections set in America evidence the birth of the anarchical impulses during the formative period of Henry's life, while the other pieces set in Paris read like extensions of the anarchist expressions which he made in Cancer. As George Wickes says,

While obviously written by the same hand, this book is quite different from Tropic of Cancer, less violent and obscene, more euphoric. Though the materials are basically autobiographical, the method is not narrative; instead of character and episode, Miller presents a series of monologues, meditations, reminiscences, dreams and visions, shifting back and forth from his Paris surroundings to his early years in Brooklyn and New York. ("Henry Miller: Down and Out in Paris" 123)
The form of *Black Spring* bears the mark of literary anarchism. Though it is a collection of ten different monologues set in different time spans, moods, and perspectives, it functions as a homogeneous whole by virtue of being interconnected by the ubiquitous consciousness of the anarchical self of Henry. "Composed in ten independent sections, the book was nonetheless conceived as a whole and developed through a process of organic growth. Underlying its chaotic variety in style and technique is a coherence of theme and symbol" (Wickes, "Henry Miller: Down and Out in Paris" 123). These "theme and symbol" are generated by the anarchist attitude of the self, which as the centre of the confessions, decentralizes itself into kaleidoscopic expressions like that of memoirs, surrealistic dreams/fantasy, statements on creative process, rebellion, and at times purposeful nonsense. Even when Henry's anarchist position serves to hold together the monologues in the likeness of spirit, the text as a whole lacks a formal centre that unifies them. The pieces stand together as if out of their own volition, without any formal purpose in being held together. The textual form of *Black Spring* is, thus, a symbol of the anarchist perspective of harmonious existence in the absence of a centralized governing power.
Black Spring's contents lack a sense of narrative direction. They don’t lead to anywhere. They are as purposeless as nature itself. As anarchism which believes that a society without ruler will be more ordered (Marshall x) the formal anarchism of Black Spring demonstrates that the lack of a centralizing narrative scheme manifests a greater textual order which transcends the artificial order of logic.

In Black Spring, Henry and the people with whom he sympathizes can be seen as being alienated from society as a result of their anarchical natures. The sense of alienation is more severe in the reminiscences of childhood and youth set in America. The puritanical, materialistic, and immigrant culture at the turn of the century in America serves as a fertile soil for the germination of alienation whose roots are in Henry's innate anarchism, which is still nebulous and unrecognized. The sense of alienation throws him out of the discourse of the mainstream. Thus Henry exists, in the episodes in Black Spring, as an outsider with the attitude and perspective of the expelled. The outsiders here are those that are unartificial, unhypocritical, and natural. Henry is all these, and identifies himself with others who are personifications of these qualities. Expectedly, all of them are economic and social failures, be it Henry, or his father the tailor, or Tanta Melia the idiot aunt.

In Black Spring, Henry in his early youth and childhood seems to be rather upset and sad because of the alienation he suffers in his perception and sensibility. The voice of protest is only taking shape in him. Instead of the carnivalesque rejection of all misery found in Cancer, we find here a protagonist
who accepts fate with a sorrowful mind. Unlike the glorification of present found in Cancer, here the tendency is to lose oneself in the past - to distance oneself from the distressing present.

Each article in Black Spring is an independent unit pivoted thematically on an epigraph. Some of these epigraphs have definite anarchical import, while there are others in which suggestions of anarchism can be read. "What is not in the open street is false, that is to say, literature" the epigraph of the first piece called "The Fourteenth Ward" is an instance of the former, while "A Coney Island of the Mind", the epigraph of "Into the Night Life" is an example of the latter. It is very obvious that the voice of anarchism that characterizes the individuality of Miller's works is present throughout Black Spring. Each piece that it consists is analyzed separately here, in an attempt to see them as expressions of anarchism.

The tradition of literary anarchism Miller sets up in Henry's perspectives in Cancer is continued in "The Fourteenth Ward", which is the first piece in Black Spring. It is literature itself that Henry primarily attacks here. The thrust of the theme is made obvious by its epigraph: "What is not in the open street is false, derived, that is to say, literature" (2). What makes 'literature' unpalatable to Henry is his anarchical apathy for the artificial order of craft. It is an idealistic position that wants literature/art to germinate from the unconscious of the artist without being hindered by the logically of the intellect. It wants literature to reflect life directly. Therefore it is a call for disorder. The metaphor of street with its disorder concretizes the anarchist vision of Henry.
Destroying the structures of elitism is of chief priority in the artistic consciousness of Henry. Elitism establishes itself by asserting continually the authority of the standard of finesse. Finesse rests on the conscious exclusion of the natural, the unstylized, the spontaneous, and the unrefined. In literature, elitism takes the form of canon and classicism, while in social life it emerges as snobbish attitudes. Henry's anarchism rebels against elitism, and the street becomes the symbol of reality which is beyond the false and the derived.

Freedom from control is the essential demand of anarchism. William Reichert therefore prefers to call anarchists "partisans of freedom", and makes this phrase the title of his book on American anarchism. Miller claims to have been personally influenced by the great American anarchist Emma Goldman, and by the ideas of Peter Kropotkin, the European anarchist theorist (Ferguson 34). The concept of freedom plays, consequently, a fundamental role in the vision he attributes to Henry. It is freedom that characterizes the life in the street. Freedom is seen here as a letting loose from everything that is fixed. It is a flux or a constant movement like that of wandering, both physically and mentally, that is the attribute of street-life. Henry says:

[. . .] I was born in the street and raised in the street [. . .]. To be born in the street means to wander all your life, to be free. It means accident and incident, drama, movement. It means above all dream. A harmony of irrelevant facts which gives to your wanderings a metaphysical certitude. In the street you learn what human beings really are; otherwise, or afterwards, you invent them.
What is not in the open street is false, derived, that is to say, literature.

Nothing of what is called “adventure” ever approaches the flavor of the street. It doesn’t matter whether you fly to the Pole, whether you sit on the floor of the ocean with a pad in your hand, whether you pull up nine cities one after the other [. . .]. No matter how exciting, how intolerable the situation, there are always exits, always ameliorations, comforts, compensations, newspapers, religions. (3-4)

The sprouting impulses of anarchism are seen in the childhood love of the street, which symbolizes for the narrator a holistic and harmonious environment for existence. If to be born in the street is to be free, being in the street instills a thirst for more freedom. This childhood reminiscence of Henry is aimed at bringing home the fact that his sense of belonging to the street, which symbolizes his identification with the downtrodden and the unartificial common man, has been a root cause in the birth of the anarchical spirit, which rebels and yearns for freedom. The craving for freedom starts in the childhood itself when “I was already dreaming of running away, of going to far away places. But I got only as far as the other side of the river” (8).

At the very beginning of “The Fourteenth Ward” we can see a statement that has the germ of anarchism in it. Henry says, “I am a patriot of the Fourteenth Ward, Brooklyn, where I was raised. The rest of the United States doesn’t exist for me, except as idea, or history, or literature” (3). Patriotism is a phenomenon that has been widely discussed in anarchism. In fact anarchists have positioned
themselves in two categories with regard to patriotism. There are those like the distinguished libertarian William Godwin and the pacifist Leo Tolstoy who have emphatically condemned patriotism. There are also famous anarchists like Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Michel Bakunin who have justified or even upheld patriotism for its inseparable link with nationalism. But the general drift of anarchism has been against both patriotism and nationalism. Proudhon could be an exception because later Bakunin modified his position with regard to patriotism.

Godwin opposed patriotism because it exhorted people to love their country and to 'sink the personal existence of individuals in the existence of the community' as if it were an abstract being. The love of our country is 'one of those specious illusions which are employed by imposters for the purpose of rendering the multitude the blind instruments of their crooked designs'. It makes us consider whatever is gained for country as so much gained to 'our darling selves'. Patriotism moreover leads to 'a spirit of hatred and all uncharitableness towards the countries around us'. (qtd.in Marshall 32)

Tolstoy condemned patriotism because it supported government and fostered war, and so he declared patriotism to be 'rude, harmful, disgraceful, and bad feeling, and above all immoral' since it influences man to see himself the 'son of his fatherland and the slave of his Government,
and commit actions contrary to his reason and his conscience'. (in Marshall 32)

Henry declares that he is a patriot. But his patriotism has nothing to do with his country; it is only a love for the street into which he was born and brought up. It is a love for the Fourteenth Ward of Brooklyn. This minimizing of the scope of the implications of patriotism as a concept is done purposely as Henry clarifies that for him the rest of America does not exist except as an idea, history, or literature. In rejecting the American nation as an abstraction (idea, history, literature) he is rejecting state itself. The rejection of state, as we know, is the basic tenet of anarchism. Being a patriot of the ‘Fourteenth Ward’ frees him from the implications of nationalism, government, and state. It also speaks for a particular kind of patriotism that has been propounded by Bakunin, thereby giving it the anarchist stamp. He calls it ‘proletarian’ patriotism, “the only truly acceptable form of patriotism, which ignores national differences and state boundaries and embraces the world” (in Marshall 33). For the child Henry the Fourteenth Ward is his world, and in his love of it he loves the world itself, free of the narrow sympathies of nationalism.

Though socialists differ from anarchists in it that the former accept authority of the proletariat, while the latter are against all kinds of authority, anarchists like socialists have been, especially during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, upholding the cause of the workers against the capitalists (Marshall 25-28). Throughout Miller’s work under consideration the narrator is anti political. But he evinces a clear sympathy for the downtrodden
workers, the proletariat. In “The Fourteenth Ward” the image of the workers that comes up in a vivid recollection of Henry’s youth acts as an expression of anarchism, and is connected to his ‘proletarian patriotism’. There is a great sense of identification with the tragic lot of the workers during the growing stage of industrial America at the turn of the century. In the following quote the “grit” becomes the stain of submission of the workers to the exploitation by the capitalists:

Where others remember of their youth a beautiful garden, a fond mother, a sojourn at the seashore, I remember, with a vividness as if it were etched in acid, the grim, soot-covered walls and chimneys of the tin factory opposite us [. . .] I remember the iron works where the red furnace glowed and men walked toward the glowing pit with huge shovels in their hands [. . .]. I remember the black hands of the ironmolders, the grit that had sunk so deep into the skin that nothing could remove it, not soap, nor elbow grease, nor money, nor love, nor death. Like a black mark on them! Walking into the furnace like devils with black hands – and later, with flowers over them, cool and rigid in their Sunday suits, not even the rain can wash away the grit. All these beautiful gorillas going up to God with swollen muscles and lumbago and black hands. . . . (5-6)

Demythification of heroism has been an anarchist tool in the hands of Miller, and has been employed in many of his works. This is very effective in “The Fourteenth Ward” because it is a reminiscence of childhood, a time when hero-
worship is most prominent in a person's life. But the anarchical tendency to destroy myths and to assert individualism through liberation of thought/choice from its dependence on myth is evident in Henry's discarding of historical heroes. He prefers the 'heroes' of his childhood to them. Even though the childhood heroes may later prove to be abject failures in their lives, the image of heroism they imprinted on Henry's mind shall not be erased. Henry destroys the myth of heroism as the glorification of personal success. He again poses the binary of real/unreal to correspond with his anarchical concept of heroism and the popular notion regarding the same. In front of his childhood heroes the historical ones are nothing but fiction. Historical heroes are heroes by virtue of their authority of success/fame, while Henry's heroes are socially invisible non-entities. His heroes are the real ones because they are not figments of popular imagination, and are not presented in the unreal haze of recognition and fame:

The boys you worshiped when you first came down into the street remain with you all your life. They are the only real heroes. Napoleon, Lenin, Capone – all fiction. Napoleon is nothing to me in comparison with Eddie Carney, who gave me my first black eye. [. . .] All these boys of the Fourteenth Ward have a flavor about them still. They were not invented or imagined: they were real. [. . .] Johnny Paul was the living Odyssey of the Fourteenth Ward; that he later became a truck driver is an irrelevant fact. (4)

In "The Fourteenth Ward" Miller laments the loss of childhood. Childhood and to a large extent youth are glorified because, according to Henry, these are
the periods in a person's life during which the consciousness acts as a unified whole. Both terror and joy, and all opposites are experienced as one without any separation:

In youth we were whole and the terror and pain of the world penetrated us through and through. There was no sharp separation between joy and sorrow: they fused into one, as our waking life fuses with dream and sleep. We rose one being in the morning and at night we went down into an ocean [. .]. (10)

But as the self enters "the great fragmentation of maturity", the unifiedness of perception is lost. This is the loss that Henry laments. The sense of loss of childhood/youth is seen in 'The Fourteenth Ward' where the fragmentation caused by maturity is identified with the decadence of society itself, thus making it an expression of the anarchist criticism of the existing social order. With the discipline and fragmentation of maturity, the mind becomes slavish enough to accept authority, which the unified consciousness of childhood resisted with its native state of celebration:

Henceforward we walk split into myriad fragments, like an insect with a hundred feet [. .]. We walk against a united world, asserting our dividedness. [. .] We live in the mind, in ideas, in fragments. We no longer drink in the wild outer music of the streets – we remember only.(10)

The account of disease at the beginning of "Third or Fourth Day of Spring", the second piece in Black Spring, is also a protest against the
fragmentation brought about by maturity. The child’s disease makes the
mature people, the parents, confused. Disease is glorified because it arrests time
to stillness and perpetuates the state of childhood:

The third room was an alcove where I contracted the measles,
chicken pox, scarlet fever, diphtheria, etcetera: all the lovely
diseases of childhood which make time stretch out in everlasting
bliss and agony [. . .] the little knob of the brain hidden away like a
grain of sand and the toenails rotting blissfully under the ruins of
Athens. In this room I heard nothing but inanities. With each fresh,
lovely disease my parents became more addlepated. (21-22)

In "Third or Fourth Day of Spring", disease becomes a symbol of
anarchical protest. Henry indulges in an adoration of human disease,
foregrounding certain metaphysical aspects of the experience of disease.
Disease is viewed as a counter-action of nature against the corruption of human
nature by forces of civilization. This is an obvious expression of anarchism, which
believes that civilization has done more evil than good to man. According to
Marshall,

There is undoubtedly a strong strand of primitivism in anarchist
thought. It takes both a chronological form, in the belief that the
best period of history was before the foundation of State, and a
cultural form, in the idea that the acquisitions of modern civilization
are evil. (15)
The exaltation of disease is also administered for its shock value since it upsets the finer sensibilities of the reader. Shock is the tool with which Henry's anarchism ejects the reader out of his complacency. Disease is made here an aesthetic experience in which Henry encodes his protest against the damage wreaked by civilization to the pristine nature of man. He views disease as the solution to human miseries. Disease is apotheosized:

Schizophrenia! Nobody thinks any more how marvelous it is that the whole world is diseased. No point of reference, no frame of health. God might just as well be typhoid fever. No absolutes. Only light years of deferred progress. When I think of those centuries in which all Europe grappled with the Black Death I realize how radiant life can be if only we are bitten in the right place! The dance and fever in the midst of that corruption! Europe may never again dance so ecstatically. And syphilis! The advent of syphilis! There it was like a morning star hanging over the rim of the world. (22)

The irony in the worship of disease falls at a certain point and Henry's anarchism unveils itself in a curse directed at state (represented here by America) for its domination and machinations:

Aye, the great sun of syphilis is setting. Low visibility: forecast for the Bronx, for America, for the whole modern world. Low visibility accompanied by great gales of laughter. No new stars on the horizon. Catastrophes... only catastrophes. (23)
Disease is one of the most negative conditions of human life. Therefore the preference of disease to the miseries brought by man-made nations, authority, and state that constitute the structure of "the whole modern world" is symbolic of the anarchist's preference of nature and freedom to the domination by power/authority.

Self as a symbol of anarchism plays a prominent role in "Third or Fourth Day of Spring". It is in this piece that Henry makes the statement equating the book to the self – the statement that is celebrated as Miller's literary motto. Henry's self becomes anarchist by virtue of its striving for liberation. The liberation of self, in Henry's philosophy, lies in its total acceptance. No aspect of one's nature is discarded as immoral or illogical. No drives are repressed subject to moral censure. Instead, self is accepted in all its protean nature. Henry's self endeavours to be liberated from the repressive values and norms of society. It is this potential for self-liberation which is universally present in individuals that the anarchists try to highlight and call to be realized.

Reichert believes that freedom is not based on rights that are granted by an external authority. This conventional view only asserts the necessity of the existence of state, and seeks to prove that freedom is extraneous. On the other hand anarchism holds that freedom is an inherent quality the individual possesses in his very capacity as a social being, although all men must undergo an internal struggle before they can liberate themselves from the forces which prevent them from enjoying their natural condition of freedom. (Reichert 13)
This is the freedom that Henry celebrates in his confessions in Black Spring:

For me the book is the man I am, the confused man, the negligent man, the reckless man, the lusty, obscene, boisterous, thoughtful, scrupulous, lying, diabolically truthful man that I am. (23)

Thus Henry's self becomes a symbol of anarchism by virtue of its being liberated and without internal conflict through an absolute acceptance of itself.

The protean nature of the self is concretized in the image of a crab in “Third or Fourth Day of Spring”. The image of the crab has the capacity of giving free reins to the imagination of Miller when he wants to give form to the abstract and evasive phenomenon of self. Max Stirner believes in his extremely individualist anarchism that self is the only real thing (in David Miller 23). Similarly Henry's all-important self is expressed in these words which are flippantly proud and uninhibited in their expression of freedom:

I am chancre, the crab, which moves sideways and backwards and forwards at will. I move in strange tropics and deal in high explosives, embalming fluid, jasper, myrrh, smaragd, fluted snot, and porcupines' toes. [. . .] Neptune dominates my ascendant. That means I am composed of a watery fluid, that I am volatile, quixotic, unreliable, independent and evanescent. Also quarrelsome. [. . .] This is a self-portrait which yields only the missing parts – an anchor, a dinner bell, the remains of a beard. (29)

The theme of the protean nature of self and the needfulness of its absolute acceptance recurs in “Third or Fourth Day of Spring”. By placing the self
above God the anarchist nature of Henry's self is egoistically stressed by asserting repeatedly its individualistic and all-encompassing significance:

It is no sacred heart that inspires me, no Christ I am thinking of. Something better than a Christ, something bigger than a heart, something beyond God almighty I think of – MYSELF. I am a man. That seems to me sufficient.

I am a man of God and a man of the Devil. To each his due.

Nothing eternal, nothing absolute. (24)

However, despite its liberated state, Henry's self feels alienated and forsaken. Rebellion, which is an aspect of anarchism, originates here as a reaction to the sense of alienation caused by the self's consciousness of its insignificance in the scheme of things. An individual with a liberated self is different from the servile individuals who form the majority of the mainstream society. Obedience and servility to authority/power is an approved virtue in society. Anarchists, for the reason that they flout the system of government and control, are alienated by the society. But anarchism has to address society for communicating its message of freedom and the redundancy of authority. Rebellion is meaningful only when it is noticed and thereby able to bring about changes in society. Anarchism therefore resorts to means by which it could attract the attention of society. Miller’s provocative works have been rebellions of literary anarchism that sought to question, attack, and destroy the accepted canons of culture and literature. In "Third or Fourth Day of Spring" Henry's
alienation provokes dreams of a visionary world in which history will be rewritten to accommodate the liberated self:

I am thinking of that age to come when God is born again, when men will fight and kill for God as now and for a long time to come men are going to fight for food. I am thinking of that age when work will be forgotten and books assume their true place in life [. . .] I am thinking that in that age to come I shall not be overlooked. Then my history will become important and the scar which I leave upon the face of the world will have significance. I can not forget that I am making history, a history on the side which, like a chancre, will eat away the other meaningless history. I regard myself not as a book, a record, a document, but as a history of our time – a history of all time. (23)

In a blasphemous identification of the holy Trinity with the male genitalia the human self is set on a higher plane than the divine in order to proclaim the anarchical outrage at religious dogmas:

Before me always the image of the body, our triune God of penis and testicles. On the right, God the Father; on the left and hanging a little lower, God the Son; and between and above them the Holy Ghost. (25)

In atheism lies one of the major principles of anarchism. Anarchists like Bakunin consider the idea of God as the phenomenon that is most potent in
keeping the minds of people in servility. Echoing the Marxist view identifying religion with opium Bakunin says that he opposes the idea of God because it is before the God idea considered as supreme power that mankind has prostrated itself throughout history [. . .]. If we would again become free, we must abolish the very thought of God, i.e. myth, from our minds, for it is only thus that we have any hope of reclaiming the pristine social qualities of our human nature [. . .]. (in Reichert 18)

From the atheistic viewpoint of anarchism Henry goes on to rationalize and demythify the Biblical concept of the Trinity: “I can never forget that this holy trinity is man-made, that it will undergo infinite changes. . .” (25)

The Stirnerian worship of the present from his theoretical viewpoint of “conscious egoism” is found in “Third or Fourth Day of Spring”. Henry says:

To imagine a new world is to live it daily [. . .] each gesture killing and recreating [. . .]. To spit on the past is not enough. To proclaim the future is not enough. One must act as if the past were dead and the future unrealizable. One must act as if the next step were the last [. . .]. (26)

This extolling of the present contradicts with the dwelling in the past seen in “The Fourteenth Ward” where Henry takes recourse to the past and future abhorring

7 Stirner says, “Why should I be bound today by my decision of yesterday? The egoist cannot submit to anything beyond his present experience, not even to his past commitments” (qtd. in David Miller 24).
the fragmentation of the present. This inconsistency in his positions itself underscores the anarchical nature of his self when we consider it in the light of Stirner's dictum that consistency is false because it limits the self's freedom. Instead he would ask anarchists to act on 'momentary caprice' freeing oneself of the binds of one's own positions (in David Miller 23-24).

The confessional expression of Henry's self is never complete unless it accommodates the aspect of being a writer/genius. Henry's concept of artistic creation is symbolic of anarchism. He effects this by stripping the creative act of the divinity traditionally conferred on it. He demythifies the creative process by trivializing it and equating it with the physical act of regurgitation. The artist is bereft of his romantic aura of being blessed and extraordinary. This is the image of himself as artist/writer that Henry presents. The anarchist revolt contained in this approach to art becomes clear when we consider the literary atmosphere of the 1930s contemporary to its statement, when the celebrated theories on literature and the creative process propounded by modernists like Eliot, Pound, Joyce etc. were in air. In a statement on genius that reminds one of the arrogance of Oscar Wilde who too was anarchical in outlook Henry says:

In short, I am an idle fellow who pisses his time away. I have absolutely nothing to show for my labors except my genius. But there comes a time, even in the life of an idle genius, when he has to go to the window and vomit up the excess baggage. If you are a genius you have to do that [...] to build a little comprehensible

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6 see Woodcock (ed.) 72-74
world [. . .]. And the more ballast you throw overboard the easier you rise above the esteem of your neighbors. (29)

America's political and cultural ethos serves as a provocation to Henry's anarchism. America, with its puritanism and materialism that are essential to its identity, becomes the symbol of a space where power and authority of state assert domination. Henry's migrating to Paris is an important factor that helps in the liberation of his self. As Alan Trachtenberg says about the Henry of Black Spring:

He feels lost and can find nothing in the American city to answer his needs for liberation. The solution is to destroy the old American world in himself, the world of fraud, materialism, gadgetry, the dream turned nightmare, and to die into a new, free being. (245) But he ironically is grateful to America for helping him in discovering his anarchical self by denying it its innate need of freedom. It is the restrictive conditions of his life in America that sets his self into revolt that is anarchical in spirit:

If I was unhappy in America, if I craved more room, more adventure, more freedom of expression, it was because I needed these things. I am grateful to America for having made me realize my needs. I served my sentence there. At present I have no needs. I am a man without a past and without a future. I am – that is all. I am not concerned with your likes and dislikes; it doesn't matter to me whether you are convinced that what I say is so or not. It is all
the same to me if you drop me here and now. [. . .] I see America spreading disaster. I see America as a black curse upon the world. I see a long night settling in and that mushroom which has poisoned the world withering at the roots. (23-24)

In "Third or Fourth Day of Spring" Henry expresses his anarchism in the total acceptance of disorder as the manifestation of a hidden order. He does not harbour any illusion that the world can be changed through a revolution. Anarchism has mostly been a philosophical position with its emphasis on individual/societal freedom from all restricting factors. It has never had a definite political agenda or ideology. In its assertion of freedom it has differed from person to person in its parameters and priorities. If for some its priority has been a freedom from state there are others whose concern has been the psychological freedom from myths and superstitions. Henry’s concept of freedom is defined in its call for total rejection of external influences, and in the unconditional acceptance of the world as it is:

[. . .] I tell you it doesn’t matter a damn whether the world is going to the dogs or not; it doesn’t matter whether the world is right or wrong, good or bad. It is – and that suffices. The world is what it is and I am what I am. I say it not like a squatting Buddha with legs crossed, but out of a gay, hard wisdom, out of an inner security. This out there and this in me, all this, everything, the resultant of inexplicable forces. A chaos whose order is beyond comprehension. Beyond human comprehension. (25)
The state imposes on society an artificial order of laws and regulations. The anarchist preference for disorder or chaos is a strike against this artificial order and hence an espousal of a superior order of nature. In order to take the world to its elementary nature of chaos anarchism resorts to destruction of this existing order established by power. But this destruction is not physical. It is purported in the realm of ideas, attitudes, and perceptions for freeing the individual psyche from the illusion of the order imposed by law and other instruments of coercion. Henry would question even the concept of the order of sanity in an anarchistic attempt to establish the need for the flouting of mythical and superstitious binds imposed by authority:

To live beyond illusion or with it? that's the question. [...] There's a mad man inside me and he's hacking away, hacking and hacking until he strikes the final discord. Pure annihilation, as distinguished from lesser, muddier annihilation. Nothing to be mopped up afterwards. (32)

Most of the reference points of anarchism in "Third or Fourth Day of Spring" are present in the third piece in Black Spring entitled "A Saturday Afternoon". The tag of the rebellion of literary anarchism is pinned at the beginning by means of the epigraph: “This is better than reading Vergil” (35). The motif of artistic rebellion is placed at the start, and in the vein of Cancer it is scattered diversely, embedded in the perspectives of Henry. The presence of characters like Van Norden and Carl in this piece makes it appear like a page out of Cancer. They appear in a context where Henry declares the anarchism in his
mode of writing whose basis is freedom from the writer's fear of making mistakes. The root of the fear of errors lies in the fear of public opinion. Individualist anarchism asserts the freedom from dependence on the approval of the society, which being an agglomeration of bound people, it disregards. As in Cancer, Henry's literary anarchism proclaims here its freedom from the fear of errors. He says in "A Saturday Afternoon":

*Don't worry about errors when you're writing. The biographers will explain all errors.* [..] When a portrait commences badly it's because you're not describing the woman you have in mind: you are thinking more about those who are going to look at the portrait than about the woman who is sitting for you. (38)

Van Norden and Carl are again symbols of disorder which is the result of the effort to impose an artificial order based on social norms. Again Henry is emphasizing that only the unconditional acceptance of the natural and apparently chaotic world will liberate man to reach the higher order of nature. Such an acceptance should mean a freedom from past and future, and a meditation of the present moment that is absolutely free of values and judgements based on them. This liberating experience is ineffable and precious, and is better than anything else for the individual:

Every second counts. I do not hear the second that has just ticked off – I am clinging like a madman to this second which has not yet announced itself . . . . What is better than reading Vergil?[sic] *This!*

This expanding moment which has not defined itself in ticks or
beats, the eternal moment which destroys all values, degrees, differences.

This gushing upward and outward from a hidden source. No truths to utter, no wisdom that can be imparted. [...] Now is the thinnest veil between madness and sanity. [...] From this peak [...] one reads Vergil and Dante and Montaigne and all others who spoke only of the moment, the expanding moment that is heard forever.

(39-40)

Clubbing the banal and the familiar with the philosophical and the sublime is a favourite method of literary anarchism found in Miller. In doing this, the bounds of these concepts are broken, and the qualities of the one dissolve into the another. Thus the attributes of the sublime lose their aura of splendor, and those of the familiar get sublimated. The effect of this ploy is to create a holistic vision of reality in which the perception is freed of the value judgements imposed on it by human consciousness.

In "A Saturday Afternoon" the philosophical discussion of the present is unexpectedly connected to the description of the environment of a urinal. Henry gets insights into the overwhelming reality of the present moment while he is in a urinal. His mind becomes so active there that it is able to draw a large number of perceptions and revelations into the vortex of the 'moment' that is the present. Everything is made subservient to the moment; the time in which the action takes place, which is here the reading of a book. All these revelations are presented in a form that overthrows the prudish norms of decency:
What impressed me, in the urinal by the Luxembourg, was how little it mattered what the book contained; it was the moment of reading it that counted, the moment that contained the book, the moment that definitely and for all time placed the book in the living ambience of a room with its sun beams, its atmosphere of convalescence, its homely chairs, its rag carpet, its odor of cooking and washing [. . .].

(46)

Humanity's yearning for and reverence to greatness appears to Henry as a factor that restrains human freedom. It also retards change and makes perspectives hackneyed. This is the perception that results in iconoclasm, an aspect of anarchist expression. Henry airs this in his revolt against the icons of classical literature, classicism itself being his chief target of attack. His musings in the urinal reach the highpoint of iconoclasm in calling Virgil a "son of a bitch". The image of Virgil, the symbol of classical authorship, is denuded of its aura of greatness, which is the creation of unquestioning tradition. Virgil stands before us as an ordinary human being; the myth encompassing him destroyed:

Vergil [sic] to me is a bald-headed guy with spectacles tilting back in his chair and leaving a grease mark on the black board; a bald-headed guy opening wide his mouth in a delirium which he simulated five days a week for four successive years; a big mouth with false teeth producing this strange oracular nonsense: *rari nantes in gurgite vasto*. Vividly I recall the unholy joy with which he pronounced this phrase. A *great* phrase, according to this bald-
pated, goggle-eyed son of a bitch. We scanned it and we parsed it, we
repeated it after him, we swallowed it like cod liver oil, we chewed it
like dyspepsia tablets, we opened wide our mouths as he did and
we reproduced the miracle day after day five days in the week [. . .]
until Vergil was done for and out of our lives for good and all. (47)

The destruction of the myth of the great author Virgil is complete when
Henry says that the “recess in the toilet” is worth a thousand Virgils, because
being in the toilet inspires him into insights which the books of Virgil fail to give.
The toilet also becomes a symbol of literary anarchism by presenting a
chronotope in which canons of literature are assaulted and demythified. Henry
mock-seriously suggests different kinds of toilets for different kinds of authors in
an attempt to level the gulf between the genius and the ordinary man (48-49).
The distinction between these two categories is equivalent to the one between
authority and non-authority and by extension the state and the subject.

Because of the human tendency to worship centres of power – the
tendency being rooted in the fear of aggression and the desire for security – the
general humanity has distanced itself from the chosen few who wield the power
of authority. The power centres have encouraged this distancing as it is helpful in
perpetuating authority through exploiting the subservience of the common people
which is the result of a feeling of inferiority and awe. The concept of genius can
be construed as a differentiating and defamiliarizing factor whose label urges
general humanity into uncritical acceptance. The freedom of individual judgement
is sacrificed for the nourishment of the concept of genius. Anarchism revolts
against this condition by democratizing the concept of genius thereby familiarizing it:

At best, as Croce points out, there is a mere quantitative difference separating the ordinary man from the great artist, for the source of energy for both is their common human nature. Were the average man totally lacking in imagination and aesthetic sense, no artist could talk beyond himself. "The cult of the genius with all its attendant superstitions has arisen from the quantitative difference having been taken as a difference in quality", Croce points out. "It has been forgotten that genius is not something that has fallen from heaven, but humanity itself". (in Reichert 16)

As said earlier, Miller destroys the myths of genius, classicism, and literary elitism by equating these with the banal. Thus, attacking the prudish canons of literature Henry replaces them with his preferences for unorthodox and rebellious writers like Rabelais, Boccaccio, Villon etc. In this process the nobility of the act of reading itself is trivialized. He says:

O the wonderful recesses in the toilet! To them I owe my knowledge of Boccaccio, of Rabelais [. . .]. All my good reading, you might say, was done in the toilet. At the worst, Ulysses or a detective story. There are passages in Ulysses which can be read only in the toilet – if one wants to extract the full flavor of their content. And this is not to denigrate the talent of the author. This is simply to move him a little closer to the good company of Abelard,
Petrarch, Rabelais, Villon, Boccaccio – all the fine, lusty genuine spirits who recognized dung for dung and angels for angels. [..] And the more ramshackle the toilet, the more dilapidated it be, the better. [..] To enjoy Rabelais [..] I recommend a plain country toilet [..]. (48-49)

Henry also divests some of his major contemporaries of their glorious public image which render them elite:

No harm, I say, can ever be done a great book by taking it with you to the toilet. Only the little books suffer thereby. [..] Aldous Huxley, Gertrude Stein, Sinclair Lewis, Hemingway, Dos Passos, Dreiser, etc. etc. . . . I hear no bell ringing inside me when I bring these birds to the water closet. I pull the chain and down the sewer they go. Down the Seine and into the Atlantic Ocean. May be a year hence they will bob up again – on the shores of Coney Island, or Midland Beach, or Miami, along with dead jellyfish, snakes, clams, used condoms, pink toilet paper, yesterday’s news, tomorrow’s suicide. . . . (49)

These exclamations of contempt for the canonical writers are not a verdict on the quality of their creations. They serve only the iconoclastic purpose of Henry’s literary anarchism, which seeks to free the readers of their bias for such writers. It is a call to readers to transcend the intellectual subservience to the officially approved canon, and to venture freely into the world of art where so many gems lie undiscovered. It is also a call to free the sensibility of the
snobbishness of literary fashion and critical standards set by a minority who pose as judges in such matters using their authority of being socially approved as men of superior tastes and intellect. Henry's revolt is against the tyranny of critical censure.

Henry wants a reform in the sensibilities of the people so that reality is accepted in its wholeness without the discrimination between positive/negative, noble/ignoble, moral/immoral, decent/obscene, sublime/base etc. He would call it a "classic purity" in perception and declare that such holistic expression is the real mark of the classic. The bisection of reality on a moral basis is the stratagem of authority whose existence is dependent on the fragmentation of psyche and the consequent confusion of the subject. This division is necessary for the subject to acquiesce to its power to determine the right and the wrong. Henry therefore cries:

I want a classic purity, where dung is dung and angels are angels.

[. . .]

A classic purity [. . .]. For what is it enables the classics to live at all [. . .]. What preserves them against the ravages of time if it be not the salt that is in them? When I read Petronius or Apuleius or Rabelais, how close they seem! That salty tang! That odor of the menagerie! The smell of horse piss and lion's dung, of tiger's breath and elephant's hide. Obscenity, lust, cruelty, boredom, wit. Real eunuchs. Real hermaphrodites. (51)
In order to highlight the significance of all that has been kept out of literature by moral censure and puritanism Henry seeks the evidence of King James’ version of Bible, which according to him is the compendium of all that has been unapproved in literature. In “A Saturday Afternoon” Henry states it thus:

The Bible a la King James, for example. Not the Bible of Wycliffe, not the Vulgate, not the Greek, not the Hebrew, but the glorious, death-dealing Bible that was created when the English language was in flower, when a vocabulary of twenty thousand words sufficed to build a monument for all time. A Bible written in Svenska or Tegalic, a Bible for the Hottentots or the Chinese, a Bible that has to meander through the trickling sands of French is no Bible – it is a counterfeit and a fraud. The King James Version was created by a race of bone-crushers. It revives the primitive mysteries, revives rape, murder, incest, revives epilepsy, sadism, megalomania, revives demons, angels, dragons, leviathans, revives magic, exorcism, contagion, incantation, revives fratricide, regicide, patricide, suicide, revives hypnotism, anarchism, somnambulism, revives the song, the dance, the act, revives the mantic, the chthonian, the arcane, the mysterious, revives the power, the evil, and the glory that is God. All brought into the open on a colossal scale, and so salted and spiced that it will last until the next Ice Age. (50-51)
A condition where the state and its centralized power are absent would seem to be primitive and regressive. But it is precisely this situation that anarchism recommends. Anarchists believe that order is inborn to human beings, and that once the artificial order imposed by state/law is removed humanity would reach naturally a condition of harmonious order. Anarchism seeks to destroy existing structures of legally dictated order to establish this natural order. It is in this sense that Proudhon says that anarchy is order (in Marshall x).

The call for a return to nature could appear as primitive to the viewpoint of the modernized civilization whose guiding force is that of progress. But Henry believes that real primitivism lies in the reckless progress and not in the vision of anarchism. The progress of civilization has rendered human beings into solitary isles that lack communication among one another. This has adversely affected the spiritual life of mankind. It is different from the isolation envisaged in the classic condition of Robinson Crusoe, who was happy compared to the present day lonely individual, believes Henry. Today’s reality is laden with the domination of political powers that constitute the state. In this unnatural condition of oppression and selfish competition humans lose their faculty of inter-personal communication out of the fear of the ‘other’ which is often inimical. This situation is aggravated by the race of progress and the consequent consumerism.

Henry reacts with great force against this condition. He recognizes this happening to the lives of people around him including artists and writers. The negative aspects of materialistic progress get expression in the symbolic imagery of desert isles and plague, a disease that eats into the natural health of mankind:
Hence forward wherever one happens to be born is a desert isle. Everyman in his own civilized desert, the island of self on which he is shipwrecked: happiness, relative or absolute, is out of question. Henceforward everyone is running away from himself to find an imaginary desert isle, to live out his dream of Robinson Crusoe. Follow the classic flights, of Melville, Rimbaud, Gaugain, Jack London, Henry James, D.H. Lawrence . . . thousands of them. None of them found happiness. Rimbaud found cancer. Gaugain found syphilis. Lawrence found the white plague. The plague—that's it. Be it cancer, syphilis, tuberculosis, or whatnot. 'The plague'. The plague of modern progress: colonization, trade, free Bibles, war, disease, artificial limbs, factories, slaves, insanity . . . . No desert isles. No paradise. Not even relative happiness: Men running away from themselves so frantically that they look for salvation under the ice floes or in tropical swamps, or else they climb the Himalayas or asphyxiate themselves in the stratosphere. . . . (45-46)

If the pieces in Black Spring that narrate Henry's life in Paris are explicit in expressions of anarchism, those that tell about his childhood and youthful life in America are searches for the roots of his anarchical impulses. His anarchism begins as a reaction to a variety of social conditions. "The Tailor Shop", the longest piece in the collection tells the story of Henry's youth. His father had been a tailor. There was a time during which business had been gainful. But later, as Henry grows up into youth, the business at the tailor shop dwindles into
failure. His father's irresponsible and drunken ways quicken the fall of the shop. Henry becomes a silent witness to all this. The tragedies of the people he sees in the times set in the early decades of twentieth century America, and the good he perceives in these ‘failures’ seem to set the tone of the anarchist mentality that would take definite form in his later life.

A mark of anarchism can be seen in Henry’s protest at the rich man’s need of the pampering of his vanity by the tailor.

When I look back on it all now, see the old man sitting down to table with his boozy breath and saying shit why don’t some one smile, why do you all look so glum, I feel sorry for him and for all merchant tailors who have to kiss rich people’s asses. (80)

However the anarchism that becomes conspicuous and forcefully expressed in “The Tailor Shop” is of a philosophical kind. It is an attempt to find answer to the question as to why basically and essentially good people turn out to be ‘failures’. The search makes Henry admire and adore failure, and accept failure as a virtue. Failure becomes a mark of the good or the natural. Failure, he believes, is the result of not trying to be something, which is against one’s nature, or being true to nature.

Such men are failures only to the eyes to of the materialistic world. Spiritually they are free, and their lives are justified by the unconditional love they radiate. In being natural these individuals become symbols of anarchism, because being true to the self is also a resistance against the standards set by society. Hence to the anarchist outlook of Henry the presence of men that are
materialistic failures but are great as individuals is an uplifting factor that makes him "Always merry and bright", which is also the phrase given as the epigraph to "The Tailor Shop". The epigraph also evinces an all-pervading optimism, a feature of the philosophy of anarchism, whose roots are in the faith in the order of nature and its ultimate good.

Paul Dexter is a character in "The Tailor Shop" who represents the failed type that is so dear to Henry. Dexter is his father’s friend and a man who frequents the tailor shop. He is jobless and suffers from a grandeur delusion that he is worth a job that would fetch $10000 a year. He would not compromise himself to take up a job worth a lesser income. In short, he is perpetually jobless. A case of genteel poverty, he feels it necessary to patronize Henry’s father by giving him orders for new suits which he will never actually buy. His claim is that he will settle the bills once he lands a job. However this tragic and pitiable character is distinguished by his great capacity for love. Henry is searching here for universal human values like freedom, naturality, and love, and as in the case of men like Dexter he finds them in materialistic failures who are despised in the American world of success. Henry says,

He [Dexter] was thoroughly honest. But he was a dreamer. He came from Indiana. And like all dreamers from Indiana he had such a lovable disposition, such a smooth, mellow, honeyed way that if he had committed incest the world would have forgiven him. [. . .] there flowed from his personality such a warm current of love and understanding that even the trimmings salesmen, hardened as
they were to soft language, melted in their boots. Paul, when all circumstances were favorably conjoined, could walk up to a man, any man on God's green earth and, taking him by the lapel of his coat, drown him in love. (91)

It is with regard to Dexter that Henry makes his statement in favour of failure. It is a sign of individualist anarchism to extol failures in the American context where the philosophy of success has been setting the tone of the general outlook. It was a different voice amidst the daze of the American dream. Henry's anarchism raises its voice against this unthinking mediocrity of the public opinion that seeks to level individual variety into a monotonous average. He recommends individual difference even if it would lead to failure:

And if it were summer's evening, and the entranceways crowded with loungers, I would look among these wasted figures searchingly, wondering how many Pauls there were among them and what it is about life that makes these obvious failures so endearing to men. The others, the successful ones, I had seen with their pants off; I had seen their crooked spines, their brittle bones, their varicose veins [. . .] their big bread baskets which had grown shapeless with years of swilling it. [. . .] All the beautiful diseases of boredom and riches. (94-95)

The character of Henry senior, who also is a failure, is not self-conscious; he just lives out his failure. But Henry's perceptive mind experiences consciously his lenience and attraction towards materialistic failures that are essentially great
individuals. In being alone in this sympathy he feels alienated from the general humanity. This alienation is the result of Henry's anarchism because it is the impulses of rebellion against the dehumanizing philosophy of financial success that is at work here.

Henry's first wife has always been characterized as a narrow minded puritan. Here also she represents the average American mentality during the early decades of the twentieth century. In contrast with her, Henry's anarchism becomes well defined. In "The Tailor Shop" an incident involving a wreck of a man called Baron Von Eschenbach drives home this point. The so-called Baron has been one of the cronies of Henry's father. Shedding his mask of genteel pride he confesses to Henry his pathetic condition of poverty and syphilis. Henry's trait of universal benevolence makes him take the Baron to his own house for being put up there. Being unable to share Henry's mentality his wife would not allow this.

'Universal benevolence' is a concept that is discussed in anarchist theory with regard to human nature. It is William Godwin, an early anarchist, who proposed that humans are by nature universally benevolent. In rejecting the idea of the necessity of state for human good, Godwin proclaimed that human beings are basically founded on reason, and that a reasonable man would strive for the happiness of all without coercion – that he would be universally benevolent (in David Miller 65). Anarchism goes against the majority outlook, and accounts for the difference in the attitudes of Henry and his wife with respect to the case of the Baron. Henry's benevolent reasoning that a derelict should be protected at
any risk (the main and understandable concern of the wife is the question of the wisdom in coexisting with a syphilitic) therefore falls on deaf ears, and becomes a cause of estrangement between them.

Faith in the essential goodness of human nature informs the anarchist vision in "The Tailor Shop". In depicting the tragic failures Henry upholds love that enriches and transcends materialistic limitations – love that forms the hidden order of the natural world and its inhabitants. It is this vision of spiritual anarchism, he seems to say, that triggers his imagination and creativity:

The men my father loved were weak and lovable. They went out, each and everyone of them, like brilliant stars before the sun. They went out quietly and catastrophically. No shred of them remained – nothing but the memory of their blaze and glory. They flow now inside me like a vast river choked with falling stars. They form the black flowing river which keeps the axis of my world in constant revolution. Out of this black, endless, ever-expanding girdle of night springs the continuous morning which is wasted in creation. Each morning the river overflows its banks, leaving the sleeves and button holes and all the rinds of a dead universe strewn along the beach where I stand contemplating the ocean of the morning of creation. (115-116)

Anarchism appears Utopian with its grand dreams of a stateless world. History has proved the impracticality of this fundamental precept of anarchism. Anarchism therefore exists as an attitude and philosophy, at best applicable in
the individual outlook of reality. It rests as a theoretical force behind individual desire for freedom, change, and equality. Henry's anarchist perspective is conscious of this fact. His anarchism is in the form of a criticism of the values that govern America. His flight to France is symbolic of an escape from the puritanism and materialism that marks the ethos of America. The very act of escape underlines his perception that anarchical revolution is an impossible prospect. Contrary to America, Paris becomes the symbol of the space where his anarchist self can exist as it is without unresolvable conflicts with the society.

In "Walking Up and Down in China", another piece in Black Spring, we see Henry experiencing in Paris the hitherto unknown sense of liberation. He calls it "China", a personal symbol for the unknown which makes his anarchist self feel natural and true to itself:

   In Paris, out of Paris, leaving Paris or coming back to Paris, it's always Paris and Paris is France and France is China. All that which is incomprehensible to me runs like a great wall over the hills and valleys through which I wander. Within this great wall I can live out my Chinese life in peace and security. (185)

Political anarchism is not the prime concern of Henry. He is an anarchist more in the spiritual and the philosophical sense. Sceptical about the possibility of the fall of authority, he cherishes his anarchist faith in the self-regulatory force in every human being which is capable of establishing a natural order in the absence of the coercion of power. He acknowledges that he is what he is
because of his search for freedom from America, and that his anarchism is essentially a dream-like, internal condition, which may not have any semblance to the external reality. For Henry the writer, it is to be expressed in writing. His is a literary anarchism formulated by words rather than actions. He expresses his anarchism and alienation in America through his yearning for China, his land of the unknown:

I am not a traveler, not an adventurer. Things happened to me in my search for a way out. Up till now I had been working away in a blind tunnel, burrowing in the bowels of the earth for light and water. I could not believe, being a man of the American continent, that there was a place on earth where a man could be himself. By force of circumstance, I became a Chinaman - a Chinaman in my own country! I took to the opium of dream in order to face the hideousness of a life in which I had no part. As quietly and naturally as a twig falling into the Mississippi I dropped out of the stream of American life. Everything that happened to me I remember, but I have no desire to recover the past, neither have I any longings or regrets. I am like a man who awakes from a long sleep to find that he is dreaming. A pre-natal condition - the born man living unborn, the unborn man dying born. (185)

Miller speaks about his concept of China in an essay where he stresses the concept of China as the wishfulfilment of the alienated artist. He says,
It is the expression of man’s wish to triumph over reality, over becoming. The artist’s dream of the impossible, the miraculous, is simply the resultant of his inability to adapt himself to reality. He creates therefore, a reality of his own – in the poem – a reality which is suitable to him, a reality in which he can live out his unconscious desires, wishes, dreams. (qtd. in Gordon 58)

William Gordon in his study of Miller touches upon the concept of China. He too stresses only the aspect of escape from reality contained in the symbol. In doing so he misses the reason behind the entry into the isolated realm called China:

The dream of the artist, the temptation which he must face and conquer is the one which leads him to look for easy answers, to a life free of struggle. This symbolic realm Miller calls “China”, and it resembles the prenatal security of the womb. “China” is discovered by the mature artist, and he must learn to surrender it. The need for the realm of “China” arises in the artist because of his desire to escape from the realm of becoming. (Gordon 57-58)

The concept of ‘China’ is not an escape from the realm of becoming as is contended by Gordon. On the other hand it is an escape into the realm of becoming – the becoming of the anarchical self – from the American reality, which is oppressive because of its puritanical and materialistic orientations. It is an escape into Paris/China where Henry can be what he is by nature, without
being alienated or repressed as in America. About his self ceasing to feel alienated in Paris he says in "Walking Up and Down in China":

[...]

I see endless roads radiating from my feet and out of my own shoes there step forth the countless egos which inhabit my world of being. [...]

I talk to these self made companions much as I would talk to myself had I been so unfortunate as to live and die only once and thus be forever alone. Now I am never alone. At the very worst I am with God! (186)

The congenial aspect of "China", the realm of self-realization where the self of Henry exists without conflicts, is further foregrounded in his condemnation of America, which is the categorical opposite "China". Literally speaking, China stands for Oriental spiritualism and the realization of the self it advocates. It also is a call for freedom from ties born of materialism. On the contrary, America stands for Occidental materialism. The following words make it clear how China, though an ideal, is different from America where there is a pathetic lack of human warmth in inter-personal relations; where people smile insensitively even at poverty:

The women clothed in beautiful garbs, each one equipped with a cold storage smile. The men smiled too now and then, as if they were walking in their coffins to meet the Heavenly Redeemer. [...]

The living walked over the dead, smiling all the while to advertise their beautiful white teeth. It is the cruel white smile that sticks in my memory. [...]

America smiling at poverty. (189)
‘China’ is a novel experience for Henry. The realization of his anarchist identity, and its living out is so new that he considers ‘China’ as a place with a hitherto unknown language and geography. It also makes him more acutely aware of the imperialistic tendencies of America and the danger it poses to the world culture. But being geographically away (in Paris) from America, which is his dreaded world of materialism, seems like being in the unknown. He feels as if being in a place where he has no language, for here he has forgotten his own language in the taking of the new birth:

I am here in the midst of a great change. I have forgotten my own language and yet I do not speak the new language. I am in China and I am talking Chinese. I am in the dead center of a changing reality for which no language has yet been invented. According to the map I am in Paris; according to the calendar I am living in the third decade of the twentieth century. But I am neither in Paris nor in the twentieth century. I am in China and there are no clocks and calendars here. I am sailing in the Yangtsze in a dhow and what food I gather is collected from the garbage dumped overboard by the American gunboats. It takes me all day to prepare a humble meal, but it is a delectable meal and I have a cast-iron stomach.

(191)

‘China’ is a symbol of Henry’s experience of the appalling transition from the ambience of America to that of Paris where he realizes his anarchist self and seeks to expresses it in writing. Chronologically it is a period in which he arrives
in Paris, and is spell bound by the change he witnesses in the environment that is replete with the traces of the centuries old European civilization. Here he feels expansive and free from the crippling he had felt in America. He feels a growing sense of humanity in him, and experiences the internal chaos that ushers change in the consciousness. He starts extolling and worshipping the confusion that goes into the making of 'China', the symbolic land of self-realization. In fact Miller finds it rather difficult to delineate the beatific experience of Henry which he calls "China". These are the ejaculations of a man who struggles to give form to a newfound wisdom, which is the result of self-realization:

So it is that, looking at the sea and land which compose the continents of man, I see certain ridiculous, monstrous formations and others again which bear witness to heroic struggles. I can trace, in the long, winding rivers, the loss of faith and courage, the slipping away from grace, the slow, gradual attrition of the soul. I can see that the frontiers are marked with heavy, natural boundaries and also with light, wavering lines, variable as the wind. [. . .] I am sure that in certain quarters the myth will come true, that here and there a link will be found between the unknown men we were and the unknown men we are, that the confusion of the past will be marked by a greater confusion to come, and that it is only the tumult and confusion which is of importance and that we must get down and worship it. [. . .] The map of Europe is changing
before our eyes; nobody knows where the new continent begins or ends.

(190-191)

"Walking Up and Down in China" is a composition devoted to the experience of walking in a trance. Unlike in Cancer here we do not find a rebellion against the present society. Instead, here the anarchist rebellion and criticism of social order is concentrated in the form of Henry's discourse, whose surrealism itself becomes an expression of anarchism. It expresses the self's horror of the objective present and opts to escape into the past/dream, and sees a virtue and hope for humanity in the ability to shed the present, which happens only rarely:

I believe as I walk through the horror of the present, that only those whose permanent absence from the condition known as reality can affect our fate. [...] I believe that only a dreamer who has fear neither of life nor death will discover the infinitesimal iota of force which will hurtle the cosmos into whack - *instantaneously.* (192-193)

In placing the status of the redeemer in the writer/dreamer Henry here establishes his purpose of promoting anarchism in writing.

In spite of the tendency to escape into the past and dream we also find a strong antipathy to war in this composition. Miller has been a pacifist and a strong opponent of war. He stood out of both the world wars, and in his writing has very forcefully condemned war in anarchist lines. America has had a pacifist anarchist tradition through theorists like Henry C.Wright, Adin-Ballou, and William
Lloyd Garrison who were peace men, and anti-war in their convictions (Reichert 46). Miller who has confessed about having been influenced by anarchists like Emma Goldman is specifically against war. His anti-war positions are concretized in the images of men who hate war but yet has to conform to the decree of the state to go to war. Anarchists abhor the power of the state to push its unwilling citizens arbitrarily to war. The minority who constitute the government exploit the citizens to achieve their ends by giving hope of freedom at the end of the war. It is a bogus and temporary freedom that the citizens get during peace because another war or emergency may crop up any time curbing his freedom again. Still the average man is tempted to conformity by the prospect of freedom that comes between two wars. Henry encodes his protest against this in a speech made by Carl about war, which suggests how the state mortifies individuals who disobey its orders:

Talking about his mother he was, about coming out of her womb [. . .] and then the war came and they told him to shoot and he couldn’t shoot and when the war was over they opened the gates of the prison or the lunatic asylum, or whatever it was and he was free as a bird. [. . .]

Free as a bird I heard him say, and with that the gates opening and other men running out, all scot-free and a little silly from the confinement and the strain of waiting for the war to end.

(208-209)
The opening pages of 'Burlesk', the last piece in Black Spring, are devoted to the satirisation of the Christian religion from the point of view of its decadent mechanicalness, ritualism and hypocrisy in a prayer meeting visited by Henry and a Dutchman during his life in New York. In this meeting a man standing on a platform mechanically repeats now and then that "After the meeting we will go down to call on our bereaved sister Mrs.Blanchard" whose son died (216). He calls on those gathered to "testify". The supposed to be devotional atmosphere is trivialized by Henry's observation that sticks prominently on a sign that is hung over the altar: "Don't spit on the floor", which suggestively jars against the concocted atmosphere of piety and spirituality.

The prayer scene becomes an expression of anarchism because of its sarcasm aimed at the prayer business. The scene is justified when we see that most of the prominent anarchist figures in the late nineteenth century America had started their activity by attacking the Church. Religion for them curbed the freedom of the individual by forcing him to accept its authority. Morse, for example, went to the extent of saying

*If we are ever to claim our birth right of freedom [..] we must reject all attempts to fetter the Spirit. It is time that we cease thinking of ourselves as sheep to be led by Jesus into the paths of righteousness. The notion of Jesus as saviour has cut the lines of communication between the individual and the religious forces of nature [..]. Let us be done with Jesus, then, Morse urged, for he*
has become a “Stumbling block to the generation” that must be removed before any further progress can be made. (in Reichert 53)

Miller’s formative years in America had been exposed to such views even though anarchism was spurned by the majority, marginalizing men with anarchist sympathies to total negligence. Therefore the anarchist critique of Christianity and its authoritarianism and conformism found in Miller has their origins in the anarchism existent in America itself.

Henry voices the alienation and loneliness experienced by the anarchist self in America; the loneliness he overcame when he went over to Paris where his anarchist self was accepted. But as he says in ‘Burlesk’, in America “I go back over to Brooklyn Bridge and sit in the snow opposite the house where I was born. An immense heartbreaking loneliness grips me” (224). He understands that his self is not in tune with the values represented by America where a person gets anything he wants if he is businesslike and heartless. In an ironical vein he says,

[. . .] America is the grandest country God ever made [. . .]. There isn’t a thing in the world America won’t do for you if you ask for it like a man. You can sit on electric chair and while the juice is being turned on you can read about your own execution; you can look at a picture of yourself sitting in the electric chair while you are waiting to be executed. (224)

This brings Henry to the conclusion that his alienation has its reason in America the country itself, once again affirming that the pieces in *Black Spring* relating to
American life evince the alienation of anarchism. As Henry says, "It's got to do with America [. . .] my grotesque loneliness. . . ." (225).

The other pieces in Black Spring are "Into the Night Life. . . .", "The Angel Is My Watermark" and "Jabberwhorl Cronstadt". These pieces are written for the sheer pleasure of writing, and are instances of literary anarchism in their demonstration of nonsense and illogicality. "Into the Night Life . . ." is a full-length dream experience while "The Angel Is My Watermark" tells about the genesis of a surrealist painting and the process of creativity. Both speak of the influence of avant-garde movements like surrealism and Dadaism on Henry, which upheld the role of the unconscious and the illogical in creativity. These movements appeal to Henry who is basically against conventionality. "Jabberwhorl Cronstadt" is about a business man poet. It is a fictional composition that raises rebellion against poetic idealism. Cronstadt is the symbol of a poet who is a real estate business man and hence very down to earth. He says, "You think literature is everything. You eat literature. Now in this house we eat goose [. . .]" (136).

Henry's reverence for him makes him an extension of the Henry in Cancer who lashes out against literature and its canons. It is with regard to these compositions that George Wickes makes the generalization that "Black Spring is full of parodies and puns, zany free associations and digressions, anarchy and irreverence" ("Henry Miller: Down and Out in Paris" 124).