



DOI: 10.22363/2312-9220-2024-29-2-278-288
EDN: SNQPCH
UDC 821.111(411)

Research article / Научная статья

Henry Miller's "Black Spring": a journey of sexuality from childhood to adulthood

Mahendra Madhav Kamat

Shri S.H. Kelkar College of Arts, Commerce and Science, Devgad Sindhudurg, Republic of India

✉ mahendramkamat@gmail.com

Abstract. Henry Miller is a modern American novelist who was famous for his autobiographical expression of sexuality in his novels on the background of metropolis like New York and Paris. His novel "Black Spring" which was written in 1932–1933 and first published in 1936 presents his childhood memories in Brooklyn and New York. The novel focuses on the development of sexuality of the novelist and his journey from childhood to adulthood, focusing on his sexuality. The novel presents his childhood sexuality, fantasies and his approach to sexuality changing with time. Miller challenges the taboos, canons and moral orders taking sexuality as a weapon against a person. He modifies all the rules of self-expression and perhaps he is the first novelist who presents himself as sexual hero. The research focuses on Miller's view on sexuality and morality and his journey from childhood to youth and his development of personality along with the role of sexuality in the development of his personality. The paper is also an endeavour to study the concepts of contemporary moral order and social ethics presented by Henry Miller.

Keywords: Brooklyn, moral order, canons, culture, morality

Conflicts of interest. The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

Article history: submitted January 5, 2024; revised February 13, 2024; accepted March 16, 2024.

For citation: Kamat, M.M. (2024). Henry Miller's "Black Spring": A journey of sexuality from childhood to adulthood. *RUDN Journal of Studies in Literature and Journalism*, 29(2), 278–288. <http://doi.org/10.22363/2312-9220-2024-29-2-278-288>

«Черная весна» Генри Миллера: путешествие сексуальности из детства во взрослую жизнь

Махендра Мадхав Камат

*Колледж искусств, коммерции и науки имени Шри С.Х. Келкара, Девгад Синдхурдург,
Республика Индия*

✉ mahendramkamat@gmail.com

Аннотация. Генри Миллер – современный американский писатель, прославившийся автобиографическим выражением сексуальности в своих романах на фоне таких мегаполисов, как Нью-Йорк и Париж. Роман «Черная весна», написанный в 1932–1933 гг. и

© Kamat M.M., 2024



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/legalcode>

впервые опубликованный в 1936 г., рассказывает о детских воспоминаниях в Бруклине и Нью-Йорке. Цель исследования – дать критическую оценку романа, посвященного развитию сексуальности писателя и его путешествию из детства во взрослую жизнь. Рассмотрены представленные в романе детская сексуальность Миллера, фантазии и его подход к сексуальности, меняющийся со временем. Он бросает вызов табу, канонам и моральным установлениям, используя сексуальность как оружие против личности. Показано, что Миллер изменяет все правила самовыражения и, возможно, он первый романист, который представляет себя сексуальным героем. Проанализированы взгляды Миллера на сексуальность и мораль, его эволюции от детства к юности и становлению личности, а также роли сексуальности в развитии его личности. Изучены концепции современного морального порядка и социальной этики, представленные Генри Миллером.

Ключевые слова: Бруклин, моральный порядок, каноны, культура, нравственность

Заявление о конфликте интересов. Автор заявляет об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

История статьи: поступила в редакцию 5 января 2024 г.; отрецензирована 13 февраля 2024 г.; принята к публикации 16 марта 2024 г.

Для цитирования: Kamat M.M. Henry Miller's "Black Spring": a journey of sexuality from childhood to adulthood // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Литературоведение. Журналистика. 2024. Т. 29. № 2. С. 278–288. <http://doi.org/10.22363/2312-9220-2024-29-2-278-288>

Introduction

The expression and presentation of sexuality in literature is not a new phenomenon and they are variant and relative to the background of its time, space and place. Though sexuality overtly seems to be the physical aspect of life, it is psychological and cultural as it is controlled by the society in which it is created. Every culture and society have their own approach towards sexuality and they assess it through their norms on the basis of canons and taboos. Further, society and culture are always changing with time and hence the change in the approach towards sexuality is unavoidable. Consequently, the changes in the social canons and taboos can be seen according to the changes in time along with the confrontation and compromise between the everchanging various moral values. The change in the approach, canons and taboos also modify and alter the moral approach of the society towards sexual relations. Subsequently, this modification also takes place in the concepts of 'good' and 'evil' according to which the ideas of morality and immorality are redefined. Thus, the study of manipulation of time and place is important in the study of sexuality and moral vision of any writer and his literature (Durell, 1961; Hassan, 1967; Nelson, 1970; Weeks, 1985; Wickes, 1966; Wickes, 1969).

Discussion

While studying the manipulation of time and place in the novels of Henry Miller, one can come across a cultural and moral background of Miller. Especially, Miller's belonging to metropolis culture and society has brought a quite frankness in his expression but at the same time he is not free from the canons and taboos (either in reaction or succession) of the culture he belongs.

Henry Miller's presentation of time and space are closely associated with the events and incidents of his own personal life. Even his books are autobiographical which give further details of his life since his childhood. In fact, his first

significant book was published in 1934 during the period of the Great Depression. Therefore, he is considered as an arch example of American expatriate of the late Depression period. He was both appreciated as well as criticized for his bohemian expressions who lived chiefly on wits and nerve. Moreover, some contemporary critics regard him as an answer to the failure of the American social and moral taboos and canons. Miller is valued as a Depression writer against his contemporaries. If the Depression period is construed with historical sense, then it is not difficult to understand Miller. But unfortunately, having the stamp of the sexual novelist, he was not given enough space by his contemporaries. This feature is observed by William Gordon. According to him, Miller was not fixed with any literary ideology. Neither was he socialist, nor bohemian until 1930. Gordon comments:

“What he knows about art and literature and philosophy is different from what our writers of the twenties and thirties knew. Miller has read more widely and deeply than most American writers of his time, but more than that, he has read different things. That difference in the kind and quantity of Miller’s reading is related both to the Brooklyn in which he grew up and to the century in which he was born; for Miller though he was born in the same period as Hemingway and Pound and Eliot, did not repudiate his early life. He built upon it.” (Gordon, 1967, p. 5).

In fact, Miller is a witness of American transition from one moral system to another, which he presents in his novels. His early Brooklyn life was the groundwork of his later career. The account of his Brooklyn childhood is detailed in his novel, *Black Spring* (Miller, 1963). Though, *Tropic of Cancer* (Miller, 1961) is his first popular published book, *Black Spring* is a significant novel for his presentation of childhood memories of Brooklyn. Here he has also presented the set-up of his mind about the time that he was writing *Tropic of Cancer*. The novel begins with “I am a patriot of the Fourteenth Ward, Brooklyn, where I was raised.” (*Black Spring*, p. 3) The novel can be looked as an introduction of Miller where he presents himself in the astrological manner, who writes:

“But I was born in the street and raised in the street. “The post-mechanical open street where the most beautiful and hallucination iron vegetation,” etc. ... Born under the sign of Aries which gives a fiery, active, energetic and somewhat restless body. *With Mars in the ninth house!*” (*Black Spring*, p. 3)

He writes about the vital, exhilarating days of his youth in *Black Spring*. The book is specially marked for the presence of an exuberance and innocence. Such quality is almost absent in other writings of Henry Miller. It is a peerless feature of Miller’s writing where place becomes more important than anything else. His skill in presenting contingency also impresses his critic, Leon Lewis, who remarks:

“A part of Miller’s appeal to a broad range of readers is his ability to exhibit an energetic delight in circumstances which most people would find distressing” (Lewis, 1968, p. 22).

In *Black Spring*, Miller seems to be honest for accepting everything, but later it is not merely an acceptance but an expectation that things will be better, gets mingled with a delight in diversity. He is repeatedly seen preaching himself by saying, “Always Merry and Bright.” He admits his childhood reality as born on

the streets and also explains how his childhood in Brooklyn sculptured his personality for future. He writes:

“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 wandering a metaphysical certitude. In the street you learn what human beings really are; otherwise, or afterwards, you invent them. What is not on the open street is false, derived, that is to say, *literature*. Nothing of what is called “adventure” ever approaches the flavor of street” (*Black Spring*, p. 3).

Miller here presents the seed of his future personality. He tells us here that he is a child of open streets and consequently he suggests that he is free from the taboos and canons of society which restrict an individual freedom. Further, there is nothing in his life which he should hide. The youth clings to a permanent place in his memory and hence, he reminisced about his childhood which later on got repeated partially in *Tropic of Capricorn*. But, here, he mostly remembers these years of his life which take him to the stage of being nostalgic. Jane Jacob puts this phase of Miller’s life and its consequences in these words:

“The intensity with which Miller recalled his childhood was partly a product of how quickly it ended, and how different his life seemed afterwards. The neighborhood in which his family lived began to deteriorate and his family began to collapse both economically and psychologically at the same time (Lewis, 1968, p. 23).

Jacob observes Miller’s capacity to present transitions around along with the contemporary time. Childhood phase of Miller gives him nostalgia. It was a beautiful world for him which later deteriorated. This deterioration is both – physical and psychological. Miller proffers the memory of his father in the section “The Tailor Shop”, which actually is a section of his nostalgia. His father runs a moderate tailoring shop which now transacts slighter business and ensues more financial indebtedness. The phase of financial indebtedness in his life was continued until the publication of *Tropic of Cancer* in 1934. Therefore, the vision of his happy childhood grows in imagination and memory. It also sustains him by promising of a way of life that could be reclaimed in his mature years if he finds the right means. Miller also thinks his memories schizophrenic. He writes:

“Schizophrenia! Nobody thinks any more how marvellous 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 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” (*Black Spring*, p. 22).

Miller presents here the deterioration of Europe and America on the ethical and cultural level as well which later became the major theme of his writing. Moreover, he expresses his frustration quite ironically.

Miller, in the early pages of *Black Spring*, shows the condition of innocent awareness which he is no longer capable to perpetuate. Instead of keeping records of his existence, he invents it a new according to his inspiration which becomes

both a guide of his quest and the goal of his search for transcendence as well. In other ways, these are his efforts towards the rebirth of himself and to maintain his mental state accordingly. His break away from Brooklyn takes him to a big ethos. Now his search for home begins. His journey to America and European countries cannot fill the cavity of his mind that is created out of the loss of Brooklyn. Even for America, beyond Brooklyn, he passes bitter comments. He remarks:

“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” (*Black Spring*, p. 25).

Furthermore, he continues the theme of deterioration of culture. America, in his reminiscence of Brooklyn, is lost now. The present America is dissimilar to it and hence, his expedition to his home still continues, which later on takes him to Paris. Further, his Brooklyn passion encourages him to give a cosmic shape to his life. But his efforts are not materialized in the world he joined and this frustration gave birth to *Cancer*. The seeds of future cancer are sown in his childhood. They are visible in *Black Spring*. At a point of time, Miller writes:

“I am Chancre, the crab, which moves sideways and tropics and deal in high explosives, embalming fluid, jasper, myrrh, smaragd, fluted snot, and porcupines’ toes. Because of Uranus which crosses my longitudinal water bottles. Neptune dominates my ascendant. That means I am composed of watery fluid, that I am volatile, quixotic, unreliable, independent, and evanescent. Also quarrelsome” (*Black Spring*, p. 29).

This is also a presentation of the roots of the Apocalypse. Subsequently, he creates another world of his imagination and tries to ferret it out in real life. Here, the things are juxtaposed astrologically and reference of planets presents his failure to search an ethos. His quest is futile which reiterates and takes him back to the Brooklyn world. Leon Lewis puts this in these words:

“And when these searches turned out to be only temporarily or partially adequate, Miller was driven back to “Brooklyn” and forced to cross and recross the blighted landscape to see if some hidden forces might still be unearthed or exploited” (Lewis, 1968, p. 25).

Lewis also refers the surrealistic aspect of Miller’s later writing, *The Rosy Crucifixion*. He finds the same roots of his search for ethos. Miller feels that most of the Americans live the formalized regulated life which is a severe deterrent to any passionate participation in the world. During his childhood he had experienced the lack of love and warmth at his home. Further, he experienced that the practical world was different than the world presented in the writings of D.H. Lawrence and Jean Giono whom he used to read desperately on the stage of adolescence. He had also realized the same from the education which he was getting in the public school. Such education encouraged the same type of rigid, puritanical repressive values which his family had already forced him to accept. Thus, he began to think that everyone in America is being taught to eradicate or suppress what is most vital human feeling like sexuality. During this period, an American thinker, Laurens Van der Post observes the same in the Western society. The education which is supposed to engender good human beings has failed in its objective. Rather it fortifies the same values of life, which leads a person to be puritanical and orthodox. He asserts:

“The rational, calculating, acutely reasoning and the determined human being that Western man has made of himself has increasingly considered the dark side of himself not as a brother but as an enemy, capable, with his upsurges rich emotion and colorful impulses, of wrecking conscious man’s carefully planned and closely reasoned way of existence” (Van der Post, 1955, p. 36).

Further, Miller enunciates his feeling of obstacle between man and man, and man and knowledge which is a part of social mannerism. As a child, he thought that he could never be rational, acute and with reasoning capacity. Accordingly, the society had established a role of enemy for him. This social repression and excessive self-indulgence seem to have provoked him later to overreact in the form of the expression of desperate sexuality of his own. Moreover, all his friends were victims of this overreaction as they shared the common impulsion. Miller presents the scantiness of the soul which, according to him, is a consequence of material aspect, and therefore, he repels it. Leon Lewis comments on Miller’s views in this regard:

“The obscene nature of the sexual activity in much of Miller’s writing is a product of the loathing and self-disgust the people he describes had for the way they were using their bodies – and for the way they were neglecting their spirit of soul” (Lewis, 1968, p. 27).

In this entire cognitive process, he faces a problem to find a way to live comfortably with the instincts. He acknowledges them as crucial to his life as an artist. Moreover, he retains a sense of respect for himself as a human being through the journey of sex. Norman Mailer points out his sex and its Brooklyn roots in his essay, ‘Narcissism’ (Mailer, 1976). Mailer illustrates the association of sex and disgust which he calls filth in Brooklyn part of Miller’s life. For him, sex in Miller’s novels, is an expression of his aggression which is rooted in his Brooklyn life. He writes:

“Sex was stinky-pinky back in Brooklyn at the turn of the century (and for a good part of the next forty years) Sex and filth were components of the same equation, as related the mass and energy – tender sex was a flower you shoved up a girl’s ass. Sex was a function of filth; filth was a function of sex – no surprise that sex was getting ready for the automobile, and the smell of gasoline would prove new aphrodisiac” (Gottesman, 1992, p. 132).

Further, the determination behind his writing is to get outside of time somehow. He desires to find a way to become a part of what he says ‘eternal here and now’ and it is very human. Some of the same idiosyncratic patterns of structure motivate him. It leads to the development of several crucial elements in his narrative consciousness and in his writing. His nostalgic inclination always makes him work for the replacement of the world and time with the reincarnation of a prior one. According to Miller, Western civilization is headed for apocalyptic catastrophe. Consequently, he is convinced that progress is a bizarre mockery of actual historical reality. As an artist, he is permanently excluded from any schemes of social improvement or adaptation. This view of Miller leads him to confound chronology as a method of organizing narrative and envision the artist as outside of history. Above all, the use of chronology ascertains Miller as the timeless as the themes of his novels deal with the basic human intensity. They are a-historical and

mainly focusing on ethical and moral values. Lewis finds out the same sense of time, when he writes about Miller. He comments:

“In a way, the artist is always acting against the time-destiny movement. He is always a historical. *He accepts Time absolutely*, as Whitman says, in the sense that any way he rolls (with tail in mouth) is direction; in the sense that any moment, every moment, maybe the all; for the artist there is nothing but the present, the eternal here and now, the expanding infinite moment which flame and song” (Lewis, 1968, p. 29).

Furthermore, the above remark is enough to explain that Miller was never comfortable in the present. In fact, he lived along with nostalgic passions for his past. He worked with tensions towards some fabulous future. The time in his nostalgia which he remembers was not only late nineteenth century Brooklyn, but an era of unlimited exception and faith. He is obsessed with his identity associated with Brooklyn. He expresses it quite directly. He writes:

“In my dreams I come back to the Fourteenth Ward as a paranoiac returns to his obsessions. When I think of steel-gray battleship in the Navy Yard I see them lying there in some astrologic dimension...” (Miller, 1963, p. 5).

Miller easily shifts from one time to the other, from reality to illusion as he rifles through the world of his dreams. He searches it into pastiches and tries to stitch them together.

In the beginning of the novel, *Black Spring*, he exclaims, “I am a patriot – of the Fourteenth Ward, Brooklyn.” His pride is justified by the social arrangement that exists in this small sector of America. He presents every person in his childhood with appropriate tasks in Brooklyn background. In his monologue, “I remember the ironworks where the red furnace glowed and men walked toward the glowing pit with huge shovels in their hands” (Miller, 1963, p. 5). He presents human beings in the Brooklyn background which were so natural and innocent. All of them were genuine artists. They were black with hard work outwardly but clean at the core. The same people he presents in *Tropic of Cancer* are white and polished outwardly and black at the core. Miller covers this change quite poetically and presents the deterioration of human life on the background of time and space. Subsequently, this change is helplessly accepted by Miller. This also focuses the role of destiny here, which supersedes him. In “Megalopolitan Maniac”, the last part of *Black Spring*, Miller expresses the same aspect in the self-created epitaph. He speaks:

“Imagine having nothing in your hands but your destiny. You sit on the doorstep of your mother’s womb and you kill time-or time kills you. You sit there chanting the doxology of things beyond your grasp. Outside, forever outside” (Miller, 1963, p. 234).

The experience of feebleness before destiny gives a sentiment of out-sidedness that diverts him to alienation. In fact, out-sidedness is an essential feature of the city and a journey towards out-sidedness and its achievement is presented afterwards in Miller’s other works. Miller’s cosmos is divided into two: a world like the Fourteenth Ward where ‘we were whole’ and a world after ‘the great change’ of out-sidedness. He senses that he lives in ideas. He calls himself child in the streets, which means accidents and incidents, drama and movements. This harmony of irrelevant facts is perhaps a part of everyone’s life. It lives in the twentieth century and experiences the transition. Thus are the streets explained by Miller:

“Here there is buried legend after legend of youth and melancholy, of savage nights and mysterious bosoms dancing on the wet mirror of the pavement of women chuckling softly as they scratch themselves, of ‘wild sailors’ shouts, of long queues standing in front of the lobby, of boats brushing each other in the fog and tugs snorting furiously against the rush of tide while up on the Brooklyn Bridge a man is standing in agony, waiting to jump, or waiting to write a poem, or waiting for the blood to leave his vessels because if he advances another foot the pain, the pain of his love will kill him.” (Miller, 1963, p. 11).

He feels deeply about Brooklyn but it might have lost in his youth. The loss is on the physical and emotional level as well. He experiences that out-sidedness is something which meant to uproot the tree from its original land and to implant it in a new ground. This is an upshot of the Depression and ultimately of the capitalism in Europe and America. Miller is one of the very few writers who presents this consequence of the capitalism. The effect is not on a part or a single section of the society but it is as a whole. George Orwell appreciates Miller for his presentation of a different world than others. In his essay, ‘Inside the Whale’, he writes:

“Miller is writing about the man in street, and it is incidentally rather a pity that it should be a street full of brothels. That is the penalty of leaving your native land. It means transferring your roots into shallower soil. Exile is probably more damaging to a novelist than to a painter or even a poet, because its effect is to take him out of contact with working life and narrow down his range to the street, the café, the church, the brothel and the studio. On the whole, in Miller’s books you are reading about people living the expatriate life, people drinking, talking, meditating, and fornicating, not about people working, marrying, and bringing up children; a pity because he would have described the one set of activities as well the other” (Mitchell, 1971, p. 9).

Orwell suggests here that the streets of Brooklyn in *Black Spring* are now full of brothels which bespeak not only the physical change but cultural and ethical too. There Miller has some solace from the out-sidedness beyond sexuality.

In *Black Spring*, Miller is introduced as a person living a life of value and creative force. At a dinner party at the Lowenfels’, he provides the subject for Miller’s surrealistic story, “Jabberwhorl Cronstadt” in *Black Spring*. It begins with Miller’s arrival at the Lowenfels’ apartment. Miller describes:

“He lives in the back of a sunken garden, a sort of bosky glade shaded by whiffletrees and spinozas, by deodars and baobabs, a sort of queasy Buxtehude diapered with elytras and feluccas. You pass through a sentry box where the concierge twirls his mustache *con furioso* like in the last act of Ouida. They live on the third floor behind a mullioned belvedere filigreed with snaffled spaniels and sebaceous wens, with debentures and megrims hanging out to dry. Over the bell-push it says: “JABBERWHORL CRONSTADT, poet, musician, herbologist, weather man, linguist, oceanographer, old clothes, colloids.” Under this it reads: “Wipe your feet and blow your nose!” And under this is a rosette from a second-hand suit” (Miller, 1963, p. 131).

Here, Miller introduces Lawenfels, but moreover, it is an expression of his intimate tenderness to him. After Brooklyn, Lawenfels is a major element with

which he is sentimentally interlaced. Miller shares a lot of common features with him. Both of them are afraid of the ferociousness of the modern world and the destruction of human values. Lowenfels is near and dear to him perhaps because he also finds the evils of time in the contemporary age. Like Miller, he scans the cancer of the civilization in the Western world. Further, he finds the same in Europe and America. Like Miller, Lowenfels is apocalyptic in his vision. He observes the same destruction in his poems which Miller presents in *Black Spring* and some of his other novels. Lowenfels was working as a writer and a renting agent. He and his wife helped Henry Miller beyond description. They encouraged him and frequently fed him and lent him money. This ‘Cronstadt’ is different than other Americans for Miller. He is a natural man bereft of the heavy load of ‘being American’. But Norman Mailer feels that ‘like Dickens, Miller is at his best with the worst’ in human beings. Further he implies that Cronstadt is an illustration of what Miller could do with one of the best people he knew. However, Leon Lewis finds another importance of Cronstadt episode in the novel. He comments:

“Through the Cronstadt tour dé force, *Black Spring* has been divided nearly equally between Miller’s early life in Brooklyn and his days in France while *Cancer* was being written. The years between have been crossed without comment” (Lewis, 1968, p. 122).

Lewis highlights here the significance of the book where Miller compares different times and spaces. It is also the roundness of Miller’s character himself. Moreover, it is presented through the use of images and the entire sequence of dreams and experience. This world of experience is seen in the section “Into the Night Life” of the novel. The section begins with an image of the narrator chained to a bed:

“Suddenly the old hag comes dancing in stark naked, her hands aflame. Immediately she knocks over the umbrella stand the place is in an uproar. From the upturned umbrella stand there issues a steady stream of writhing cobras travelling at lightning speed. They knot themselves around the legs of the tables, they carry away the soup tureens, they scramble into the dresser and jam the drawers, they wriggle through the pictures on the wall, through the curtain rings, through the mattresses, they coil up inside the women’s hats, all the while hissing like steam boilers.

Winding a pair of cobras about my arms I go for the old hag with murder in my eyes. From her mouth, her eyes, her hair, from her vagina even, the cobras are streaming forth, always with that frightful steaming hiss as if they had been ejected fresh from a boiling crater. In the middle of the room where we are locked an immense forest opens up. We stand in a nest of cobras and our bodies come undone” (Miller, 1963, p. 153).

Miller presents here the shift of space and time also. This is a swing from the reverent and innocent affection of Lowenfels. He enters into the world of sexuality again. This world is not beautiful but it is more dreadful. He presents here the archetype of terrible mother which is later on presented in the *Tropics* novels. This is a sequence of dreams which move from the present to the past. His recollection from the distant past to present and vision of the future that is his apocalypse is not ended with *Black Spring* but it is continued for the next forty years in his writing. In the section of this Book “Walking Up and Down in China”, Miller

picks up Cronstadt's insight that happiness is always a search. It again takes him to illusions. For him, time is a flow and he connects it with the help of fantasy again. Moreover, he fills the lacuna of his real world with the help of his illusions and thus he constructs the impeccable world of his vision and further it takes him to China. Miller enunciates:

“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” (Miller, 1963, p. 185).

Here, China is not a tangible place for Miller but it is a condition of being for him. He also expresses it when he writes, “I became a Chinaman, a Chinaman in my own country! I took the opium of dream in order to face the hideousness of a life in which I had no part” (Miller, 1963, p. 185). Nevertheless, he visited Eastern world or China until the sixties, China in this book is a formation of concept of many other places and times. China is as good name given to the place as any for a place. These are Miller's attempts to replace the cancerous West with the timeless and eternal East. Every time, he tries to move rather than to escape from the present, and further searches spirit in the past which is unrecoverable. The final pages of *Black Spring* suggest that Miller resolves to confront the circumstances of the present and accepts the difficulties of an uncertain arduous path towards China. Moreover, he begins the process to be so.

Conclusion

Miller is successful to present the places of action in the novel, emphasizing on the changes occurring in the space and the impact of the changes upon the individual. He presents every ugly and beautiful aspect of New York and Paris and the people of these cities and in his individual life which variegates both in good as well as bad ways. In short, the metropolis and the modern life provide the space and time to the works of Henry Miller. He tries to search the roots of the problems of the modern society in the growth of the cities which changes cultural and moral approach of an individual and society. Both individuals and masses work either to gain or to change their identities on the background of the crowded cities. Miller presents the loss of the nature and innocence with the development of the cities in his novels as he describes Brooklyn of his childhood memories in *Black Spring* and how it turns to the crowded place of New York in his adolescence days. While presenting the metropolis life and its problems, Miller becomes subjective like most of his novels as his novels are autobiographical. Moreover, Miller also presents man's alienation from nature and its impact on the individual character in his novels.

References

- Durell, L., & Perles, A. (1961). *The art and outrage*. Dutton: Boojojoycer.
- Gordon, W.A. (1967). *The mind and art of Henry Miller*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
- Hassan, I. (1967). “My life in fiction”. *The Literature of Silence: Henry Miller and Samuel Beckett*. Knopf.

- Kermode, F. (1971). Henry Miller and John Betjeman: Puzzles and epiphanies. In E. Mitchell (Ed.), *Henry Miller, Three Decades of Criticism*. New York: University Press.
- Lewis, L. (1968). *Henry Miller: The major writings*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Mailer, N. (1976). *Genius and lust: A journey through the major writings of Henry Miller*. New York: Grove.
- Mailer, N. (1992). Narcissism. In R. Gottesman (Ed.), *Critical Essays on Henry Miller*. New York: G.K. Hall and Co.
- Miller, H. (1961). *Tropic of cancer*. New York: Grove Press.
- Miller, H. (1963). *Black spring*. New York: Grove Press.
- Nelson, J.A. (1970). *Form and image in the fiction of Henry Miller*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Orwell, G. (1971). Inside the whale. In E. Mitchell (Ed.), *Henry Miller, Three Decades of Criticism*. New York: University Press.
- Van der Post, L. (1955). *The dark eye in Africa*. New York: Morrow.
- Weeks, J. (1985). *Sexuality and its discontents: Meanings, myths & modern sexualities*. London: Routledge & K. Paul.
- Wickes, G. (1966). *University of Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers* (no. 56). Minnesota: University of Minnesota.
- Wickes, G. (1969). Cancer and delirium. *Americans in Paris*. London: Doubleday.

Bio note:

Mahendra Madhav Kamat, Associate Professor and Head, Department of English, Shri S.H. Kelkar College of Arts, Commerce and Science, Devgad Sindhudurg, Maharashtra, 416613, Republic of India. E-mail: mahendramkamat@gmail.com

Сведения об авторе:

Камат Махендра Мадхав, доцент и заведующий кафедрой английского языка, Колледж искусств, торговли и науки Шри С.Х. Келкара, Республика Индия, 416613, Махараштра, Девгад Синдхадург. E-mail: mahendramkamat@gmail.com