Review of the Work already done on this Subject

In his thesis, entitled Ideology and four post-1960 Afro American Novelists, Gatsinzi holds contribution of John Oliver Killens in forming the ideology of the black literature in America. Here Killens does not receive any special attention as he is one of the four under study.\(^1\)

In the dissertation submitted to the Dallas University of Texas, Stephen records the influence of W.E. Du Bois on the life of Southern America as reflected in the novels of John Oliver Killens.\(^2\)

A scholarly treatise on the life John Oliver Killens, Gilyard describes the memorable events from the life of Killens. It is a sort of biography with a critical insight for the purpose of the black literature lovers and scholars.\(^3\)

Another book by Gilyard records the role of John Oliver Killens in the activating the black movement in the form of Harlem Writers’ Guild in the south. The book is more political than a literary one.\(^4\)

In the Cambridge companion to African American Novel, Graham Marimba only provides brief information about the works of John Oliver Killens running into three pages giving story line of the works of Killens.\(^5\)

Horst comments on Killens’ criticism of the theory of the white man’s burden and his advocacy of the black man’s burden. It is kind of a gist of Killens’ political philosophy.\(^6\)

Lehman in his dissertation submitted to Lehigh University in 1076 describes the theme of the development of the black psyche and manhood in the works of John Oliver Killens. It is a detailed study of the protagonists in each major novel by Killens. It is hardly new as it is core theme in all the black writers in America.\(^7\)

Littlejohn in his interesting essay enlists the views of the black writers on the white people and characters in their works. Killens is one of the minor writers covered in this essay as the focus of the study remains on Malcolm X Paul Robeson, Tony Morison and WE Du Bois.\(^8\)

Like Gatsinzi’s work, this work by Harris too, undertakes a study of the seven afro- American novelists of the post sixties in America. The study is devoted on the relation between the characters and themes in the works of these novelists. Again Killens is one among the seven.\(^9\)
Macon in his paper on the adolescent characters in the works of six Afro-American novelists concentrates on the sexual behavior of the black protagonists. Here Killens’ Chick Othello of Sippi, Solly Saunders of And Then we Heard the Thunder and Robert of Youngblood receive major attention. It is a psycho-sexual study of the black young men in America. 10

Wiggins focuses on the creative use of black and African folk lore used by the black writers in America. As Killens’ Sippi and A Man ain’t Nothing but a Man and the Great Russian have folk tales at the backdrop, these novels are the focus of the study. 11

Wiggins here only provides a short description of the life and achievement of John Oliver Killens as one of the black American writers. It is informative only and not analytical or critical. 12

Harish Chander from Shaw describes the early life of Killens. Killens wanted to become a physician; during his adolescent years, he intended to become a lawyer; and after his war experiences, he decided to become a writer. 13

Taylor is the of view that the famed author and activist John Oliver Killens is the subject of today’s "Little-Known Black History Fact.". He gives an account of Killens’ associations with the other leaders of the black movements and the products of his Harlem Writer’s Guild which Killens founded. 14

In this long article, Louis Reyes Rivera, son in law of Killens describes how significant writers and a person Killens had been. He laments on the fact that not only the white people but the black people also have ignored the contribution of Killens today. He describes at length how Killens was wronged by the academic scholars from the mainstream literature in America. Rivera cites example how and when Killens faced the racial hatred of the white people in his life and how they refused to acknowledge his literary talent by rejecting him the Pulitzer Prize thrice. 15

Gerald Fraser in his obituary holds that Dr. Killens held a strong belief in the revolutionary power of writing and the need for people of color to bring their stories to light. That revolutionary power did not cease with the passing of the sixties, or the achievements of Dr. Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement. 16

Sarkissian infers that when Killens was not writing, he worked for social causes and racial equality. A man whose low-key manner belied his hard-edged activist beliefs, Killens knew both Martin
Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X—but identified more closely with the latter. As a writer-in-residence at Howard University; Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee; and Medgar Evers College in New York, Killens was known as a generous, encouraging mentor. He was instrumental in establishing black writers' conferences at each of the schools. 17

David Des writes that Killens polished his first novel, *Youngblood*, at meetings in members' homes. Spanning the Jim Crow era through the Great Depression, it portrays black people in the fictional rural community of Crossroads, Georgia, as they struggle to maintain their dignity and secure their rights. 18

In his talk on his own book Killens, Dr. Gilyard explained that in 1936, Killens moved to Washington D.C. to become the first black employee of the National Labor Relations Board. DC became a very crucial environment for Killens' development, as "DC was the intellectual capital of Black America and U Street was the heart of it." After a stint in the Philippines during WWII, he tackled novel writing again (having written two novels while very young). Throughout Killens' life he was mentored by Langston Hughes. The list of Killens' contemporaries and students includes many people of note including Maya Angelou, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Harry Belafonte, and Walter Dean Myers. 19

Dr. R.T. Bedre in his project finds that works of Killens attempt at cultural and psychological liberation of the colored people not only in America but also in the any corner of the world. These are attempts, to use other words, to decolonize the socially, politically, economically or culturally slaves. Killens has opposition to the integration in America at the ideological level 20

The present review of literature on Killens makes it clear that the researches done so far have lay stress upon the different themes found in the works of Killens. Some trace the development of black psyche in Killens' work, some focus on the theme of black manhood or his advocacy for violence against the racial violence of the white Americans. Few other find the black heroes and their worship in his works. So far no scholar has tried to see how the narrations in Killens' works are rooted in his life and his (black) philosophy.