

On the dehumanizing universe of Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer*: the code of obscenity and its interaction with other elements

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Abstract:

The following article shows why Henry Miller's novel Tropic of Cancer should not be labelled as a pornographic nor dehumanizing novel through the prism of a scientific and non-sentimental approach. The author of the article argues that even though Henry Miller creates in his novel a certain project of dehumanization, the article explains how usage of poetic language prevents Tropic of Cancer being a sexist insult to woman as often claimed by the feministic discourse of the 1980s and 1990s. Reacting to the popular and standardized interpretational traditions, the article contributes to the discourse about the dehumanizing aspects of Henry Miller's novel by analysing the code of obscenity present in the materia of literary text. The code of obscenity is put into context with other features of materia of Miller's text in order to explain how its specific "energy" functions. The author of the article applies the thinking of influential Russian literary scholars such as Mikhail Bakhtin and Yuri Lotman on the autonomous world of a literary text.

Introduction: differentiating between the discursive and the sentimental approach

Current reception of Henry Miller's "Tropics" is influenced by various standardized myths which have continuously developed since the first publication of *Tropic of Cancer* in 1934 and allowance of its publication in the United States after the obscenity trials which started in 1961. As proved by Yuri Lotman in the *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*, every single literary text has its own memory which derives from its history and specifically

from the history of its reception (Lotman, 2014, p. 78). Thus, when we try to understand the semantic level of the literary text, codes created outside of the enclosed world of the literary text have an impact on the current state of semiosphere of the literary text and deserve to be taken into consideration. In such a manner, diachronic out-textual elements have an impact on the synchronic semantic level of the literary text. In the case of H. Miller, there are various factors which are responsible for the contemporary popularized image of Henry Miller as a writer of pornographic literature, author of the so-called “sexual bibles”, whose texts undermine women’s dignity and are an “insult to femininity”.¹

The author of the article argues that even though Henry Miller uses dehumanizing features towards his characters, the image of Henry Miller as a writer who undermines women’s dignity and whose texts are an attack on woman is only possible through the prism of a naïve, non-discursive and non-scientific approach.

The crucial factor responsible for the popularized myths in the reception of Henry Miller is the critical spectrum of feministic discourse about him, starting with the second wave of feminism in the 1970s and its influence on American literary criticism (Astvacaturov, 2010, p. 13). The myth of Miller as an aggressive sexist was continually cultivated in the later feministic discourse of the 1980s and 1990s. For illustration, Mary Dearborn as a feministic literary critic in 1992 wrote a destructive biography of Miller, *The Happiest Man Alive*, in which she accused him of anti-Semitism, brutality, hidden homosexuality and sexism but at the same time admired his authenticity and vitality (Dearborn, 1991). Dearborn’s reading of Miller’s works might be explained via a “typology of reading” categorized by the Slovak literary scientist Ján Števček as *sentimental*. According to Števček’s typology of reading, *sentimental reading* functions as a movement in the unclosed and non-autonomous world of the literary text. The recipient of the literary text does not respect the autonomy of the literary text as a whole self-functioning world and allows ethical principles to play a role in decoding the codes hidden within the text’s literary material (Bokníková, 2015, p. 34). On the other hand, so-called *discursive reading* functions as the highest form of reading, since it does not include application of one’s own ideology and ethical principles on the fully autonomous world of the literary text (ibid.). Since Mary Dearborn in her reading fails to properly differentiate between the materia of the physical world and the abstract materia of the literary text, the way she decodes codes hidden within the text’s semiosphere is affected by her personal codes which undergo the question of morality and ethical principles. Such subjective attitude enables her to label Miller’s texts as “aggressively sexist”. However, what would be considered as “sexist” in the physical world does not

necessarily have to undergo the same denotational process while decoding the materia of the literary text.

As written by the feminist poet, writer and scholar Erica Jong one year later in defence of Henry Miller in the face of the feministic discourse (as translated from the Czech language by the author of the article): “It isn’t a secret that a great amount of rhetorical nonsense has been written on the topic of Henry Miller as a sexist. I am convinced that it has not helped in either understanding Henry Miller nor countering sexism...” (Jong, 1994, p. 163). In contrary to Mary Dearborn, Erica Jong decodes codes hidden within the world of the literary text in a more discursive manner, not affected by her own personal ethical principles. This case illustrates how disrespecting the borders separating the literary text from the physical world causes dogmatization of interpretation and is therefore seen by the author of the article as a negative phenomenon, which, as directly or indirectly proved by more scholars studying Henry Miller, repeatedly occurred in the development of Miller’s reception.

As underlined by Andrej Astvacaturov, the established traditions of studying Miller’s texts always look at them through the prism of other writers or through the life of Miller as an author: “Absence of the immanent readings of Millers texts can be explained by the fact, that H. M. was seen by his contemporaries and admirers in the first place as a strong individuality, as an example of a non-compromise fight for the realization of his inner ‘I’” (Astvacaturov, 2010, p. 32). On one hand, reception of Miller’s texts as a reflection of his personal intellectual and existential struggle is in many aspects logical. As Yuri Lotman claims in *Structure of the Artistic Text*, art gives a platform for an individual to communicate with himself in various languages, differently inter-code one’s personal “I” and thus to solve the biggest psychological problem – the justification of one’s inherent existence (Lotman, 2015, p. 83). It’s accurate to claim that Henry Miller’s poetics finds its pillar principles in the voice of a strong textual “I” which often impersonates the Bible under the influence of codes transferred from the texts of Walt Whitman and Friedrich Nietzsche.² On the other hand, reception which binds literary texts to the myths surrounding an author’s individuality causes a loss of interest in them as in the aesthetical phenomenon. Strong textual “I”, involving the presence of Miller in his texts as the presence of the so-called “textual author” is one of the reasons why the vast majority of academic discourse concentrates on Miller as a “figure” rather than on his texts as separate autonomous units.

Importantly, contemporary academic discourse concentrates on Henry Miller as an influential figure in cultural development, since Miller’s novels were associated with the sexual revolution of the 1960s and banned in the United States for almost thirty years after their

publication in Paris. Henry Miller contributed greatly to the freedom of literary expression in the Anglophone literary tradition. After the obscenity trials in the 1960s, Henry Miller developed notoriety as the first immoralist in American literature, the first writer who started an open countermovement against the standardized moral and literary norms. His highly specific poetics and especially the element of anti-moralist tendencies became a source of inspiration for many American writers in the latter half of the 20th century.³ The popularity of Miller's texts led to the dominance of the "alcoholic side" in the reception of the reading public – the attractive and easily understandable but at the same time desultory appreciation of sexual motives and obscene language often led to the overlooking of philosophical context.

Concentration of discourse on popularized and explicit themes often causes a reduced approach towards the more implicit themes hidden in the world of the literary text (Dulebová, 2014, p. 34). The purpose of the following article is to analyse the code of obscenity in relation to other elements present in the *Tropic of Cancer* separately from the codes occurring outside the literary text and additionally created by sentimental reading in popular interpretational traditions.

Miller's project of dehumanization: the code of obscenity in relation to poetic style

The code of obscenity plays a crucial role in the materia of Miller's literary text. Miller's text is a meta-text, a self-creating phenomenon in which the process of creation is coded and justified within the world of its material and content. *Tropic of Cancer* does not comprehend developed plot structures and functions purely for the usage of poetic language in of itself. The novel overcomes the standardized conventions of the composition of a novel in which the materia involves a graduation, climax or dominance of relationship of certain parts in relation to the *fabule*. In such a manner, the novel ignores and overcomes the standardized literary norms of the American literary tradition – the standardized compositional methods that operate on the principle of structure and movement in the structure.⁴ Therefore, *Tropic of Cancer* never displays a full comprehension of the material involved. We are not familiar with characters' backgrounds, and separate parts of the novel do not graduate to a logical conclusion which would serve as an answer to the questions raised by the previous or following literary material involved in the text. Thus, Miller's unstructured compositional technique creates an exceptionally inflated materia where every single segment is of an ambiguous character. Because of the full realization of the modernist ambiguity, the codes which give meaning to the literary material are coded within the language of the literary text rather than in the "plot". Literary scholar Katy Masuga summarizes this feature in the following manner: "Miller's

writing is a forum for wordplay and manipulation that challenges expectations and puts words in motion by constantly anticipating not a plot progression but simply the next allusion or the next episode, overflowing with another assault on normalized language” (Masuga, 2011, p. 43).

Miller uses poetic language. His texts involve a rich number of tropes and figures and usage of metaphor is of a much deeper meaning than just a pure aesthetical tool. For example, metaphor serves as an introduction to the literary text: “I am living at the Villa Borghese. There is not a crumb of dirt anywhere, nor a chair misplaced. We are all alone here and **we are dead**” (Miller, 2015, p. 7).

Dense usage of simile as an intentional literary device also gives Miller’s language (or to the language of Miller’s lyrical subject) a poetic character:

Tania is a fever. too – les votes urinaires. Cafe de la Liberte, Place des Vosges, bright neckties on the Boulevard Montparnasse, dark bathrooms, Porto Sec, Abdullah cigarettes, the adagio sonata pathetique, aural amplifiers, anecdotal seances, burnt sienna breasts, heavy garters... (ibid., p. 9)

As we can see, Miller’s language mimics compositional methods of surrealistic poetry, where either authentic or apparent automatism uses a high density of signs to create an extensively rich number of connotations and denotations – which is predominantly a feature of the poetic style. But mainly, it is the certain specificity of the poetic language which helps Miller’s text to achieve its autonomy from all other semantic structures, whether hidden in the regular language or other literary texts. The dominant usage of poetic language turns *Tropic of Cancer* into a poetic text, and a poetic text functions as a special form of communication, reflecting the model of a unique world, created in relation to the aesthetical concept of the author (Kryukova, Olitzkaja, 2016, p. 37).

The aesthetical concept of Miller takes its influence from various philosophers, the crucial one being Henri Bergson. Under the influence of Henri Bergson, Miller believed that the world and being is a constantly moving energy – an unstoppable and always progressing wave. More than that, under the influence of H. Bergson, Miller realizes that the value of intuition overcomes the value of schematized and rational intelligence (Astvacaturov, 2010, p. 85). Bergson differentiated between two methods which help us to comprehend the object – the absolute and the relative. The relative way is achieved by analysis, while the absolute way of understanding and accepting object belongs to intuition.⁵ In Miller’s worldview, intuition is an antipole to the schematic thinking and only intuition is a sufficient way of comprehending

material as an absolute unit. Intuition is realized through the evoking of different symbols which are attached to one given object, in this case Tania, the carrier of female essence. Miller uses the poetic compositional method of automatism in order to grasp the object and comprehend its absolute essence through the chaotic density of connotations which are attached to the individual signs and symbols, as seen in the excerpt above. The essence of object remains metaphysical and chaotic – no concrete answer is given to the question of the object's true nature. Therefore, the object is put into synthesis with the sign of "chaos" and "reality", since chaos and reality are here in a dialectic relationship – only through the chaotic evocation of signs can we know something about the object's reality and its real essence. Therefore, Miller's lyrical subject claims: *You, Tania, are my chaos* (Miller, 2015, p. 9). The knowledge we obtain about the object's nature is comprehensible only by intuition. This intuition as a method is achievable only by the usage of a poetic style.

As written by Mikhail Bakhtin on poetic style in *Aesthetics of Verbal Art* (translated from Russian by the author of the article): "Poetic style does not involve any boundedness, historicity, social assignation... In poetic genres artistic consciousness – in the sense of unity of all notional and expressive intentions of the author – completely implements itself in its language, being immanent to the completeness, expressing itself in the language directly and immediately, without any calumnations and distances" (Bakhtin, 2012, p. 121). Bakhtin in his influential thinking about poetic language underlines the symbiosis between the author and his language – the language of the author is only his own language and is a functional source of his artistic intentions, being separated from and reminiscent of all other possible languages. Therefore, Miller's specific project of full realization of his inner "I" and the realization of intuition as a method would not be possible without the usage of the poetic style and his very own poetic and therefore autonomous language.⁶

While we have already differentiated between poetic style, whose purpose is definitely not to be a reflection of the regular realities of the physical world as it might be in the case of the prosaic style, we see that the analysis of the obscenity code deserves to be separated from any social assignation outside of the world of the literary text. But what is a possible interpretation of the meaning of obscenity in Miller's texts?

Even though the literary text is an autonomous unit fully separated from the author's intentions, Miller's specific thinking about obscenity as a phenomenon helps us to decode the obscenity code in the materia of the literary text in a relatively satisfying manner. H. Miller in his essay *Obscenity and the Law of Reflection* justifies the presence of obscenity in the literary text as a technique with a purpose of didactic character – obscenity functions as a relief from

the modernist world, as a cure for omnipresent frustration, due to its humorous elements (Miller, 1985).⁷ Thus, the code of obscenity derives from the bizarre situation of human existence in the modernist crisis of humanism. The purpose of obscenity is also to “awaken” human beings and reflect their harsh reality. Literary scholar Ondřej Skovajsa writes that the purpose of obscene humour is to create a process of laughter in the reader, since the laugh activates our own “voice” and in the case of intensive laughter, even our body. The motive of the physical sensations plays a dominant role in Miller’s poetics (Skovajsa, 2015, p. 253). Since Miller’s *Tropic of Cancer* is a meta-text, a text which justifies the process of its own creation in its own content, the code of “obscenity” is put into synthesis with the code of “ecstasy” – the Nietzschean artistic “state of frenzy” which is a source of joy and sensual pleasure, the very goal which Miller’s lyrical subject (or Miller as a textual author) aims to achieve together with the recipient of the text:

I love scripts that flow, be they hieratic, esoteric, perverse, polymorph, or unilateral. I love everything that flows, everything that has time in it and becoming, that brings us back to the beginning where there is never end: the violence of the prophets, **the obscenity that is ecstasy**, the wisdom of the fanatic, the priest with his rubber litany, the foul words of the whore... (Miller, 2015, p. 182, emphasis added)

As we have already mentioned, the code of obscenity does not only involve reflection of the modernist out-textual reality but at the same time becomes the reality of the modernist world itself. The lyrical subject speaks about a certain persona – Carl: “I thought of Carl who can recite Faust backwards, who never writes a book without praising the shit out of his immortal, incorruptible Goethe” (ibid., p. 132). The sign of *Goethe* refers to the culture of classicism, romanticism and its semiospheric codes. Following on, the presence of modernist out-textual reality is reflected through the prism of obscene language: “And yet he hadn’t sense enough to take on a rich cunt and get himself a change of underwear” (ibid.). In Miller’s optic, it’s a failure of the previous cultural development which is responsible for the modern state of human existence. Influenced by the thinking of H. Bergson, Miller despised the schematic intelligence and rationalism of the previous cultural epochs. In Bergson’s worldview, schematic thinking means only relative comprehension of the object, while intuitive and irrational thinking uses intuition, which is in Miller’s text evoked by the density of signs and symbols as an absolute way of understanding object. Any schematic thinking undoubtedly results in war and social catastrophe. On the other hand, intuition helps to achieve absolute comprehension of the object and therefore is a positive category. The sign of *cunt* functions as an obscene element

which is an answer to the schematic and rational thinking, which is represented by the sign of *Goethe*. In the chosen excerpt, Miller as a textual author uses the obscenity code as a communication of the codes of his text with the codes of the period of classicism as a cultural epoch and at the same time reflecting their legacy in the meaning of the present state of existence:

There's something **obscene** in this love of the past which ends in bread-lines and dug-outs. Something **obscene** about this spiritual racket which permits an idiot to sprinkle holy water over Big Berthas and dreadnoughts and high explosives. Every man with a bellyful of the classics is an enemy to the human race (Miller, 2015, p. 132, emphasis added).

As was already illustrated, not only does the code of obscenity function as a therapeutic tool in dealing with the out-textual reality, but "obscurity" also becomes the state of modernist existence, the chaos which is reality. Obscurity also becomes a response to the failure of the previous cultural development which resulted in the crisis of humanism. Therefore, the meaning of the sentence *Every man with a bellyful of the classics is an enemy to the human race* does not have to be decoded "seriously" nor "literally" as anything in the *Tropic of Cancer* – it does not need to be decoded with the use of the subjective codes involving our own ethical principles. However, the motive of historical development cooperates with the sign of obscenity – the modernist state of existence is obscene, its obscenity is cyclical and therefore unsolvable, since the love of the past in such an optic means loving the cultural development which is responsible for the problematic modernist state of existence. The cyclicity of the situation is solved by obscenity which functions as a response to the problem of being.

Cyclicity is evoked by constant repetition. Firstly, we have relatively many situations in the text where the object, a female character, is put into synthesis with a high density of signs and symbols, and the evocation of many connotations displays the chaotic nature of an intuitive and absolute comprehension of object. Here is another example of simile in the text with such a function: "When I look down into this fucked-out cunt of a whore I feel the whole world beneath me, a world tottering and crumbling, a world used up and polished like a leper's skull" (ibid., p. 213). In the text, the situation where a sign evoking obscene language in the world of social norms, in this case the sign of "cunt", is put into the synthesis with the "world" – a state of existence and in Bergson's worldview, a constantly moving energy. Lexical repetition – the constant repeating of the sign of "cunt" is an interesting feature of Miller's text. In one case, on the platform of a paragraph consisting of 227 words, the sign "cunt" occurs four times. In

another paragraph, consisting of 224 words, the sign “cunt” occurs five times. The sign “cunt” plays a special role in the poetics of *Tropic of Capricorn* due to repeatedly implemented lexical repetition.

What do we know about the sign of “cunt”?

1. It is an “obscene” sign.
2. It is a sign evoking physicality.
3. It is a sign evoking female essence in the universe of *Tropic of Capricorn*.
4. The sign of “cunt” is a lexical unit.

We suspect that the more often a lexical unit occurs in the poetic text, the more dominant a position it plays in its universe. As stated by Yuri Lotman, the word in a poetic text is at the same time a word functioning in the regular language system and may be found in the dictionary. But the same lexical unit, in our case “cunt”, in the poetic text does not have an identical meaning as in regular language. Y. Lotman also underlines the fact that every system of language, even if it is poetic language, always pretends to comprehend the whole reality of the universe, even if it does not. He underlines that in texts written in the period of classicism we do not find vulgar lexicon, and this simply means that in the universe of classical texts and in the reality they try to comprehend, vulgarisms do not exist (Lotman, 2015, pp. 482- 486). We have already mentioned that Miller’s text calls for “intuition” and in a modernist manner creates an intuitive antipole to the schematic rationalistic thinking of previous cultural epochs. Thus, if the text is fulfilled by vulgar lexicon, it means that its opposite – non-vulgar and morally pure – in the reality of the *Tropic of Capricorn* fails to be present. Simply speaking, obscene elements have to be present in the text, because in the universe of the text and in the reality it tries to comprehend, nothing like politeness and purity exists and thus cannot be present. Obscene is not obscene any more, because when Miller’s language tries to comprehend reality, obscene does not have its antipole in the picture of reality which is seemingly comprehended. The presence of “cunt” in the text might be interpreted in the following manner: reality is obscene but obscenity is normal and reality cannot be otherwise. The modernist state of existence is obscene and physical.

Miller’s project of dehumanization: The code of female essence in relation to the code of obscenity

The code of female essence plays a crucial role in the materia of *Tropic of Cancer* – it is its interaction with the code of obscenity that becomes a source of what Yuri Lotman in

Structure of the Artistic Text calls the *energy of a poem*. The energy of the poetic text derives from the conflict of structures involved within a text. Every single structure which in the system of the text functions as an autonomous structure and a source of organization – in our case it's the code of obscenity, in contact with the other structure, in our case with the code of female essence, functions as a disorganization. This disorganization becomes a source of energy which is always felt by readers, often taken into consideration by literary criticism, but only rarely studied by the literary science⁸ (Lotman, 2015, p. 110).

When we take a look at the code of female essence in the plan of the text, we can claim that the presence of relatively many female characters without a psychological profile can create a platform for the lyrical “I” to realize its expression. However, when we see that the code of female essence collaborates with the code of obscenity and the code of sex – which is not analysed in this article – it's the synthesis of the codes and colliding of their structures which due to their intentionally disorganizing elements create the source of Miller's specific “energy”. As proved by Yuri Lotman, a separate analysis of the structure allows us to treat it as autonomous systems within the materia of a literary text, but it is mainly its collision with other structures that forms its “energy” (ibid., p. 111).

At the very start of the novel the lyrical subject addresses his creative efforts, labelled as “singing”, towards the character of Tania: “It is to you, Tania, that I am singing” (Miller, 2015, p. 13). Like other female characters in the novel, Tania has almost no biographic background; we do not know much about her, but we already know that “she” is a lyrical object and at the same time a denotation of the “female essence”, which is in the text put into contest with the “irrational chaos” – which through the prism of (not only) Miller's optic functions as the modernist state of existence: “When into the womb of time everything is again withdrawn, chaos will be restored and chaos is the score upon which reality is written. You, Tania, are my chaos” (ibid.).

The character of Tania is with the usage of simile a literary device put into context with the surrounding environment – thus, Tania and her “female essence” does not function as an embodiment of a physical person but rather as a metaphysical embodiment of the distant and dynamic abstract sphere, a platform for realization of Miller's irrationalism, an intuitive opposition to schematic thinking – which in *Tropic of Cancer* as a meta-text helps to justify the process of the text-creation:

But there is another **Tania**, a Tania like a big seed, who scatters pollen everywhere – or, let us say, a little bit of Tolstoi, a stable scene in which the foetus is dug up. Tania is a fever. too – les

votes urinaires. . .dark bathrooms, Porto Sec, Abdullah cigarettes, the adagio sonata pathétique, aural amplifiers, anecdotal seances, burnt sienna breasts, heavy garters, **cancer and delirium**, warm veils, poker chips, carpets of blood and soft thighs... (ibid., emphasis added).

Tania, the lyrical object, the carrier of “female essence” is put into synthesis with the signs of “cancer” and “delirium” – the state of existence which in the *Tropic of Cancer* is a reality of all characters and functions as Miller’s response to the modernist crisis of humanism. A possible decoding of the female sign might be a connotation of the mythical beginning of the culture of humankind – to the famous and influential biblical myth of Adam and Eve – where Eve becomes the source of the first sin and woman becomes the mythological carrier of irrational earthly beginning. When we suggest that the female essence in the chosen excerpt serves as a reflection and the reason for irrational and sinful being, we can also illustrate how the system of the female code in the text collides with the code of obscenity in order to become *comic relief*, which Miller in his essay *Obscenity and Law of Reflection* proposes as the liberation from the suffering state of human existence that not only liberates but also tries to teach the recipients of the text to face the problematics of the cultural epoch with laughter and distance:

O Tania, where now is that warm cunt of yours, those fat, heavy garters, those soft, bulging thighs? There is a bone in my prick six inches long. I will ream out every wrinkle in your cunt, Tania, big with seed. I will send you home to your Sylvester with an ache in your belly and your womb turned inside out. (ibid., p. 16)

As we can see in the chosen excerpt, physicality is the source of the binding of the code of obscenity with the code of female essence. Literary scholar Andrej Astvacaturov suggests that one of the reasons for the physicality of Miller’s text is a surrealistic feature taken from the literary tradition of the surrealistic approach – the creation of the situation where *everything is immanent to everything*. As he writes in his monograph on Henry Miller, “[*Tropic of Cancer*] is a creation of free consciousness, ignores the principle of power, does not involve a hierarchy of things, does not separate the main from the marginal, the sacral from profane” (Astvacaturov, 2010, p. 112). In a system where all of the systems and structures of a literary text are placed on one level omitting a developed scheme or hierarchy, we can claim that the code of obscenity and code of the female essence are in an equal relationship with each other and it’s their collision that revolves into the “energy” of the text as understood by Yuri Lotman. Miller’s text

functions in a unity as a human body – and the motives of the human body are a place for the interaction of the code of obscenity and the code of female essence.

The code of female essence and the code of obscenity function in the materia of *Tropic of Cancer* in a symbiotic relationship. Their intersection results in the “energy” or “function” of the text. The code of female essence is present in the text in order to be a metaphysical embodiment of the surrounding environment and a dark state of existence, while obscenity functions as an answer to the problem of such an existence, as *comic relief* and liberation. Since the text operates on the principles of poetic language as determined by Mikhail Bakhtin – the used language is purely Miller’s own and does not fall into the range of non-Miller semantic structures – it is impossible to label Miller’s novel as “pornographic” or “aggressively sexist”, at least when we use the principles of discursive reading as determined by Ján Števček and do not decode the codes of the literary text with the use of subjective ethical principles. In conclusion, Henry Miller does create a certain project of dehumanization in the world of his literary text – but this dehumanization is not an insult to anyone, because Miller’s own poetic language remains immune to regular language and comprehends its own reality.

Endnotes:

¹ Literary scholar Andrej Astvacaturov in his monography *Genri Miller i jeho "parižskaja trilogija"* analyses popularized myths about Henry Miller in a detailed manner.

² If a writer follows and simultaneously opposes a certain literary tradition, his opposing attitude might enrich it and comprehend it by founding new aesthetical techniques (Otrisalová, 2011, p. 30).

³ For example, the Beat Generation poets or Charles Bukowski.

⁴ The ignoring of the standardized compositional method is taken from the tradition of French literature, mainly from the surrealists and Marcel Proust.

⁵ Even the experience of the contemporary world problematizes what can be perceived as real. (Smiešková, 2016, p. 1).

⁶ Miller often alludes to the one of the most important poets of American literary tradition, Walt Whitman, but also to Friedrich Nietzsche, whose *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is also written using poetic language.

⁷ Miller’s intention to evoke laughter in the reader is inspired by the essay *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* by Henri Bergson. Bergson saw the process of laughter as a caricature of the mechanistic nature of human beings.

⁸ As written by Yuri Lotman, his usage of the term “energy” is an equivalent to the term “function” used by the Czech linguist and literary scholar Jan Mukarevsky and his followers.

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