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Nandyal, Ranganath. Henry Miller in the Light of Eastern Thought [review]

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If the Welsh Whitman cannot claim to be “not a bit tamed,” the taming is relatively slight. Wynn Thomas’s choices of language are consistently intelligent and sensitive: it is genuine poetry and authentic Whitman one finds here, so much so that it begins to seem as natural in Welsh as the literal translation of *Leaves of Grass* into *Dail Glaswellt*. If I were reviewing for Welsh readers, I would quote “Cymodi” without reference to “Reconciliation” as in itself a beautifully realized poem and as a sample of the quality sustained throughout.

But why translate at all, when Welsh readers have the original available in their local bookshops and libraries? There are some practical reasons, unmentioned and perhaps taken for granted by the translator. A fair number of plays have been translated from English for Welsh-language theatre, a good deal of popular fiction such as romances and mysteries for adult readers and of stories for children, but very few standard literary works for those most at home in Welsh. The steady expansion in recent years of Welsh-medium education makes it particularly desirable that such translations be available for students at higher secondary level and beyond.

Wynn Thomas argues cogently, however, that there should be other motives than utilitarian for translating. He undertook his work, he says, from love for the Welsh language and its literature—and it is in extending the experiential and technical potential of the language and its poetry that translation of already accessible works can be finally justified. Thomas hints at one possible effect in remarking that while translating one poem he felt that it “was a means for me to acquaint myself anew with the hiding-places of the passion that conceals itself in the Welsh language . . . a passion that has been ignored to a considerable extent, regrettably, by Welsh poets.” Thanks to these translations, Whitman has now vigorously entered Welsh poetry, and future poets in Welsh may find that, as has long been the case for American poets, one essential element in their rites of passage is coming to terms with him.

Aberystwyth, Wales

JOSEPH P. CLANCY

RANGANATH NANDYAL. *Henry Miller in the Light of Eastern Thought*. New Delhi: Arnold Publishers, 1991. 99 pp.

Henry Miller is still known to the general American public primarily as the author of “dirty books,” but he has been highly regarded as a serious writer by such formidable authors as T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Edmund Wilson, Karl Shapiro, and Norman Mailer. For some years his books were banned from publication in the United States. Dr. Ranganath Nandyal’s book on Miller should help to underscore his importance. And it should also be of interest to Whitman scholars and students. Miller was strongly influenced by Whitman, who, like Miller, was strongly influenced by Eastern thought. Of course they were both banned at one time for their sexually explicit writings. Ranganath Nandyal discusses influences and parallels in the Eastern thought of both writers. I recommend his book to all Whitmanians.

After receiving his Ph.D. degree from Indira Gandhi University in New Delhi, the author was awarded a fellowship by the University of California at Los Angeles to study the extensive collection of Miller's papers in the UCLA library, a collection largely ignored by American scholars. The result of this research is a book that offers new understanding of Miller as well as of his attitudes toward Whitman. Miller once listed *Leaves of Grass* as one of the fifty books that had influenced him most.

GAY WILSON ALLEN