

siveness that it also considers poets who are admittedly “no longer read” (290), as Richard Cronin writes in his chapter on “The Spasmodics,” i.e. practitioners of unactable and highly subjective verse drama. This kind of verse is likely to strain the patience of today’s reader, but it was highly popular in the days of Queen Victoria and is hence “important as an index of Victorian taste” (ibid.). Part II looks at the production, distribution and reception of poetry, including a chapter on the role which anthologies played in the making of a poetic canon, as well as a chapter on Victorian illustrations of poetry, which includes several reproductions.

Students who work with these two volumes will get a sure footing in the two major kinds of Victorian literature and their cultural contexts, with helpful suggestions for more in-depth study. These companions are somewhat high-priced for the German student’s average book budget, but they are worth their price and should at least be found on library shelves.

Money could certainly be saved by *not* acquiring Gale’s *World Literature and Its Times* series. This series is founded, according to the “General Preface,” on the “belief that within a people’s literature are keys to their perspectives, their emotions, and the formative events that have brought them to the present point” (vii). The *Zeitgeist* identified for British and Irish literature from Victorian times to the present is “uncertainty” (xiii). It is certainly broad – and vague – enough to encompass the eclectic span of works and their writers assembled here, from Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories to Joyce’s *Ulysses*, or from Browning’s dramatic monologues to work by Tom Stoppard, Hanif Kureishi or Jackie Kay. The entries, which come in alphabetical order, have an average length of about ten pages and include the author’s bio-sketch, information on the historical context, an in-

terpretation of the work(s) in question as well as notes on sources and literary contexts. Entries are illustrated with photographs and interspersed with text boxes that offer additional ‘key’ information. For Wilfred Owen’s war poetry, for instance, a box provides the number of battle casualties during the First World War; Conrad’s *Lord Jim* has a mini-note on “Victorian Orientalism,” and Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway* one on “Shell Shock.” While these seem more or less relevant, the Robert Browning entry features a box on “The Romance of the Century,” i.e. the story of his elopement and married life with Elizabeth Barrett. One wonders what the merit of such ‘information’ might be, just as one wonders about the criteria according to which writers and works have been selected or omitted. Irish literature, for instance, could hardly have been represented without Yeats, Synge, Joyce or Beckett – but why is Brian Friel excluded in a volume that pays respect to Hanif Kureishi? This reference work is not recommendable for academic purposes.

Barbara Korte (Freiburg)

**Christoph Henke. Vergangenheitss-
obsessionen: Geschichte und Ge-
dächtnis im Erzählwerk von Julian
Barnes. Literatur-Imagination-Realität.** Anglistische, germanistische, romanistische Studien 27. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2001. 326 pp. Pb. €29.00. ISBN 3-88476-480-2

Christoph Henke successfully tackles the protean author’s varied output (with the exception of the detective stories, which are published under the pseudonym Dan Kavanagh). In a comprehensive and systematic approach, Henke combines an analysis of the literary and cultural negotiations of the past in Julian Barnes’s

complete works with close readings of individual books. Henke links Barnes's dominant issue, his 'obsession with the past,' to the postmodern correlation between widespread uncertainty due to accelerating progress and the growing need for reassurance by the retrospective searching for individual and collective identities. His major thesis is that Barnes foregrounds *and* deconstructs in a mildly sceptical manner the attempts to grasp the past by memory or history (28). Henke concisely refers to key arguments from philosophy, phenomenology, sociology, historiography, and cultural studies in order to discuss the implications of the experience, cognition, and representation of time as well as the question of identity as a result of remembering and forgetting the past. He follows Maurice Halbwachs's fundamental differentiation between memory, which focuses on continuity and identity, and history, which stresses difference and discontinuity (76). However, I would argue that memory inverts rather than opposes history because in order to talk about one rather than two or more identities or nations, a sense of continuity in memory presupposes (subordinate) differences in similarity across time, and the concept of discontinuity in history entails that of (subordinate) similarity in difference throughout the ages. Henke maintains that memory struggles with bias and reliability, and that history is beset by the epistemological problem of objectivity and the ontological one of fictional narrative construction. The negotiation of the past, he claims, goes far beyond explicit expository discussions and may pervade all narrative levels. Therefore, Henke scrutinises narrative situations, characters' relationships and perspectives, the use of props, time, space, symbolic leitmotifs, intratextual and intertextual references as well as metafictional reflections in order to reveal the implications of retrospectives.

Henke denies any possibility of subjecting Barnes's career to a teleological pattern, which would amount to a paradox with regard to the author's sceptical outlook on coherent retrospectives. Instead, the novelist plays variations on the same theme. Henke maintains that the early novels, *Metroland* and *Staring at the Sun*, deal with memory and the construction of identity in the stories of individual lives. The first novel opposes the individual memory of a permanent identity and individual history, which leaves the past behind, whereas the second book functions as a "mnemotext" (84) because the central character's fragmentary and associative memory challenges the reader's capacity to recollect and interpret to a large extent, doubling the retrospective endeavour in the text.

The next three novels, *Before She Met Me*, *Talking It Over* and *Love, etc.*, unfold clashes between subjective distortions of the past mostly due to passionate involvements in eternal triangles. The characters try to erase or reverse the past in order to reconstruct identities and relationships. Their subjective perspectives do not agree with each other but overlap to a certain degree so that the reader can at least develop a rough idea of what may have happened.

Barnes fictionalizes biography and history in the postmodern novels *Flaubert's Parrot*, *The History of the World*, and the rather conventional narrative of *The Porcupine*. The difficult search for Flaubert's life yields historical realemes of doubtful authenticity. Contingency undermines the would-be biographer's attempts at constructing a coherent biography, which is continuously deferred. The search itself becomes an important project, which displaces the confrontation with his own past. Henke cogently argues that the fragmentary and heterogeneous form of the fictional biography and *History* mirrors the impossibility of con-

structuring a linear and meaningful story, a fact that is supplemented by a network of intratextual references. The *History of the World* deconstructs myths and undermines the desire for coherence and progress by ironic repetition. Henke is right to add *The Porcupine* to this group of fictionalizing history because he shows the questionable inversion of biased historiography by those who follow and profit from the fallen elites in Eastern Europe.

Finally, Henke analyzes the connection between individual and national identity in *Cross Channel* and *England, England*. The volume of short stories juxtaposes the necessity and the unreliability of memory for the construction of identity, which fictionalizes the past in a series of imaginative narratives rather than a single and comprehensive *grand récit*. Barnes's last novel to date compares individual and collective memory, foregrounding the questionable authenticity of a history which is recycled and reduced to a simulacrum. Christoph Henke displays a very good sense of ironic contradiction and paradox, writes a very readable prose, and delivers an accomplished work of criticism, which deserves more readers than those who are competent in German.

Michael Meyer (Koblenz-Landau)

Carmine Chiellino. Liebe und Interkulturalität: Essays 1988–2000. (Love and Interculturality: Essays 1988–2000). Stauffenburg Discussion: Studien zur Inter- und Multikultur / Studies in Inter- and Multiculture. Band / Volume 17. Tübingen: Stauffenburg Verlag, 2001. 192 pp. Pb. €30.00 / SFr 52.50. ISBN 3-86057-045-5

With his collection of twelve essays, Carmine Chiellino gives an overview of various aspects of the discussion about in-

terculturality and intercultural literature as it developed in Germany since 1964. This collection is a welcome companion to *Interkulturelle Literatur in Deutschland: Ein Handbuch* (Intercultural Literature in Germany: A Handbook, 2000) that he edited and it offers interesting perspectives also for English and American Studies. Chiellino, Italian by birth and Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Augsburg, writes as an insider of and active participant in the development of interculturality as scholar, poet, essayist, editor, and co-founder of a poly-national literature and arts association. His expressed intention has been to increase interest in the early contributions to intercultural literature, and to sharpen the profile of the entire literary movement. A link between the essays is the struggle for intellectual and aesthetic autonomy in light of the public discourse about immigration, multiculturalism, European identity and alterity. Three of the essays are original contributions to this book, the other nine have previously appeared in various publications.

Chiellino raises questions about intercultural love, linguistics, bicultural memory, the intercultural novel, nostalgia (illustrated with pictures and graphs), identity, the role of foreign authors in the shaping of a multicultural future, the reception of multicultural literature as well as the authors' perception of their literature in the German context. He rounds up his discussion with an evaluation of "commonalities that separate and differences that bind" (180–188) with regard to visions about a truly multicultural literature in Germany. It is a pity that this last essay was written as early as 1988 instead of being a new contribution with an up-to-date evaluation of the multicultural literary situation in Germany. Thus, the author misses the opportunity to review his vision in light of new developments, particularly regarding authors who unfortu-