

exile from their homeland and their diaspora among the texts that bear their names" (100).

Within the modernist tradition, Marilyn Reizbaum analyzes the place of Irish Jews in Joyce's *Ulysses*. In her essay on Dorothy Richardson, Jacqueline Rose raises the more general question about the relation between the feminist modernist projection and the castigating-caricatured representation of that *other* outsider, the Jew. Her complex answer revolves around history and destiny, individual and race, private and public worlds.

Phyllis Lasner examines Virginia Woolf's and Stevie Smith's representations of the Jew, while Andrea Freud Loewenstein looks at masculine protection and Jewish projection in the writing of William Gerhardt and George Orwell. She shows how Eric Blair was tormented, self-hating, and conflicted about his masculinity; his textual animosity toward women and homosexuals explains his ambivalent and changing stance toward Jews.

In the final essay, Eric Homberger re-examines the politics of ambivalence in the work of Abraham Cahan and Michael Gold—writers of the American left who deal uncomfortably with the Jewish immigrant community. Unlike most of the contributors to this volume who take Gilman as gospel, Homberger begs to differ in siting a space of resistance wherein Jewish writers find a critical distance both from their Jewishness and from antisemitic projections. The burdens of immigration contributed to their sense of ambivalence.

All of these postmodernist grapplings with premodern and modernist texts reflect a healthy continuity within a Jewish critical tradition that goes back to Talmudic heteroglossia whereby each rabbinic opinion and each midrash may be construed as furthering textual ambiguities. Stubbornly wandering viewpoints culminate (but never terminate) in the negative dialectics of the Frankfurt School and the essays in *Between "Race" and Culture*. Often "between," the Jew is rarely "beyond" criticism, and Bryan Cheyette ensures ongoing arguments against modernist closure.

MICHAEL GREENSTEIN



Joseph Brodsky, Seamus Heaney, and Derek Walcott. *Homage to Robert Frost*. New York: Farrar, 1997. Pp. 117. \$11.00.

A collection of essays on renowned American poet Robert Frost by three recent Nobel laureates would be of some interest to general readers of poetry criticism anywhere. For readers and critics in the Caribbean and other former colonial possessions, essays by Joseph Brodsky, Seamus Heaney, and Derek Walcott take on added value because each of these poets has gained international prominence despite the inherent disadvantages of living in exile outside their native

countries. Although Walcott is the only one from a former third-world colony (St. Lucia), his two colleagues share Walcott's experience of having to forge a personal voice despite hegemonic cultural forces. In their *Homage to Robert Frost*, these poets render their unique perspectives on a man who, along with Walt Whitman, is seen as America's consummate homespun bard.

The opening essay, Brodsky's "On Grief and Reason," offers a close reading of such poems as "Come In" and "Home Burial" in order to delve beneath Frost's apparently benevolent surface. There he seizes upon the "terrifyingly" negative potential that distinguishes, for him, Frost's "Americanness." After covering the subject matter and idiomatic dialogue of "Home Burial," he argues that the poem exemplifies "language's terrifying success" rather than what might at first seem to be simply the failure of communication within a marriage (39). In acknowledging the paradox of language's being "alien to the sentiments it articulates," Brodsky duplicates Walcott's earlier recognition of this problem in his autobiographical poem *Another Life*. Even while Walcott holds the hand of his first love, he regrets the treachery inherent in contemplating poetic treatment of their intimacy (94). Brodsky applies this same insight in accounting for the husband's futile attempts to explicate the emotional problem his wife refuses to discuss. Frost dramatizes the encounter even as words fail to reconcile his characters' differences. Each participant is an aspect of the poet's verbal framework: Amy's inexpressible grief, her husband's clinical reason, preserved in the suspension of understanding.

Heaney's "Over the Brim" finds evidence of Frost's "sound of sense" theory at work in poems such as "Desert Places," "Stopping by Woods," "Birches," and "Home Burial." Impressed by Frost's ability to project living speech without artifice, Heaney goes one step further, recognizing the expressiveness of language itself, "brimming up beyond the poet's deliberate schemes and performances" (70). These two poets, who must negotiate distances separating their native cultures from that of the US, both seize upon Frost's linguistic dexterity in bridging the gap between his New England reality and the language he uses to embody it.

In "The Road Taken," Derek Walcott is also drawn to Frost's accomplishments as a poet; but perhaps because he is from the neglected fringe of the Americas, his critical overview incorporates key political considerations. Beginning with Frost's recitation of "The Gift Outright" at John F. Kennedy's inauguration in 1961, Walcott points out Frost's amnesia in the line "The land was ours before we were the land's." Frost has conveniently overlooked the native Americans who had to be eliminated or domesticated in order for their European supplanters to fulfil their "manifest" destiny (93-94). He finds Frost to be autocratic in comparison with the multi-hued democracy of Walt Whitman's verse. While he refuses to excuse the racism inherent in

such masters as Frost and Ezra Pound, Walcott values the beneficence of poetry despite the inadequacies of the man behind the art: "A great poem is a state of raceless, sexless, timeless grace . . . too full of such benedictions for this reader not to pick it up and continue" (114).

Joseph Brodsky, Seamus Heaney, and Derek Walcott are not about the task of breaking new interpretive ground in these essays; they read Frost and his text as poets, rather than critical theorists. Consequently, *Homage to Robert Frost* is at least as valuable for what it reveals about the aesthetic priorities of its contributors as it is for its contribution to Frost criticism.

ROBERT HAMNER

WORK CITED

Walcott, Derek. *Another Life*. New York: Farrar, 1973. R.405.



Malashri Lal, ed. *Feminist Spaces: Cultural Readings from India and Canada*. New Delhi: Allied, 1997. Pp. xxiii, 236.

Part of the occasional monograph series produced under the auspices of the University of Delhi Centre for Canadian Studies (UDCCS) and released at the recent XIV International Conference on Canadian Studies hosted by Pondicherry University, Malashri Lal's latest book is, in her own words "an anthology with a focus on feminism" (vii). Of the fourteen essays by new and established Indian and Canadian scholars included in the collection, twelve are directly concerned with exploring aspects of the differing cultural and institutional ideologies of race and gender that have dominated and continue to oppress women in Canadian multicultural society. Most of these explorations take the shape of critical readings of literary and theoretical texts by mainstream and minority women writers from Canada. Works by authors such as Sara Jeanette Duncan, Mavis Gallant, Margaret Laurence, Maria Campbell, Margaret Atwood, Carol Shields, Claire Harris, M. Nourbese Philip, Dionne Brand, Joy Kogawa, Beatrice Culleton, Audrey Thomas, Pamela Boyd, and Wendy Lill are opened to sensitive scrutinies informed by feminist, postcolonial, and postmodern reading strategies. The well-known Métis writer Emma LaRoque's moving autobiographical essay "Tides, Towns and Trains" is a forceful indictment of the inhuman, callous victimization of Native Canadians by mainstream Canadian society. In another subjective essay, Canada-based Indian writer Uma Parameswaran, through her own creative writing, draws attention to the diasporic woman writer's "conscious or subconscious sense of addressing a community within the larger community of humankind," thereby bridging the cultural chasm that exists in her world (12). Sukrita Kumar's engaging conversation with French Canadian writer Lola Lemire Tostevin is distinctive for its at-