

Nonetheless, in her text Gunew consistently challenges dominant perceptions of marginality, especially the notion that "ethnic minority texts" stand only as sociological and historical evidence of someone else's social reality. *Framing Marginalities* is a helpful addition to this series, especially in its expansive approach to theory and its dexterous critical attention to works that trouble placid imaginings of "Australia."

MARILYN IWAMA



Zailig Pollock. *A. M. Klein: The Story of the Poet*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1994. Pp. 324. \$25.95 pb.

"Design was it or forgetfulness? It was the spirit of prophecy."

A. M. KLEIN, *The Second Scroll*

This comprehensive bio-critical study takes its proper place alongside several other works produced by members of the A. M. Klein Research and Scholarship Committee over the last two decades. Extensively researched and well written, *A. M. Klein: The Story of the Poet* offers an intimate look—through his poetry, fiction, and journalism—at the life of one of this century's most significant and complex poets. Recent scholarly editions of Klein's poetry, literary essays, editorials, reviews, and previously unpublished papers have made accessible a rich variety of essential primary materials. As editor of Klein's *Complete Poems* (1990) and co-editor of *Notebooks: Selections from the A. M. Klein Papers* (1994), Pollock brings to the present work an intimate knowledge of Klein's writings. In *A. M. Klein: The Story of the Poet*, he draws significantly from many sources to create an intriguing portrait of an enigmatic figure.

Pollock's central thesis is that all of Klein's writings tell his life story, which begins in the 1920s and remains essentially the same, although it assumes a variety of different forms, over the next three decades, only beginning to change substantially in the last years before his eventual withdrawal and silence in the late 1950s. The story follows Han "archetypal" pattern (4) grounded in two significant metaphors: "the metaphor of unfolding" (7) and the "counter-metaphor" of "remembering" (8). The "metaphor of unfolding" assumes an integral and inviolable centre, essentially a vision of the "One in the Many" (3), from which the story in its various forms, all traceable back to the centre, is unfolded. Militating against the unity implied by this metaphor, however, are the facts of history, those external forces that resist and often shatter such constructions of individual integrity. Thus, as Klein unfolds his story of the One in the Many, and as it continually breaks against historical realities, he finds himself seeking various means of "re-membering," piecing together, the fragments of this story

in the valley of the dry bones that is history. It is a process at once problematic and frustrating, but also the source of creative inspiration for many of his works.

The study is in some ways a piece of critical detective work, not too surprising given Klein's own interest in the genres of detective and anti-detective fiction, and given the persistent questions, despite various articles on the subject, about Klein's silence after the 1950s. Pollock refers to over three hundred literary pieces by Klein, many in passing, but discusses a substantial number of them in sufficient detail to support his thesis effectively. While he focuses significantly on the poetry, he also covers a wide range of Klein's articles, fiction, and translations. But Pollock deals most extensively with "the three major texts in the evolution of Klein's story of the poet" (218): "Out of the Pulver and the Polished Lens," "Portrait of the Poet as Landscape," and "A Jew in the Sistine Chapel" (slightly but significantly revised as "Gloss Gimel" of *The Second Scroll*), exemplary pieces from the three most significant decades of Klein's career. Through his discussions of these works, Pollock demonstrates how Klein creates meaning out of the dialectical struggle between himself on the one hand and various forms of an ever-changing idea of community on the other. Klein, Pollock contends, creates a portrait of himself as the poetic—even prophetic—voice of his community, as a sustainer of its essential traditions. But since both the realities and the ideals of community and tradition are themselves in a constant state of flux, Klein is forced constantly to re-write his story throughout his life.

It is a story that reaches its dialectical apogee in *The Second Scroll*. Pollock calls the novel "both a breakthrough in Klein's development and the culmination of a continuous process of clarification and definition in which he had been engaged for several years. As this process unfolds through a series of works of poetry, fiction, and journalism, it gradually becomes clear that Klein is moving towards a dialectical narrative which will link the Holocaust to the creation of the State of Israel, and that this narrative will take the form of a commentary" (197). Pollock's own commentary on "A Jew in the Sistine Chapel," detailing the extraordinary influence on Klein of Charles de Tolnay's *The Sistine Ceiling*, demonstrates how far Klein is able to proceed with his ingenious commentary on the famous ceiling, as he attempts to link the horrors of the Holocaust back through history to Michelangelo's famous panel of the creation of Adam. Yet Pollock probes the text for indications that commentary itself, no matter how masterful, will not suffice. In the process of trying to create meaning from an act (the Holocaust) which many have contended is beyond meaning, Klein has arrived at the centre which he now witnesses as void and for which the metaphor of the One in the Many can no longer suffice. Pollock states: "As with 'Out of the Pulver and the Polished Lens' and 'Portrait of the Poet as Landscape,' the very complexity and coherence of the struc-

ture which Klein has created have the paradoxical effect of throwing into relief a gap at the centre which no act of the imagination can entirely bridge" (231). Klein's story stops some time after publication of *The Second Scroll*, and Pollock offers some compelling thoughts in his analysis of this novel as to why that may have been so.

Overall this is an excellent study, although, built upon perceptive—sometimes ingenious—close readings of representative texts, it does not really break any new ground in its critical approach and technique. And occasionally the analyses disappoint. For example, despite his own awareness of Klein's significant notes on "Sestina on the Dialectic" and his discussion of Klein's comments about the dialectic itself, Pollock says surprisingly little about this poem's formal qualities (156-58). Yet here in this imploded sestina Klein makes perhaps one of the most significant and prophetic comments on the limitations of the dialectic as form, anticipating the dialectical perplexities of *The Second Scroll* that Pollock examines so effectively. Also, while his treatment of various dialectical oppositions such as the Diaspora and the State of Israel provides a solid grounding for the analysis of many pieces, his treatment of the differences between those two problematic demarcators of twentieth century criticism—modernism and postmodernism—is less satisfying. The critical insufficiencies of some of his generalizations regarding these terms tend to prevent Pollock from extending his insightful analyses even further. These minor reservations aside, however, *A. M. Klein: The Story of the Poet* is an essential book for anyone interested in Klein, particularly in his significance for modern, Jewish, and Canadian literatures. While it is not the final story of the poet, as the definite article in its Joycean title might suggest, it certainly sets a high standard for any more stories of Klein yet to be told.

NEIL QUERENGESSER



Hans Bertens. *The Idea of The Postmodern: A History*. New York: Routledge, 1995. Pp. ix, 284. \$55.00, \$16.95 pb.

Many of us whose graduate study took place in the 1980s felt called upon to ally ourselves with a blend of translated "theory," and the postmodern art which formed the avant-garde of the time. This is not to say that we escaped bewilderment, in face of the variety of ideas and experiences being called "postmodern." We were immersed in the thing, we could not easily stand outside of it and map it. We "did theory" and we lived the postmodern. When we tired of reading Lyotard or Baudrillard ("by the yard," as we said), we witnessed "*la condition postmoderne*" manifesting itself in David Lynch's *Blue Velvet*. (There, we learned that the postmodern was paranoid, carnal, and had a compelling soundtrack.) Newly mannered, exuberantly coloured post-