through Erdrich's *Tracks*, and Eliot's *Romola* by way of Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*. In each instance, the recent text clarifies something essential in its precursor: Erdrich's novel, for example, making it "impossible to ignore [*The Woodlander's*] importance as a political and historical outcry" (242); or Hong Kingston's forcing a reconsideration of the historical importance of Eliot's novel, revealing "a hidden history amid the pomp" (270); and in the subtlest of the three pairings, ghostly discourse that interrupts real history providing the link between *Villette* and *Beloved*, texts that connect as well through the motif of invisibility.

There are many fine and nuanced readings in this section, but overall the retrospective illumination is less sustained here than in the first part, the linkages more a *tour de force* than an inevitable outcome of the argument or the examples. Still, they return one to the texts with a heightened alertness to their formal and ideological features. One starts constructing forking paths of one's own in the vast Borgesian library of possibilities, for it is a truth universally acknowledged—when you come to a fork in the road, take it.

JUDITH SCHERER HERZ

Patrick D. Morrow. *Katherine Mansfield's Fiction*. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green Popular Press, 1993. pp. ii, 158. $29.95, $10.95 pb.

In *Dreams of Speech and Violence: The Art of the Short Story in Canada and New Zealand* (1987), W. H. New argues that "the problem, in writing a history of New Zealand fiction, is Katherine Mansfield" (113): should one regard her as a British writer or as a New Zealand writer, and where does she fit in a study of postcolonial literature? Many critics, he suggests, are severely limited by their "ignorance of colonial literary practice" (130) and by their tendency instead to rely on fashionable critical approaches. Moreover, in their attempts to underscore certain aspects of her work, these critics often blur the ambiguities of Mansfield's puzzling self-definitions. New, along with others such as Andrew Gurr and Linda Hardy, thinks of Mansfield as an expatriate writer, ambivalent about her New Zealand roots.

Patrick Morrow, in *Katherine Mansfield's Fiction*, initially appears to share New's frustration with current Mansfield criticism, and particularly with the scarcity of "exact and in depth" readings of her stories (2). Morrow's own approach emphasizes "precision rather than generalisation" (135) and a refusal to iron out internal contradictions as they emerge in individual stories. This strategy is evident in the shifting focus of the book—Morrow does not seek overall patterns or forced conclusions—and in the variety of labels Morrow uses for the writer herself (Mansfield, KM, Kass, Katherine). His aim, he states, is instead to "give the reader an idea and a feeling for the kinds of textures and issues that KM stories have" (2). This declared strategy will

be refreshing for readers who have been seeking a close examination of Mansfield's writing, although there are several problems in the way Morrow carries out the task.

In the first chapter of the book, Morrow narrates an abbreviated biography of Mansfield, focusing specifically on her obsession with moving. He then reads three of Mansfield's stories, employing three critical perspectives: Mieke Bal's narratology, M. H. Short's studies on shifts in point of view, and Seymour Chatman on the unnarrated narrative. In subsequent chapters, Morrow abandons these perspectives and instead provides close readings of individual stories within the collections. Finally, he sets Mansfield's writing next to that of contemporaries such as Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, as well as to that of Anton Chekhov, one of Mansfield's primary European influences.

Although some of Morrow's readings are thought-provoking, they are often marred by false assumptions and stereotypes which arise from his ignorance of postcolonial issues. Morrow writes in his acknowledgements that "I really had no idea what Katherine Mansfield was about until I went to New Zealand" (i), but it is ultimately unclear what his trip to New Zealand contributed to this book. In fact, he displays throughout an unfamiliarity with New Zealand's historical, cultural, and social contexts, finally confronting none of the questions that New and others have posed. In one passage, Morrow compares Mansfield with Jean Rhys, noting that these two writers are both from "tiny island nation[s]" (150). He then goes on to state, in language that betrays his own cultural biases, that neither Rhys nor Mansfield make

> apologies for the different morality which rules in the isolated areas of the world. New Zealand and Dominica, though they import English people and English customs, are not small slices of England, but wild, primitive lands where English law becomes senseless. (151)

Morrow's choice of words such as "wild" and "primitive," not to mention his suggestion that these areas actually "imported" the cultures and peoples that colonised them, would itself be a fascinating subject for analysis. Another difficulty with the book is its very lack of cohesiveness; Morrow tends to pick up important threads of investigation and then to discard them almost immediately. To cite one example, his discussion of Mansfield's interest in moving—in constructing roles as a way of defying other people's definitions—is potentially insightful, but he does not follow up on this inquiry in later chapters.

Morrow suggests that he wanted to leave his own readers with the sense of ambiguity and incompleteness he reads in Mansfield; however, the considerable gaps in his research also limit the value of the book. In one striking example, he overlooks the allegorical reading of "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped"—the kidnappers of the Pakeha girl, Pearl Button, can be read as Maori women—and instead simply recapitulates the plot:

> Mansfield's "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped" is a story about a little girl named Pearl Button who is kidnapped by two strange women . . . Possibly, this is a dream the Pearl is having, because she is watching the clouds that are playing hide-and-seek, and perhaps Pearl drifts into the clouds and these women are the ones who find her. (116)

It is difficult to imagine the reader who would benefit from this uninformative summary of the story.

In conclusion, Morrow's study might prove useful as an introduction to Mansfield, or as a reference for the undergraduate student. However, Mansfield specialists will likely find it too limited in its scope to affect current scholarship, and postcolonial readers in particular may find its treatment of the New Zealand context superficial and ultimately unilluminating.

DOROTHY F. LANE

Richard Schechner. *The Future of Ritual: Writings on Culture and Performance.* New York: Routledge, 1993. pp. x, 283. $27.50.

Richard Schechner is well known for his performance and ritual theories of theatre; his latest book offers a sample of his traditional work on ritual and a new approach that is refreshingly cautious, since he has, it seems, begun to appreciate the limitations of intercultural performance and research.

The Future of Ritual: Writings on Culture and Performance begins with vintage Schechner describing ritual and play in intercultural terms that overlook any sort of cultural specificity. The middle sections are based on papers that have appeared elsewhere, while the concluding chapters begin to question productively the spectre that Schechner helped create: intercultural performance. The fragmentary tone of the book—and the inconsistencies that this creates—is acknowledged partly by the too convenient statement in the acknowledgements that "[m]y writing isn't finished" (viii). The conversational style that Schechner employs (with himself always centre stage) is also a part of this convenience, which can also be interpreted as laxness (for instance, the repetitive use of the imprecise word "bigness"). The first sentence provides an example of the generalizations in a style that communicates little beyond self-indulgence:

> The best way to . . . understand, enliven, investigate, get in touch with, outwit, contend with, defend oneself against, love . . . others, other cultures, the elusive and intimate "I thou," the other in oneself, the other opposed to oneself, the feared, the hated, envied, different other . . . is to perform and to study performances and performative behaviours in all their various genres, contexts, expressions, and historical processes. (1, Schechner's ellipses)

The text would be well served by good editing to separate the author a bit more from his work.