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PLACE AND SETTING IN THE WORK OF SARAH ORNE JEWETT

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

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PLACE AND SETTING IN THE WORK OF

SARAH ORNE JEWETT

by

Rebecca Wall Nail

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School at
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Greensboro
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Approved by

[Signature]
Dissertation Adviser
This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Dissertation Adviser

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Date of Acceptance by Committee

Date of Final Oral Examination
Although Sarah Orne Jewett's active career extended over thirty-four years, studies of her work have tended to ignore its chronological development, and in spite of the admitted importance of her settings relatively little attention has been given to their nature and function in her sketches. Her own comments make it obvious that she habitually worked from setting and character toward incident, and many of her remarks imply that setting suggested character as well. Since Jewett's native region has long been recognized as a major influence on her work, it is not surprising that she considered the places writers knew a major formative influence, and setting for her was an essential matrix generating both writer and story. Thus Jewett agreed with Eudora Welty's suggestion that place is basic to the validity, emotion, and perspective of fiction. Her relationship to her native Berwick, Maine, however, was less serene than many critics have realized, and to this emotional ambivalence must be added the ambiguity inherent in the relationship of real people to real places and of literary characters to their settings. This study demonstrates that Jewett's attitudes and emotions toward her settings are complicated, and the settings themselves are varied and complex. The places she depicts express and interact with her themes, provide a major source of interest in her stories, and supply clues, as they change, to her overall intellectual and emotional development.

The body of the dissertation examines Jewett's settings in the three major phases of her development, from her first publication in
1868 to 1884, from the novels of 1884 and 1885 to 1895, and from the appearance of *The Country of the Pointed Firs* in 1896 until the end of her career. It traces her changing depiction of nature, country, city, and the social milieu, and it examines the techniques she uses at each stage to make her settings real and relate them to her characters, plots, and themes. Her view of nature evolves from that of whimsical, conventional affection to a solid realism that combines genuine love with an honest appraisal of the potential hostility of nature. The city, more attractive and important in the early works than has generally been realized, loses significance and becomes somewhat ambiguous, but its image remains largely pleasant. Rural life is at first seen as lonely, harsh, and extremely destructive to human personality, but as Jewett matures and resolves her own ambivalence toward country existence she learns to appreciate the offsetting advantages of closeness to nature and the soil. She also grows increasingly interested in portraying the social milieu of the rural village and depicting its values, but her realism and belief in progress never allow her to ignore rural hardship or the inevitability of social change. In technique her development is toward increasing skill and consistency of performance, for although there are some changes and experiments her late works depend on essentially the same methods of depicting setting as the best of her early sketches.

Most significant of all is Jewett's growing appreciation of the importance real places have for their inhabitants. In this sense place is one of the interests of *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, it
provides a unifying theme for The Tory Lover, and it is the subject of "William's Wedding," the last work of Jewett's published and possibly the last written. Place and setting are thus more than an ornament or background in Jewett's work; they are a major concern, and the most memorable and basic part of her fiction.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my thanks to Winston-Salem State University and to the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina for the financial support which made this dissertation possible. Thanks are also due for help provided by the staffs of the Walter Clinton Jackson Library of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, the Z. Smith Reynolds Library of Wake Forest University, and the Houghton Library of Harvard University. My adviser, Dr. Robert O. Stephens, has been unfailingly patient and helpful, as have the members of my committee, Dr. Randolph Bulgin, Dr. James E. Evans, Dr. Richard Bardolph, and especially Dr. Donald G. Darnell. Finally, I must also thank my family, friends, and colleagues for their continual kindness and encouragement.
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CHAPTER I
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PLACE
AND SETTING FOR SARAH ORNE JEWETT

The importance of setting in the works of Sarah Orne Jewett has long been recognized, but in light of that fact the settings themselves have received curiously little attention. Critical study has focused on The Country of the Pointed Firs (1896), generally acknowledged to be her masterpiece, and has treated the book's Dunnet Landing as a paradigm of all her settings. Within the full scope of her work, however, the Landing is important but not characteristic. In the thirty-four years between her first publication in 1868 and the end of her active career in 1902, Jewett depicted farms and cities as well as villages, aristocrats as well as rustic citizens, and social customs as well as the rhythms of nature. There were, in all, five novels or sets of related sketches and well over a hundred short stories and essays, to say nothing of a book of history and a number of works for children. So large and varied a canon seems to call for more inclusive analysis, and a productive career which lasted over thirty years can be expected to show considerable growth and change.

In addition, it has been convincingly argued that the development of Jewett's portrayal of setting is a major aspect of her overall artistic maturation. F. O. Matthiessen, in his Sarah Orne Jewett (1929), suggests that Jewett's growth from nostalgic involvement with setting in
Deephaven (1877) to the imaginative realism of "By the Morning Boat" (1890) made the writing of Pointed Firs possible for her. A quarter of a century had, he says, served to bring her from mere recital of facts to the creation of an immediate and vivid sense of place, a sense of being there. This special skill was a necessary precondition for her best work, written late in her career. Thus Matthiessen sees in Jewett's depiction of setting a developing capacity that strongly affects the quality of her work.

That Jewett herself saw setting as central to fiction and basic to her own work can be seen in her remarks about writing. Although she did not often discuss aesthetics or fictional theory, during the course of her career she frequently wrote letters that mentioned her work or gave advice to novices in the craft. Taken together these remarks form a substantial affirmation of the importance of setting.

Two letters to Horace E. Scudder, one of her early editors, show that from the first years of her career Jewett recognized the role setting played for her and that as the years passed she became increasingly aware of its importance. In 1873 the inexperienced author wrote timidly that "It seems to me that I can furnish the theatre, and show you the actors, and the scenery, but there is never any play!" Twenty-seven


2 See Richard Cary, "Jewett on Writing Short Stories," Colby Library Quarterly, 6 (1964), 425-40. The Quarterly, a major source for Jewett study, will be referred to hereafter as CLQ.

years later, however, when her work was well enough established to justify a volume of her best stories, Jewett told Scudder that the new book would be called Tales of New England because their New England setting was the stories' real subject. Her tone in this later letter was still playful, but the apology had disappeared.

Part of what Jewett had learned was that the "actors" and "scenery" could be relied on to generate a New England "play." A number of comments in her letters suggest that her stories usually began in setting and character. In one letter she told her friend Annie Fields that "the next story is called 'Marsh Rosemary,' and I made it up as I drove to the station in Wells this morning. . . . Somehow dear, dull old Wells is a first-rate place to find stories in." Another letter seems to imply that setting joins with character to fuel the mysterious, unconscious process from which a story evolves:

Today I am plunged into the depths of the rural districts, and this promised to be one of my dear country stories. . . . Good heavens! what a wonderful kind of chemistry it is that evolves all the details of a story and writes them presently in one flash of time! For two weeks I have been noticing a certain string of things and having hints of character, etc., and day before yesterday the plan of the story comes into my mind, and in half an hour I have put all the little words and ways into their place. . . .

6 Letters, ed. Fields, pp. 51-52. If this letter does refer to "Marsh Rosemary" it probably dates from 1895-96. Fields does not always make it clear when or to whom letters were written, and she appears to have mixed paragraphs from different letters. Dates can sometimes be assigned on the evidence of works or events mentioned in the same paragraph.
The story referred to is probably "Marsh Rosemary," the story Jewett "found" in Wells. At any rate it seems likely that the "string of things" Jewett had been noticing, since it seems to be distinct from character and "the plan of the story," refers to a series of observations and ideas about setting.

A letter to John Greenleaf Whittier still more strongly indicates that as a mature writer Jewett generally worked from setting and character toward plot. Assuring Whittier that she intended to use an idea for a story he had suggested, Jewett said the work was demanding more thought than usual. "I have to work backward when I get an idea in this way," she went on, "for I usually know my people and their surroundings first and then, whatever particular happens to them is secondary." 7

A similar confirmation of the generative function of setting came in a remark to Willa Cather. Cather records in a preface to her edition of Jewett's best work that Jewett "once laughingly told me that her head was full of dear old houses and dear old women, and that when an old house and an old woman came together in her brain with a click, she knew that a story was under way." 8 "An old house and an old woman" is a more specific variation on the "people and their surroundings" Jewett had


mentioned to Whittier. Since the letter to the poet was written well over twenty years before Jewett mentioned old women and old houses to Cather, and since those years include the most productive part of Jewett's career, it seems fair to suggest that to imagine setting and character and let them generate the rest of the story was Jewett's accustomed way of working during her maturity. This picture of plots created out of the coalescence of setting and character is further confirmed by two unpublished letters casually mentioning places or pictures of places that called for stories. In one letter Jewett said in gratitude for a drawing of a house she had admired that looking at it left her ready to begin writing a sketch, and in another, apparently written on a carriage trip, she declared that seeing old homes and imagining stories about their people was one of her favorite amusements.10

Some of Jewett's advice to younger writers implies that she regarded her own mental habit of imagining stories about places and their inhabitants as a valuable technique for any writer. When one of her social acquaintances asked for advice for a daughter with literary talent, Jewett emphasized setting and character in her answer. The aspiring writer should, she said, practice as a basic exercise "what

9 The letter to Whittier was written in 1885 (see note 7); since Cather knew Jewett only during the last eighteen months of her life, the "old women," "old house" remark cannot have been made before 1908.

10 Letter to Annie Fields, Monday morning, Sarah Orne Jewett Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard Univ., Cambridge, Mass., and another Letter to Annie Fields, Wednesday night, Sarah Orne Jewett Collection, Houghton. Jewett often fails to use complete dates on her letters; her correspondence with Annie Fields continued from around 1880 to Jewett's death in 1909. In some cases internal evidence makes dating possible.
Dr. Weir Mitchell calls Word-sketching, writing down just what she has seen in a sunset or a look across the fields in a summer day." From these sketches of pure setting one should go on to "figure drawing," in which one tried to provide "what she imagines to be the truth about an old woman who goes by down the street, or somebody whom she has seen in the cars in the morning."¹¹ One began, in other words with setting, and then went on to characters placed firmly in settings. These skills were as fundamental to the writer as scales to the singer.¹²

A series of letters to another young author further emphasized setting's basic utility and its close relation to character. One of the aspirant's stories, Jewett told him, would be improved if it ended with a bit of setting without comment. "There is no need to say anything about the bird," she cautioned, "but just say it was there and let people feel what they like about it."¹³ Another story was weak because it attempted too much; a similar story about one of its characters, a doctor, would be much stronger. Jewett's sketch of the sort of character and story she had in mind was interspersed with bits of setting: "his growth of sympathy etc in that lonely place," "along shore in winter nights and summer dawns," "defeated, invalided, isolated in that


¹² Keyes, p. 821.

strange old house." The wording implies that Jewett naturally saw any character in a particular place intimately related to his nature.

Setting and character were basic, but for Jewett the first was often the source of the second. In one of her early stories (ca. 1869) she made the narrator say that one's personality was strongly dependent on the places where one had lived and "the inanimate things which surround us indoors and out make us follow out in our lives their own silent characteristics." That these were Jewett's own beliefs and that she continued to hold them was shown by a passage written for her preface to an 1894 illustrated edition of her first book, Deephaven. Human personalities, she declared, varied but little from place to place, though the surroundings in which they lived might alter their outward behavior in various ways. Thus Jewett shared the common late nineteenth century idea that real people were shaped and formed by their environments, and her habitual close connection of literary character and setting mirrored this belief. Moreover, a particular setting might even suggest an individual character. One fragment in Jewett's handwriting describes a woman in terms of an abandoned garden. The passage has been cancelled, but under it is Jewett's note that she wished to remember an idea of a character formed while visiting the

15 "Lady Ferry," in Old Friends and New (Boston: Houghton, Osgood & Co., 1879), p. 188. This was the first appearance of this story.
16 MS. in the Sarah Orne Jewett Collection, Houghton. This sentence does not appear in the published version of the preface.
garden of some friends. Describing a place and allowing it to call up a description of a person who had lived there was to become one of her most clearly marked techniques.

A close relationship between literary settings and characters is one corollary of the idea that environment shapes personality, but another is that authors' own personalities, including the form and content of their works, must be shaped by the settings they personally have known. Jewett endorsed this opinion in a long letter of serious advice about a writer's backgrounds and attitudes written to Willa Cather in 1908. The older author was very ill at the time; to read other correspondence of the period, with its brevity and deteriorating handwriting, is to suspect that these ideas about writing must have seemed important to merit so major an effort. One section of the letter discussed the settings Cather's life had given her:

I want you to be surer of your backgrounds, -- you have your Nebraska life, -- a child's Virginia, and now an intimate knowledge of what we are pleased to call the "Bohemia" of newspaper and magazine-office life. These are uncommon equipment. . . .

Her "backgrounds," or possible settings, were the "equipment" a writer needed. The settings a writer knew formed literary talent in the same

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17 Sarah Orne Jewett Collection, Houghton.

18 This habitual linking of person and place has been noted in various contexts. See for example Sister Mary Conrad Kraus, "The Unifying Vision of Sarah Orne Jewett," Diss. Notre Dame 1978, pp. 60-65 et passim; and Richard Cary, Sarah Orne Jewett (New York: Twayne, 1962), pp. 66 and 89. This book by Cary will be cited as Cary.

way the settings in which literary characters existed shaped their human nature. Setting was not merely an accidental or supplementary circumstance for Jewett; it was an essential matrix that generated both writer and story.

Jewett's own background was critical in the development of her art and particularly in her portrayal of setting. She lived from birth to death in South Berwick, Maine, and her dearly loved father's fondness for the region gave her from the first, says F. O. Matthiessen, "what many strive unsuccessfully ever to gain, an almost complete knowledge of her environment." Country By-Ways (1881), a book of sketches closely tied to the Berwick setting, was dedicated "To T. H. J. [Theodore H. Jewett], my dear father . . . who taught me many lessons and showed me many things as we went together along the country by-ways." The Berwick region her father had taught her to observe became the material for much of Jewett's best work, and both she and her friends were well aware of its influence. William Dean Howells, for example, wrote after a visit that her house and garden had surprised him greatly, precisely because they provided a perfect setting for her and her art. It was more usual, he said, to find literature growing in spite of its surroundings. Jewett's fondness for Berwick was shown in a lengthy

20 Jewett, p. 51.
21 Sarah Orne Jewett, Country By-Ways (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1894), [p. iii].
22 Letter to Sarah Orne Jewett, 15 Sept. 1903, Sarah Orne Jewett Collection, Houghton.
article she wrote (in 1894) for the New England Magazine and in the major effort she devoted to her one historical novel. The Tory Lover, (1901), set in Revolutionary Berwick, fulfilled a life-long ambition:

The Tory Lover . . . has taken more than a solid year's hard work and the dreams and hopes of many a year beside. I have always meant to do what I could about keeping some of the old Berwick flowers in bloom. . . . It has been the happiest year of work that ever came to me as well as the harde{'24'}st.

Aside from The Tory Lover and some of the essays, none of Jewett's works were set specifically in Berwick; only a few were given any real setting less anonymously large than a city like Boston. In the original preface for Deephaven, Jewett noted that although there was a "likeness to be traced" between Deephaven and a real village, the sketches and characters came from other places. But if Deephaven was not any one place, it was in another sense the three places Jewett loved best— Berwick, York and Wells, the first an inland port on a tidal river, the other two, near enough to Berwick for an afternoon ride, fishing villages on the rocky shore. The quiet beauty and rich history of the area held Jewett's allegiance and interest all her life. Near the end of her life she wrote to Howells that Deephaven and The Tory Lover


"together hold all my knowledge . . . and all my dreams about my dear
Berwick and York and Wells--the people I know and have heard about: the
very dust of thought and association that made me!" Thus Jewett's
first book and her last had settings derived from her native region,
and many of the works between them grew out of similar places.

There is, however, considerable evidence of ambivalence in Jewett's
attitude toward Berwick. One of her continual themes is that the
dullest-seeming place can provide much to interest a properly tuned mind,
that life can be challenging and stimulating wherever one may be. In
"Looking Back on Girlhood," an autobiographical sketch which appeared
in Youth's Companion in 1892, she wrote that she had learned this
lesson early:

The quiet village life, the dull routine of farming or mill life,
early became interesting to me. I was taught to find everything
that an imaginative child could ask, in the simple scenes close at
hand.

I say these things eagerly, because I long to impress upon every
boy and girl this truth: that it is not one's surroundings that can
help or hinder--it is having a growing purpose in one's life to
make the most of whatever is in one's reach.

26 Quoted in Matthiessen, Jewett, p. 120. The original is in the
Houghton, and lacks "and association," although a typed copy in the same
file includes the phrase as Matthiessen quotes it. It is worth noting
that on 14 Sept. 1876 Jewett wrote to Horace Scudder that York reminded
her of Deephaven but she did not know York well until after the first
section of Deephaven was written. Letter 8, Letters, ed. Cary, p. 32.

27 "Looking Back on Girlhood," Youth's Companion, 65 (7 Jan. 1892),
5-6; rpt. in The Uncollected Short Stories of Sarah Orne Jewett, ed.
Richard Cary (Waterville, Me.: Colby Coll. Press, 1971), p. 7. See
also Sarah Orne Jewett, "To William H. Rideing," 24 Oct. [1890],
Letter 45, Letters, ed. Cary, pp. 68-69 for Jewett's agreement to write
the article and her plan to stress the theme of contentment in one's
own place.
Even taken by themselves these lines might be interpreted to mean that the richness of Berwick could be seen only with properly educated eyes. But a diary preserved in the Harvard Library's Sarah Orne Jewett Collection suggests that this lesson of contentment may have been harder to learn than Jewett later admitted, and that perhaps she repeated the idea so often out of a desire to share the fruit of hard-won emotional growth. The diary covers, for the most part quite sketchily, the period from May of 1871 to December of 1879, when Jewett was in her twenties and was in the process of using her home as the background for *Deephaven* (1877). Several of the diary's passages show that Jewett was not well contented to stay quietly at home during this time and that she bitterly missed her friends and activities when she came back from visits in Boston and other cities. At one point, in an entry for 1872, she declared that she would be miserable in Berwick if it were not for her home and family, although she knew she ought to be content with the duty God had given her.  

Thus the love for Berwick shown in Jewett's portraits of New England did not reflect an unbroken happiness to remain there. Many comments in her letters revealed an element of discontent even as her affection for the town was growing. In 1876 she wrote to Anna Laurens Dawes that she wished to spend more time with her friends, and that "when I was growing up" separation from them had been a major sorrow to 

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her. "I think village life makes one very narrow if one is not careful," she went on, but "I dont [sic] mean by this, that I am not fond of Berwick: there never was such a place in the world!"\textsuperscript{29} To Whittier in 1882 Jewett complained that, although her home meant more to her each year, being forced to stay inside and having few social distractions in the long country winters both contributed to her bad health (the arthritis from which she suffered from childhood on) and gave her too much time to worry about it. "I like to be where the outside life helps me to forget myself," she said, and so she was planning a trip to Boston.\textsuperscript{30}

Another letter, probably also written in the 1880s, carried an admission of discontent hidden from many modern readers:

\dots I am always delighting in reading the old Berwick, picturesque as it was, under the cover of the new life which seems to you so dull and unrewarding. \dots "Where every prospect pleases," etc., ought to be your hymn for Berwick, the which I don't suggest unmercifully, but rather compassionately, and with a plaintive feeling at heart.\textsuperscript{31}

"Where every prospect pleases" is a line from the missionary hymn "From Greenland's Icy Mountains." The line which follows it, and which explains why Jewett insisted that she spoke with compassion, is "And only

\textsuperscript{29} 11 Dec. 1876, Letter 10, in C. Carroll Hollis, "Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett to Anna Laurens Dawes," CLQ, 8 (1968), 116-17.


\textsuperscript{31} "To Annie Fields" [?], Monday morning, Letters, ed. Fields, p. 33.
man is vile." The clear implication is that however pleasing the natural and historical setting provided by Berwick might be, its social setting was far from adequate.

Jewett's most charming expression of ambivalence toward Berwick came in a letter written in 1895. With an apology to Dr. Johnson, Jewett said, "'Sir, when you have seen one snow field you have seen all snow fields. Sir I like to look upon men. Let us walk down Charles Street!"" Her love for Berwick made her go on to praise the beauty of even its winters, but her continuing preference for Boston was clear.

Dissatisfaction with village life may not have been the only source of Jewett's ambivalence toward Berwick. In spite of their prominence in the area, the Jewetts were not an old-line Berwick family and Sarah was the first Jewett born there. When she summarized and praised the town's history in "Looking Back on Girlhood," she felt it necessary to mention that she was not of the original stock:

As I write this, I keep in mind the truth that I have no inheritance from the ancient worth and dignity of Berwick. . . . My own people are comparatively late comers. I was born in a pleasant old colonial house built near 1750, and bought by my grandfather sixty or seventy years ago. . . .

Jewett's grandfather moved to South Berwick around 1839, and her father


34 "Looking Back on Girlhood," p. 4.
brought his family there only about a year before Jewett's birth in 1849. Given the slowness with which traditional communities accept newcomers, it is not surprising that Jewett still felt like a recent arrival over a half-century after her family settled in a place whose history went back to the 1620s. Berwick was Jewett's home and she felt rooted there, but her need to disclaim an inheritance from its past reveals uneasiness beneath her affectionate sense of place.

Jewett herself never ceased to regard Berwick as her home, but after 1880 she was also increasingly involved in the urban life of Boston's Brahmin aristocracy, a group to which she is frequently said to have belonged. Like the earlier Berwick upper class described in her historical sketch of the town, she associated with Boston's "people of refinement and cultivation" as an equal, and she seems to have been quite at home in the Boston milieu. Even on Beacon Hill, however, she habitually introduced herself by saying "I am a country person." Neither ambivalence toward Berwick nor membership in a more cosmopolitan genteel class could keep her from identifying with her Berwick home.

36 "The Old Town of Berwick," [pp. 586 and 588-90]. (The reprint has no page numbers but appears to reproduce the pagination of the original.)
38 "The Old Town of Berwick," [p. 600].
39 Cary, ed., Letters, p. 3.
The ambivalence of Jewett's feelings for Berwick and country and village life in general must be considered before categorizing her as a single-minded apologist for rural life. Richard Cary regards "Country versus City" as one of Jewett's major themes, and argues that the many works in which this opposition appears almost always come out in favor of the country. In Jewett's own life, however, city and country were both desirable, and as some critics have noticed, her city-country theme is not really opposition. Instead it is a dialogue, a continuing discussion, in which both places have advantages and disadvantages. When the settings of works across the entire range of Jewett's career are examined, this fact becomes increasingly clear.

The times Jewett lived in did not encourage single-minded enthusiasm for rural possibilities. Even Howard Mumford Jones, who vigorously disputes the idea of an overall debility in the New England culture of the period, admits that "in this half-century [1865-1915] New England agriculture steadily declined." More specific data appear in

40 Jewett, p. 44.


John Donald Black's study of New England's rural economy. Black points out that although little land was so utterly abandoned as to have no owner, the years between 1870 and 1920 saw many farms revert to pasture and then to woodland as a large number of families abandoned agricultural life. Many young people left the farms to seek more secure employment, and birth rates declined. In northern New England, however, these setbacks occurred about thirty years after their beginning in the southern part of the region.  

Black's data suggest some remaining vitality in the agriculture of Jewett's own area during much of her life, since the amount of land from which crops were harvested in York County reached its peak in 1890. They also show, however, that as early as 1830 Maine's population growth had leveled off and that between 1870 and 1920, in an era of great national growth, most of York County either lost population or gained only very slightly. What Jewett probably observed in her lifetime (1849-1909) was a pervasive but not precipitous falling-off in agricultural activity. From 1890 to 1910 South Berwick itself was losing population, and in New Hampshire, which lay immediately south and west of Jewett's home, the reversion to woodland had already begun in 1880. As a writer for the Nation had pointed out in


44 Black, pp. 71-73 and 155.


46 Black, p. 153.
1869, New Englanders were taking up their "old work of emigration" to help populate the West and the mushrooming Eastern cities. As late as 1894 Jewett was saying that Berwick's "common stock of prosperity" had never been better, but her portrait of country life shows her awareness not only of economic decline but also of the hardships that drove her rural neighbors from their land.

Her complex sense of place meant that Jewett faced special problems in writing fiction that would contain "the very dust of thought and association that made me." She had the native insight Hamlin Garland saw in Crumbling Idols (1894) as necessary to authentic use of local materials, but she needed also to gain the objectivity that would allow the creation of art. Such objectivity, the ability to withdraw and see the object of understanding in relationship to the rest of the world, was to appear to Edith Wharton in The Writing of Fiction (1925) as "the chief difference between the merely sympathetic and the creative imagination." Jewett herself recognized the same problem.

47 "The Decay of New England," Nation, 8 (1869), 411.


49 "The Old Town of Berwick," [pp. 603-04].

50 Quoted in Matthiessen, Jewett, p. 120. See note 26.

51 Crumbling Idols (1894; rpt. ed. Jane Johnson, Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1960), pp. 49-55. There is a debate over whether Jewett should be classed as a local colorist but none over whether local color is an element in her work.

when she told Willa Cather that "The thing that teases the mind over and over for years, and at last gets itself put down rightly on paper—whether little or great, it belongs to literature." Another remark to Cather also suggested that years and distance might be required before a writer's "backgrounds" could be turned to use:

... you don't see them yet quite enough from the outside,—you stand right in the middle of them when you write, without having the standpoint of the looker-on who takes them each in their relations to letters, to the world... you must find your own quiet centre of life, and write from that to the world that holds offices, and all society, all Bohemia; the city, the country—in short, you must write to the human heart....

The ability to combine a native's love and knowledge with an artist's necessary perspective became, in F. O. Matthiessen's estimation, a major clue to Jewett's own development from Deephaven (1877) to Pointed Firs (1896): "She needed detachment, to go away for twenty years, and then come back to Dunnet Landing as a visitor, but as a visitor made of its dust."

The challenges presented by perspective and by ambivalent emotions did not, however, mean that Jewett's use of her own environment as setting was unwise. Given her method of working, in which milieu influenced character, and character and setting produced plot, her employment of local materials was fruitful and probably unavoidable. A more recent

55 Jewett, p. 103.
regional writer, Eudora Welty, has explained a process of place-dependent creation very much like what Jewett's scattered comments seem to describe. Welty says that for her and many other writers specific places are the catalyst for the act of composition. The creation of a story is an imaginative process, but for the imagination to operate properly it needs the constraints—perhaps the form—imposed by place. This way of writing is, Welty implies, what is meant by "regional" fiction, but some regional writers may not realize their dependence on place because the process need not be something of which they are aware. Since place is basic in this way, it is of course a part of the structure of the story, and it is also related in a complex fashion to the honesty and validity of the fiction. 56

Welty goes on in an essay called "Place in Fiction" to argue, as Ian Watt does in The Rise of the Novel, 57 that a concern with everyday actuality has been characteristic of the novel ever since its beginning. This means that novels by their nature must create a sense of place for the reader. But since "feelings are bound up in place," the novel's sense of place is the source of the feelings it evokes, and therefore "fiction depends for its life on place." Place gives a novel the plausible "surface" which carries its meaning; it also tests and validates the believability of character. And because people have always seen


place as integral to themselves and have been formed by the places they have known, place is the source of a writer's basic nature and perspective, and it forms the sensibility of the reader as well. Writers who abandon place, who try to "write with no roots struck down," will find that fiction which is not firmly located can have no properly distanced perspective; they will "have flown straight out of detachment by denying attachment." 58

For Welty, in other words, it is impossible to achieve aesthetic distance without an insider's rooted sense of place. The need for both is not then just an accident of Jewett's particular situation, but results instead from the nature of fiction, or at least of fiction generated by place, "regional" fiction in Welty's understanding of the term. The necessity of balancing perspective and involvement was thus implied by the very nature of Jewett's art, and her problem was to preserve the insight of familiarity and love while gaining and applying the objective insight of the "quiet centre." She once told Cather, somewhat playfully, that "You must know the world before you can know the village." 59 Her work, she knew, required a dual focus on the world and the village, or on the village in its "relations to letters, to the world," 60 Beginning from setting implied a whole perspective and way


of working, and setting would become the primary carrier of her themes and her fictional truth.

As Welty's discussion implies, the psychological importance of place makes the depiction of setting more complex than simple description. Setting must be "seen" in the reader's mind from both a psychic and a physical point of view. John Conron has noted in _The American Landscape_ that as physical perspective turns undifferentiated land into landscape, so psychic perspective organizes the "hopes, needs, values and ideas" projected onto the land. The same is true of other elements of setting as well, since cities and gardens, interiors and customary behaviors in fiction all carry psychological meanings organized by the author. But they also take on overtones of meaning and emotion from the reader's experience; as Welty notes, "feelings are bound up in place." The importance of literary setting is thus related to the importance of human setting; the minds and emotions of author, character and reader are all involved with place. For Welty place takes on mythic dimensions:

> From the dawn of man's imagination, place has enshrined the spirit; as soon as man stopped wandering and stood still and looked about him, he found a god in that place; and from then on that was where the god abided and spoke from if ever he spoke.

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62 "Place in Fiction," p. 58.

Thus the maintenance of perspective in the portrayal of setting requires not only technical skill with description and evocation but also the ability to manipulate psychological and symbolic overtones.

Moreover, some theorists suggest that literary setting reproduces the shaping role played in human thought by the real places a person has known. Place, it has been argued, suggests very basic concepts about the universe, and place-derived ideas by their nature are ambiguous. The widespread idea of upper and lower worlds surrounding earth, for example, derives from ideas of "up" and "down," but when the upper world is identified as "good" the resulting moral imbalance conflicts with the system's physical symmetry and becomes equivocal. Lower-level abstractions derived from place, like "country" or "city" or "New England," also structure human thinking, and the result is an extremely complex cognitive meaning for both real place and literary setting. Abandonment of the "far, far away" of the fairy tale for an approximation of real place thus made setting crucial to fiction and gave it the catalytic function Welty describes, but it also introduced an unavoidable ambiguity.


It is important to notice that the idea of place involves not only the natural environment but also the parts of his surroundings man has shaped or created. Individual human beings and their societies are influenced by their environments, but it is equally and more obviously true that environments are modified and structured by the people who inhabit them. Those human influences in turn become a part of environmental structure, so that architectural patterns, forms of settlement, modes of agriculture, attitudes toward gardening, and any number of other elements of human culture are as much a part of the sense of place as topographical features and natural phenomena. Thus Berwick's Mount Agamenticus is an element of Jewett's sense of place, but so are the logging being done on its lower slopes and the superstitious awe in which people tend to hold mountains. Jewett's stories are full of farms, gardens, yards, and "best rooms" which show the shaping hand of the people who make and care for them, and even unformed nature frequently circles a man-made clearing or lines a road or path. Thus man-made elements are an important part of the sense of place underlying Jewett's work.

The cognitive and creative significance of place confirms Jewett's own perception of the importance of setting in her work, but critics have given surprisingly little attention to her setting-related ideas.

67 See Salter and Lloyd, p. 2.
68 See Salter and Lloyd, pp. 7-22.
and techniques. No close analysis of setting's importance in her overall work has appeared, and in spite of the frequent suggestion that the difference between her portrayal of setting in *Deephaven* and in *The Country of the Pointed Firs* is fundamental to Jewett's success, no one has examined chronologically the way in which she developed her settings in the thirty-four years (1868-1902) of her active career. A developmental study of Jewett's settings can provide concrete data on the physical and cultural settings she uses, examine her attitudes toward her settings and the relationship of those settings to her major themes, investigate the functions which setting serves within her novels and sketches, and illuminate the general course of her development. Such a study, however, requires a broadly based and inclusive definition of setting.

Jewett herself never defined setting, but one of her friends, a distinguished editor and literary scholar, produced during her lifetime a discussion of setting she apparently approved, one that fits her own settings well. In the Sarah Orne Jewett Collection at Harvard there is a copy of Bliss Perry's *A Study of Prose Fiction* that the author, who was Jewett's last editor at the *Atlantic Monthly*, inscribed to her with the notation that her examples were greatly superior to his theories. The inscription was dated November 14, 1902; in a letter dated eight

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71 *A Study of Prose Fiction*, Sarah Orne Jewett Collection, Houghton.
days later Jewett wrote to express appreciation for the book and spoke of it admiringly.\textsuperscript{72} Since she read and applauded Perry's book, its definition of setting seems likely to be compatible with her own theory and practice.

Perry began his examination of the term setting with several examples of works (War and Peace and The Octopus, among others) he said possessed "one strong element of interest . . . outside of the sphere of character or action." Setting, he felt, was not an adequate label for this third element, but it would have to serve. At times it might mean the "milieu, -- the circumstances . . . that surround and condition the appearance of the characters." At other times it might simply refer to fiction's equivalent of dramatic scenery, providing "a mere background for the vivid presentation of character." In other words, said Perry, setting was the "atmosphere" or "environment," to borrow terms from art and science, which joined with character and plot to constitute a work of fiction. It often served to provide modern works with "a definite locality," and there was also a recent tendency for it to include social backgrounds like occupations or even social and political institutions.

Setting filled certain technical roles in the work. In the first place, it might be used to achieve "vividness" of immediate sensation, either for characterization or as a backdrop to the action. This might be done either by having the setting and the dominant mood run parallel

\textsuperscript{72} Letter to Bliss Perry, 22 Nov. [1902], Houghton.
or by playing one of them off against the other. Secondly, setting might become an active element in plot, either by its influence on the characters or by the practical constraints it imposed on the action. And thirdly, setting often became a novel's major source of unity by providing its central image.  

Perry returned, in his chapter on "The Short Story," a chapter Jewett mentioned with special approval, to speak of setting as "the background, the milieu, the manners and morals of the age, the all-enveloping natural forces or historic movements." In the short story it was entirely possible for this background to be the main source of interest:

If the author can discover to us a new corner of the world or sketch the familiar scene to our heart's desire, or illumine one of the great human occupations . . . he has it in his power, through this means alone, to give us the fullest satisfaction. The modern feeling for landscape, the modern curiosity about social conditions, the modern aesthetic sense for the characteristic . . . all play into the short story writer's hands.

For Perry, then, setting was one of the three major elements of fiction. It might be the only really important factor in a short story, and even in a novel it could be a "strong element of interest." Setting included, as Perry's examples made clear, landscapes and natural scenery, but it also included occupations, manners, political institutions, and

74 Letter to Bliss Perry, 22 Nov. [1902], Houghton.
75 Perry, pp. 307-14.
all the other cultural and man-made parts of the milieu. It was to fiction as environment was to scientific observation, and it usually had certain specific effects within a narrative.

Jewett's general commendation of A Study of Prose Fiction might be simple politeness, but the fact that she singled Perry's chapter on the short story out for special commendation 76 implies that she agreed, in general terms at least, with its theory of setting. This implication is confirmed by the fact that Jewett apparently had an entire milieu in mind when she talked about her own settings. In one article she described how her doctor father took her along on his calls and taught her the habits of observation that later provided her materials:

I had no consciousness of watching or listening, or indeed of any special interest in the country interiors. In fact . . . I was sometimes perplexed at my father's directing my attention to certain points of interest in the character or surroundings of our acquaintances.

Jewett went on to speak of "rural landscapes" as part of the material her father's teaching gave her, 77 but in the overall context it is quite clear that all country surroundings, including habitual ways of life and the interiors of houses, were part of what she meant.

That the culture of New England villages was at least as important in Jewett's view of her work as the natural backgrounds is also shown by several comments from the 1893 preface to Deephaven. Looking back at

76 See Jewett, Letter to Bliss Perry, 22 Nov. [1902], Houghton.
77 "Looking Back on Girlhood," pp. 6-7.
her motives twenty years before for beginning to write about a New England village, Jewett spoke of her sorrow then "that certain phases of provincial life were fast waning" and that "Tradition and time-honored custom were to be swept away. . . ."78 In a passage cut from the final version of the preface she went on to identify her intimate understanding of a life that had almost ceased to exist as a special advantage she possessed in her early career to help offset her youthful inexperience and give *Deephaven* permanent value.79 These lines describe Jewett's memories of her motives in the seventies, but since they were written for publication in the early nineties, during Jewett's most productive period, it seems likely that they represent a continuing concern for village customs and manners.

The care Jewett took to portray the details of provincial life accurately is shown in a postscript added to a letter to John Greeenleaf Whittier. She had been speaking of her work on her novel *A Marsh Island* as "getting in my salt hay," presumably because she was working on a part of the book that describes the haying process in detail. At the end of the letter she added humorously that "I was getting in the salt hay much too late in the season and had to start over again."80 Haying seasons and other work patterns join with an abundant array of interiors, exteriors, yards, social occasions, funeral customs, and

78 *Deephaven and Other Stories*, p. 32.

79 MS, in the Sarah Orne Jewett Collection, Houghton. See also *Deephaven and Other Stories*, p. 34, for the same general passage.

personal habits to create in Jewett's work a closely knit society which lives within and interacts with her vivid natural backgrounds. Thus Perry's conception of setting as including the entire social, political, and natural background in a work of fiction not only seems to have had Jewett's approval but also appears to be particularly well adapted to the actual role of setting in her works.

Although the part setting played in Jewett's developing work has never been closely analyzed, there has been some attention to her settings over the years. They have often been commented on or characterized; they have frequently served as part of the data supporting an interpretation of an individual work. In two modern cases they have received somewhat closer attention, and in one other the pattern of casual remark and overall characterization covers most of what Jewett wrote. A look at some of the previous comment on Jewett's settings confirms the importance of setting for her and shows the need for a study of its development.

Jewett's editors and friends were not slow to recognize the importance of setting in her stories and sketches, although the earliest were uneasy about allowing stories to depend heavily on setting as she at first depicted it. William Dean Howells, for example, praised the "Bits of New England landscape" in Jewett's first book, Deephaven (1877); and in his retrospective "Recollections of an Atlantic Editorship," written after the end of Jewett's active career, he spoke of her "incomparable sketches of New England" and of his own "good luck to be the means of encouraging them in the free movement, unfettered by the limits of plot, and keeping only to the reality, which no other eye than hers
has seen so subtly, so humorously, so touchingly," But as a conscientious editor Howells had been less sure that plot would be an encumbrance to the young Jewett's talents. Without the benefit of his later understanding of her style, Howells wrote to Jewett on March 5, 1871, that the Atlantic editors felt the particularly vividly depicted setting provided by "The Shore House," the first part of the series that would eventually become Deephaven, required a considerably strengthened, more romantic plot. Much more should happen when a setting had been described at such length, and when the story ended out of balance, with no real occurrences, the reader's legitimate expectations were left frustrated. Nevertheless, when Jewett had doubts about doing as he had suggested, Howells replied that she should try to write well in her own vein if she did not feel more plot was a possibility. Significantly, however, he cautioned her that if she did so, the remaining elements of setting and character would have to be very full indeed.

His later comments show that Howells found Jewett's eventual achievement in the depiction of reality so satisfactory that he forgot, or at least failed to mention, his early doubts. His friend Henry

81 "Recent Literature," Atlantic Monthly, 39 (1877), 759, and "Recollections of an Atlantic Editorship," AM, 100 (1907), 599.

82 Typescript letter, apparently a copy of the MS. original made by Mary Rice Jewett for Mildred Howells, "The Editors," Letter to Sarah Orne Jewett, 5 Mar. 1871, William Dean Howells Collection, Houghton.

83 Typescript copy of Letter to Sarah Orne Jewett, 11 Mar. 1871, William Dean Howells Collection, Houghton.
James, probably the most perceptive critic among Jewett's literary friends, also saw her contemporary New England settings as her great strength, admiring her skill with stories of "the domestic life of New England." When in The Tory Lover (1901), a novel set in Revolutionary times, Jewett left what he saw as her true calling, James was disturbed enough to write her a letter of frank disapproval. He argued that the setting of The Tory Lover could not avoid basic insincerity because no one can truly enter another world and time. Jewett, he said, must return to the present and "to the dear country of the Pointed Firs" to recapture the form of her best work; setting, in other words, was the essence of what she did best.

Among others who saw setting as a prime element of Jewett's art, Horace Scudder, one of her first editors and a long-time literary friend, remarked in 1894 that the fact that Deephaven was continually taken for non-fiction "was a most unconscious tribute to Miss Jewett's art." George Washington Cable had written in 1888 to praise Jewett's work for its depth of perception and to warn her not to join the opponents of realism because she herself wrote so realistically as to transport her readers' minds directly to New England. Her work set


86 Horace E. Scudder, "Miss Jewett," Atlantic Monthly, 73 (1894), 130-33; rpt. in Appreciation, p. 17.
forth, he said, the repressed emotions of New England life, the nature that was always nearby, and the beauty whose portrayal required both delicacy and an unsentimental eye. 87

Thus it is clear that to Jewett's literary contemporaries setting was one of her great strengths, and twentieth-century critics have agreed. Arthur Hobson Quinn suggests in American Fiction (1936) that Jewett's portraits of fading New England seaports are her important accomplishment, 88 while Mary Ellen Chase, like Jewett a child of the Maine coast, argues in a 1962 article that "the speech and the manners, the customs and the characters of Dunnet Landing" are true and complete enough to serve as a social history of the region. 89 In her 1966 study of Jewett's work Margaret Farrand Thorp sees this ability to create a complete fictional world as the reason Jewett's work transcends the usual limitations of local color writing and becomes "something a little larger." 90

Both of Jewett's biographers have also noticed the significance of her fictional world. F. O. Matthiessen, who in his pioneer study

87 George Washington Cable, Letter to Sarah Orne Jewett, 29 Nov. 1888, Sarah Orne Jewett Collection, Houghton.


89 "Sarah Orne Jewett as a Social Historian," in The World of Dunnet Landing, ed. David Bonnell Green (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1962), pp. 365-72; rpt. in Appreciation, pp. 184-86. As a child Chase was taken to meet Jewett.

90 Margaret Farrand Thorp, Sarah Orne Jewett, Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers, No. 61 (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1966), p. 7.
(1929) sees the development of Jewett's skill with setting as a major index of her growth, argues in another essay that Jewett's fictional world remains important because it precedes and shapes the modern world, helping develop the sense of place any true civilization requires.

John Eldridge Frost, in his more recent biography (1960), also believes Jewett's settings create a realistic milieu that is a major element in her work. Frost says that "Miss Jewett's world could not die, so much of it was expressed in her works. The stories did not embrace all of her knowledge . . . but little that she wrote was unaffected by her life and its surroundings. . . ."

Other modern critical appraisals of Jewett's work have recognized setting's importance for her and commented on her milieu and technique, but no study of any aspect of her work has taken a developmental approach, and only two have concentrated on setting. Robert D. Rhode presents essentially the same analysis in "Sarah Orne Jewett and 'The Palpable Present Intimate'" (1968) and Setting in the American Short Story of Local Color (1975).

Narrowing his definition of setting to consider only Jewett's use of nature, Rhode argues that she, like many other local colorists, writes a "story of setting" that depends on its

91 Jewett, pp. 98-99.
93 Frost, p. 139.
94 "Sarah Orne Jewett and 'The Palpable Present Intimate,'" CLQ, 8 (1968), 146-55; rpt. in Appreciation, pp. 229-37; and Setting in the American Short Story of Local Color (The Hague: Mouton, 1975).
backgrounds rather than plot or characters for much of its interest. She is one of the few writers who succeed in using "setting as an independent aesthetic device," but according to Rhode she makes only passing use of setting in characterization, though she does see "a mystical relation" between her characters and surrounding nature. She rarely personifies nature as a whole, but she is rather too willing to use natural objects as characters, and only her skill and her "reflective," almost plotless style make such experiments acceptable.

Rhode's ideas are valuable, but he restricts himself to nature in studying Jewett's settings, he makes only fitful use of a chronological view, and he is constrained by his focus on the short story to ignore a major portion of the work. Sister Mary Conrad Kraus uses a wider definition of setting in her "The Unifying Vision of Sarah Orne Jewett" (1978), but she too studies the work collectively, rather than in chronological sequence, and her primary concern is not setting but Jewett's vision of harmony and unity in the world she portrays. This harmony brings people together with their past and their surroundings, blending setting and character into an Emersonian synthesis of man and nature. A similar oneness among human beings emerges from the portrait of the social milieu, and techniques that unite past stories or emotions with present settings serve, Kraus says, to emphasize harmony within time.

95 Setting, p. 173.

96 Setting, pp. 81, 112-18, 135, 158-61, 165, and 171.

97 Kraus, pp. 7, 38, 40-42, 51-71, 80, 90, 100-05, 113-14, 156-67, 177-80.
Another previous study relevant to any examination of Jewett's works is Richard Cary's *Sarah Orne Jewett* (1962). The only study to consider the full scope of the author's production, it discusses Jewett's native region and summarizes her most common setting. It also defines eight major themes, five of which, the "Decline of New England," "Past versus Present," "Nature," "Country versus City," and "Religion," suggest a close relationship between setting and theme. Cary refutes the idea that Jewett sees only the pleasant aspects of her settings, noting that she shows hostile qualities in nature, narrow and selfish characters, and poverty and despair, so that the idea that all is pleasant in her world actually reflects a need on the part of the reader:

In view of these and other veins of acute realism, one must reject the glib attribution of idyllic to Miss Jewett's re-created world. That this impression persists is due as much to the reader's desire for escape as to the author's preference for repose.

In later chapters Cary discusses the close relation Jewett sees between man and nature and shows its effect on her characterization. A brief but suggestive passage points out several occasions when natural objects parallel human action in "a transcendental equation worthy of Emerson," and some idea of the variety of Jewett's settings appears when he classifies her short stories partly on the basis of where they occur. Cary's emphasis, however, is on overall survey, he does not look at the works chronologically, and he discusses setting only briefly and incidentally.  

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Jewett's sense of place is nevertheless important enough to justify an inclusive analysis of setting's central role in her work, and its close connections to her themes and her chosen mode of writing make it a peculiarly suitable focus for examination of her intellectual and aesthetic growth. Her developing view of nature and rural life exemplify her movement toward realism, and her increasing appreciation of the country and gradual abandonment of an early preference for the city reflect her own emotional growth as well as the maturing of her themes and art. The same sort of change appears in her portrait of the social background, a portrait that makes clear her awareness of the problems of her time. Her techniques with setting, on the other hand, take essentially the same form in her best work throughout her career, but her skill and consistency increase and she experiments with several literary modes and devices.

A few practical considerations are necessary. Jewett wrote prolifically for at least thirty-four years, and there is no biography detailed enough to provide dates of composition for her works. To make study of her development feasible it is necessary somewhat arbitrarily to limit consideration to her novels and sketches for adults, excluding children's stories and non-fiction historical writings, and to use dates of publication to establish a chronological sequence. Since Jewett's adult novels and sketches include her best work and since her letters make it clear that she habitually wrote for more or less imminent publication, this procedure should not introduce undue distortion.

Lack of an authoritative edition dictates other decisions. There is no complete collected edition, and ample evidence exists to show that Jewett revised her stories after their initial magazine publication and also made corrections in later editions of her collections. In this situation, and since some of the works are somewhat difficult to find in any version, general critical practice seems to be to use whatever text is available. Except with regard to the chapters included in *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, this practice seems reasonably satisfactory.

Sarah Orne Jewett's career can be divided into three phases. The first includes some preliminary works, her first book (*Deephaven*, 1877), the first three collections of miscellaneous stories and essays (*Old Friends and New*, 1879, *Country By-Ways*, 1881, and *The Mate of the Daylight and Friends Ashore*, 1883), and a few other assorted adult stories which Jewett never collected. Covering the years from 1868 through 1883, these works, examined in Chapter Two, show Jewett learning her craft.

The second phase of Jewett's career saw her reach a productive maturity; between 1884 and 1895 she published two novels (*A Country Doctor*, 1884, and *A Marsh Island*, 1885), five volumes of stories (A

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100 The *Atlantic Monthly* pages revised to serve as printer's copy for *Deephaven* are in the Sarah Orne Jewett Collection, Houghton. See also Sarah Orne Jewett, Letter to Houghton Mifflin and Company, 27 June 1886; Letter to Mr. Garrison of Houghton Mifflin, 10 Apr. [1888]; and Letters to Houghton Mifflin, 18 Sept. [1886], 22 Nov. [1901?], and [n.d.], all in the Houghton.
White Heron and Other Stories, 1886, The King of Folly Island and Other People, 1888, Strangers and Wayfarers, 1890, A Native of Winby and Other Tales, 1893, and The Life of Nancy, 1895), a number of other stories she did not collect, and a book of history called The Story of the Normans (1887) with important implications for her settings. This second phase is the subject of Chapter Three.

Chapter Four covers the years from 1896 until the end of Jewett's career, which actually came in 1902, although a few stories were published after an accident forced her to stop writing. This third phase includes both the triumph of The Country of the Pointed Firs (1896) and the qualified failure of The Tory Lover (1901); it also includes one collection (The Queen's Twin and Other Stories, 1899) and some important uncollected stories. In all of these works setting is peculiarly important, and the sense of place becomes in this period one of Jewett's major themes.

In many ways Jewett's settings are a key to her work. They express and interact with her themes, they provide a major source of interest in her stories, and they supply clues to her intellectual and emotional development. Examining them in chronological sequence reveals that they are less homogenous and more complex than previous readers have realized. Jewett's settings change over the three phases of her career, and her work's intimate relation to place makes those changes very significant.
CHAPTER II
THE FIRST PHASE: 1868-1884

Between 1868, when she published her first story, and 1884, when her first attempt at a traditionally constructed novel appeared, Sarah Orne Jewett established herself as a competent writer and carved out the framework of the fictional world she would portray. Modest success came early; her second published story for adults, "Mr. Bruce" (1869), appeared in the prestigious Atlantic Monthly, as did much of the other work of the 1870s. In all, there were one book of connected sketches and thirty-three adult stories, most of them published first in a popular magazine and then reprinted in one of the three collections of the period. Although the country and village setting identified with Jewett appears in many of these stories, there are also portraits of quite different places, and almost none of this early work is consistent with the usual picture of Jewett as an uncritical apologist for an unchanging rural life.

1 Bibliographical information for which no other source is cited appears in the standard Jewett bibliography by Clara C. Weber and Carl J. Weber, A Bibliography of the Published Writings of Sarah Orne Jewett (Waterville, Me.: Colby Coll. Press, 1949).

Part of that stereotype derives from an excessive emphasis on Jewett's popular first book. A series of sketches about a seaside village and its people, Deephaven (1877) was an impressive effort for a new author. Much of it had first appeared in the Atlantic, William Dean Howells had encouraged its publication, and it was well received by both the country people it portrayed and literary leaders like John Greenleaf Whittier. Through the years such good opinions have continued, and the fact that Deephaven is in many ways similar to The Country of the Pointed Firs (1896), the major work of Jewett's later career, has also focused attention on it. But Deephaven is not typical of all of Jewett's early work, and its thirteen chapters include fewer than a third of the first-phase sketches. Nearly all of Deephaven is set in or near a quiet seaside village, but a majority of the other thirty-three sketches have inland settings, and only about half of them are set in villages. Ten, nearly a fourth of all the early work, are set partly or wholly in cities. Thus the overall world of the early stories is not identical with the village life of Deephaven, and in order to

assess the role setting plays in the first phase it is necessary to examine a wide variety of fictional places.

The sum of these many fictional places is, however, a single fictional world, for the settings are consistent with each other and were apparently envisioned as parts of a whole. The distinctions and changes evident when they are compared suggest not that the author is creating new worlds but that she is expanding her view of the old one or recognizing changes within it. The creation of a complex and plausible physical and social setting, with the development of appropriate techniques to delineate it, is one of the primary achievements of the first phase. Beginning with a naive affection for nature, Jewett comes to recognize nature's potential cruelty and to integrate her continuing affection with some of the grimmer biological theories of her time. A similar complexity marks her portraits of country and city, which almost from the first transform simplistic stereotypes and recognize in rural life an isolation and deprivation that can be mitigated by urban cultural and economic opportunity. The social milieu existing within these physical settings is equally complex; Jewett examines its central values related to the love of place, provides a portrait of some social changes, and suggests the need for others. All of this development occurs in the same sketches in which Jewett is improving her technique, choosing the parts of setting she will portray, and learning to blend setting with plot, character, theme, and emotion. Her first phase does not present a pattern of smooth or constant development, however, since _Deephaven_ (1877), one of the earliest works, is also one
of the best. But the overall accomplishment of the first segment of Jewett's career reflects a general advance in technique and thematic insight.

**Nature**

Jewett's view of nature emerges from the conventional and moves toward a more personal and complicated vision during her first phase. The earliest stories make little real use of nature, and not until "The Girl with the Cannon Dresses" (1870) does it play a major part. There it functions as an integral part of a country setting, offering health to a visiting narrator and providing compensation for the dullness and lack of interest in the rural scene. By the time of "Miss Sydney's Flowers" (1874) this conventional view has begun to lose its hold; although the story's central theme is the redeeming influence exerted by some beautiful flowers, the flowers are in a city conservatory viewed from a busy street. If they represent, as Cary has suggested, the redeeming aspect of nature, then nature is no longer confined to or even identified with rural scenes.

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5 Sarah Orne Jewett, "Miss Sydney's Flowers," *Old Friends and New* (Boston: Houghton, Osgood, 1879), pp. 143-75. Future references, identified as OFN, will be included in the text.

By the time "Miss Sydney's Flowers" was published, Deephaven had already (1873) begun to appear in the Atlantic. Natural descriptions form a powerful part of the rural Deephaven setting, and the sea in particular always seems near, from the evening walk by the shore that closes the first chapter to the final paragraph of the book. A particularly beautiful evocation comes at the end of the second chapter:

When we came down from the lighthouse and it grew late, we would beg for an hour or two longer on the water, and row away in the twilight, far out from land, where, with our faces turned from the Light [sic], it seemed as if we were alone, and the sea shoreless; and as darkness closed round us softly, we watched the stars come out. . . . Sometimes in the evening we waited out at sea for the moonrise, and then we would take the oars again and go slowly in, once in a while singing or talking, but oftenest silent.

Such skillful evocations of natural beauty, often involving the sea, appear in many places in Deephaven. The explicit ideas about nature that appear are less impressive, for the suggestion that nature is not really inanimate but actually expresses the mind of God (Dp p. 131), is only a conventional quasi-pantheism. Less conventional, however, is the book's recognition that nature is not uniformly beneficent or pleasant. Even the beautiful sea can be treacherous, as several references to shipwrecks (Dp pp. 132-33) and men lost at sea (Dp p. 66) bear witness. As seen from shore it can become "wide and

7 Sarah Orne Jewett, Deephaven and Other Stories, ed. Richard Cary (New Haven, Conn.: College and University Press, 1966), p. 53. Future references, made parenthetically and identified as Dp, will be to this edition, which except for the 1893 preface follows the text of the 1877 first edition.
monstrous," a "wicked" sea that holds "all the trembling land in its power" (Dp p. 159).

This less common vision of an inimical nature is particularly evident in "In Shadow," a chapter about the struggle and death of a couple on a remote farm in the Deephaven area. Nature has not favored these people; as a neighbor says, life has been "against wind and tide with 'em all the time" (Dp p. 144). Now that time and tide have won, and the farmer and his wife are dead, nature can begin to reclaim the farm in a scene of utter desolation:

It is not likely that any one else will ever go to live there. . . . the thistles which the man who is dead had fought so many years will march in next summer and take unmolested possession.

I think today of that fireless, empty, forsaken house, where the winter sun shines in and creeps slowly along the floor; the bitter cold is in and around the house, and the snow has sifted in at every crack; outside it is untrodden by any living creature's footstep. The wind blows and rushes and shakes the loose window sashes in their frames, while the padlock knocks--knocks against the door. (Dp p. 149)

The bitter winter cold, inhospitable not only to man but to "any living creature," is an image of a nature neither loving nor benevolent. Almost equally effective is the image of the thistles, plants whose delicate beauty and color belie the cruel tenacity with which they overrun and ruin cultivated land. Like them, nature in Deephaven is beautiful, but an underlying potential for cruelty makes that beauty ambiguous.

Less attention is given to the destructive side of nature in "A Bit of Shore Life" (1879); the potential danger of the sea is recognized (OFN pp. 249, 252, 261), but the beauty of the sea and the rest of
nature also provide an outlet for country dwellers (OFN pp. 249-50 and 259-64). This beautiful and sympathetic side of nature is particularly embodied in the trees in the sketch. Robert Rhode has pointed out that Jewett frequently uses trees much as she might use human characters, and two of his examples, a group of pines "born to good luck" (OFN p. 253) and some "jolly old apple trees" (OFN p. 254), appear here. A huge pine, visible far out to sea, beneficently helps fishermen sight and avoid a dangerous reef (OFN p. 239); other pines, no longer standing, have been particularly important to the narrator. When she learns they are to be destroyed she goes out "to say good-by, as if I were sure they could hear me" (OFN p. 263). The tone in this section is not fanciful, but seems to express genuine feeling for "the woods I loved best" (OFN p. 263).

The trees which are so important in "A Bit of Shore life" continue to be prominent in the essay-sketches of Country By-Ways (1881). Although various influences might be traced here, as in most philosophical essays, Jewett seems actually to be working out concepts based on her own experience with nature, and in "A Winter Drive" (1881) trees become a primary image, a kind of synecdoche, for the ideas she is discussing. There is, she says, a "scale of existence," at some point on which "the first glimmer of self-consciousness" appears. Since "Man was the latest comer into this world," he is not sure which other creatures may also

possess the ability to think, but trees at least must "have thought and purpose." Although this passage suggests that Jewett actually considers trees sentient creatures, it is not clear how seriously she is speaking. Rhode, finding the theory consistent with her practice, accepts it as a real belief and a skillful addition of "human interest" to natural descriptions. His opinion is supported by the interest in trees frequently shown in Jewett's work and by the fact that she was an enthusiastic member of the Maine Forestry Association and once bought a stand of pines to preserve them. Her genuine love for trees, however, does not imply her serious belief that trees can think. Even in "A Winter Drive" Jewett does not maintain her view of trees as persons consistently, for after declaring that she drives "as sadly ... behind a great pine log as if I were its next of kin and chief mourner" (CB pp. 166-67), she drives on a frozen pond stacked with cut logs, a sort of charnel house for trees, with no hint of distaste or sorrow (CB p. 173).

However seriously Jewett means it, she ties her idea of sentient trees to "an old doctrine called Hylozoism, which appeals to my far from Pagan sympathies, the theory of the soul of the world, of a life


10 Robert D. Rhode, "Sarah Orne Jewett and 'The Palpable Present Intimate,'" CLQ, 8 (1968), 146-55; rpt. in Appreciation, pp. 231-34.

residing in nature . . . the doctrine that life and matter are inseparable" (CB p. 168). Such a doctrine implies oneness of life, a unity between man and nature, and the beauty and enjoyment Jewett and the reader find in her winter sleigh ride reinforce this image. A less pleasant view is also present, however, in the "bare, thin, comfortless aspect" nature shows in winter (CB p. 163), when even the trees may become terrifying instead of companionable:

It makes one shudder, the thought of a lost man hurrying through the forest at night-fall, the shadows startling him and chasing him, the trees standing in his way and looking always the same as if he were walking in a treadmill, the hemlocks holding out handfuls of snow at the end of their branches as if they offered it mockingly for food. (CB p. 174)

This is the same inimical nature glimpsed occasionally in Deephaven, and Jewett's awareness of such potential hostility complicating the beauty and companionship of nature gives her, as Cary has noted, a sense of the "cruel duplicity" of the natural order. 

"River Driftwood" (1881), another of the Country By-Ways essays, broadens this picture of natural ambiguity by paralleling the grim views of nature set out by some of Jewett's older contemporaries. A beautiful passage that begins with "great gulls" soaring overhead ends in consideration of the natural food chain, in which "we must eat our fellows and be eaten to keep things within a proper limit"


13 Jewett, p. 31.
Later a similar image intrudes in an almost prototypical description of natural beauty:

On a spring day how the bobolinks sing, and the busy birds... go flitting and chirping and whistling around the world! A great fish-hawk drops through the air, and you can see the glitter of the unlucky fish he has seized as he goes off again. (CB p. 30)

Some birds sing while others seize prey, and the dying fish glitters as the hawk soars in the sun; nature is continually involved with cruelty as well as beauty. Although Jewett expresses these ideas optimistically, seeing them as part of an evolutionary chain that leads to the angels,\textsuperscript{14} their basic similarity to Tennyson's malign "Nature, red in tooth and claw" and to the evolutionary theory of the survival of the fittest\textsuperscript{15} is unmistakable.

Another of the Country By-Ways essays, "An October Ride" (1881) may seem to contradict such a grim picture of nature, for its speculation that nature is actually "one great existence" including all matter and energy and even spiritual truth (CB pp. 101-03) is a more sophisticated version of Deephaven's affirmation of God in nature. This Christianized version of Hylozoism, however, is less memorable than the sketch's image of "little pines... growing in on every side" while their elders watch them "march in" upon the cultivated fields and defeated farmers live out their lives "within that steadily

\textsuperscript{14} Cary (Jewett, p. 70) sees this as a romantic addition to the Chain of Being, but it could be adopted from Paradise Lost.

\textsuperscript{15} Cary points out this similarity in Jewett, p. 70.
narrowing circle of trees" (CB pp. 98-100). No vague image of benevolent control can cancel so sinister a picture.

After Country By-Ways there is little further development in Jewett's view of nature during her first phase. "The Hare and the Tortoise" (1883) contains a descriptive passage that underlines the fact that nature can be found in the city (USS pp. 66-67), and several stories and sketches make use of natural imagery. Apparently the essays of 1881 had adequately set out Jewett's early view of nature, a vision of ambiguity and potential danger balanced by love and genuine understanding. As a possible revelation of God and of the "one great existence" of the world, nature is to be loved and protected even if it must also be approached with caution. Not only is man, as Larzar Ziff has pointed out, "an organic part of the whole," but everything is a part of that same entity. Here, as Ziff suggests, lies the basis for Jewett's use of the pathetic fallacy, and, if D. S. Bland is right in arguing that natural imagery should be judged by whether inanimate sympathy for human moods is rendered honestly and appropriately, her use of it is not necessarily a flaw in her technique. Jewett often fails to meet the standard of honesty and appropriateness when she has nature sympathize with her characters, but her intense feelings for nature at least make it possible for her to do so.


18 See Williams's suggestion--pp. 168-69--that Jewett's personifications work because of her attitude toward "kindred life in nature."
Country

The same ambiguity Jewett came to see in nature during her first phase is reflected, almost from the first, in her portrait of country life. Even her earliest story, "Jenny Garrow's Lovers" (1868), has a foundation of believable rural ways below its unconvincing English veneer (USS pp. 8-14), but the first real portrait of rural life comes in "The Girl with the Cannon Dresses" (1870). As Cary has pointed out, this story is also the first to make major use of a contrast between city and country. The narrator, spending a summer on a farm to regain her physical and mental health, enjoys the friendship of a child whose unspoiled friendliness and knowledge of nature derive from the country setting (USS pp. 16 and 20-22). Such rural benefits, however, have a price, for the child's happiness at acquiring a friend twice her age and at learning to take "comfort" in the pastime of reading (USS pp. 21-24) shows that her world is terribly lonely. In this prototypical story the country gives health and virtue, but it also implies isolation and lack of mental stimulation, two deprivations whose remedies may be found in the city.

The deficiencies of rural life become more apparent in Deephaven (1877). Robert Horn's argument that the book presents a stark picture

19 Introd., USS, pp. v-vi.
of rural degeneration and decay, made only more emphatic by the narr­
tor's sentimentality, may go too far, but it is true that the placid
beauty the village offers to visitors imperfectly conceals the poverty,
deprivation, loneliness, and degeneracy experienced by the natives. As
a decayed port Deephaven is a former extension of urban life now becom­
ing rural again (Dp pp. 38 and 71), so that its very existence undercuts
the stereotype of the rural village as the scene of primal bucolic
bliss. Further disparagement of the myth comes from many parts of the
book, including the portraits of Danny, a fisherman whose most home­
like memories are of a hospital (Dp pp. 88-90); Mrs. Bonny, a lonely
widow whose love for nature cannot hide the near-madness isolation has
induced (Dp pp. 135-39); and the "Kentucky giantess," a sideshow
performer whose sordid present is a frightening contrast to her youth
as a "real ambitious" country girl. (Dp p. 108).

Two passages of Deephaven are particularly clear about rural
hardship. A description of life on the isolated hill-farms of the
township provides an early view of the bleakness and thwarted ambition
Hamlin Garland would find in other rural scenes in Main-Travelled Roads
(1891):

in Appreciation, pp. 284-96. See also Donald Robert Anderson, "Failure
and Regeneration in the New England of Sarah Orne Jewett and Mary E.
Wilkins Freeman," Diss. Univ. of Arizona 1974, p. 35; and Ronald Lee
Lycette, "Diminishing Circumferences: Feminine Responses in Fiction to
Some of the more enterprising young people went away to work in shops and factories; but the custom was by no means universal, and the people had a hungry, discouraged look. It is all very well to say that they knew nothing better . . . there was too often a look of disappointment in their faces, and sooner or later we heard or guessed many stories: that this young man had wished for an education, but there had been no money to spare for books or schooling; and that one had meant to learn a trade, but there must be some one to help his father with the farm work, and there was no money to hire a man to work in his place if he went away. (Dp p. 133)

Even more vivid is the depiction of stark rural failure in "In Shadow," the story of a farm couple's defeat and death mentioned earlier. During the first of their two visits to the farm the narrator and her friend discover the background of hardship that underlies the disaster of later scenes. On their way they see a group of pine trees "like a band of outlaws" that have come "as near the sea as they dared" (Dp p. 141), giving warning that life in this place is hard and savage and lies largely outside the softening influence of civilization, while the sea that might represent contact with the outer world is here something to be feared. Later, when the girls talk to the father of the family, they discover that a combination of the depression of the shipbuilding industry, poor health, and nearly worthless land has thwarted all the effort he and his wife can exert (Dp p. 141). The later scenes of the farmer's funeral, following that of his wife by a few months, complete a grim story of rural hardship and failure, and the stark vision of the padlock knocking against the door of the deserted home (Dp p. 149) symbolizes not only the heartlessness of nature but also the desolation that can easily overtake rural life.
In light of such evidence it is hard to see in Deephaven the avoidance of "the sordidness, bleakness, and meanness of spirit" in rural life which Ima H. Herron detects, nor can one easily agree with F. L. Pattee that Jewett "recorded only the things lovely and of good report." Deephaven is a composite of Berwick and adjacent areas, and Jewett knows her subject well enough to portray it with accuracy. In spite of occasional lapses into sentimentality or preciousness her approach is basically realistic, and even her naively stated argument that the quietest place may be full of "romance and tragedy and adventure" (Dp p. 66) and that happiness depends on attitude, not place (Dp pp. 160-61) parallels William Dean Howells's declaration that the "true realist" will not "look upon human life and declare this thing or that thing unworthy of notice. . . . He feels in every nerve the equality of things and the unity of men." Howells apparently recognized


22 Jewett actually suggested local scenes to be used as models by artists preparing sketches for an illustrated edition. See Babette Anne Boleman, "Deephaven and the Woodburys," Colophon, 3 (Sept., 1939), 17-24. See also her letter to W. D. Howells quoted in Matthiessen, p. 120. Some of the complaints about the boredom of village life included in the last chapter of Deephaven (p. 160) resemble Jewett's own youthful comments on Berwick in 14 Jan. [1872], MS. diary May 1871-Dec. 1879, Sarah Orne Jewett Collection, Houghton. See Chapter One.

Jewett's underlying adherence to his principles, for in reviewing Deephaven for the Atlantic he spoke of its "conscientious fidelity" and dedication to "the very tint and form of reality." Deephaven is too real to become either a sylvan paradise or a rustic purgatory, for the old-fashioned charm and natural beauty visitors and natives enjoy in summer are offset by the poverty and suffering the natives must endure all year. "So long a winter was coming, but . . . how pleasant it would be in the spring" (Dp p. 165).

The greatest hardship in Deephaven is found on outlying farms; rural life is somewhat easier for those who live near neighbors in the village. In the later stories of the first phase it becomes increasingly clear that a sense of community can alleviate some of the hardships of country dwellers. Jewett continues to portray farm life as isolated and difficult, but she suggests that neighbors and family members can share burdens and provide companionship. In villages a sense of community is easier to attain, but social change and narrow attitudes may threaten the village way of life.

In "A Bit of Shore Life" (1879) possible alleviations are not yet visible; the hardships of "wretched farming-land" and "bitter cold mornings" filled with constant work are still an "immense contrast" to "even a moderately comfortable city house" (OFN pp. 245-46). The narrator is particularly aware of the psychological damage that comes

24 [William Dean Howells], "Recent Literature," Atlantic Monthly, 39 (1877), 759.
from continual isolation:

I wonder if any one has not often been struck, as I have, by the sadness and hopelessness which seems to overshadow many of the people who live on the lonely farms in the outskirts of small New England villages. It is most noticeable among the elderly women. Their talk is very cheerless, and they have a morbid interest in sicknesses and deaths; they tell each other long stories about such things; they are very forlorn; they dwell persistently upon any troubles which they have; and their petty disputes with each other have a tragic hold upon their thoughts, sometimes being handed down from one generation to the next. (OFN p. 244)

Even when economic hardship is not a major problem, country life threatens to kill the spirit. In "Good Luck: A Girl's Story" (1879) city visitors enjoy a country summer, but a girl from a prosperous neighboring farm seems "to have lost every bit of her girlhood" in the boredom of rural life, and to lack relaxation and society so badly that she needs to spend a summer reading "good-tempered, well-bred English society novels" (CB pp. 197-98). "An Autumn Holiday" (1880) uses an abandoned farm to emphasize the stark loneliness and desolation summed up in a haunting image reminiscent of Frost's "Home Burial":

... the sight of the little grave at first touched me strangely, and I tried to picture to myself the procession that came out from the house the day of the funeral, and I thought of the mother in the evening after all the people had gone home, and how she missed the baby, and kept seeing the new grave out here in the twilight as she went about her work. (CB pp. 142-43)

Both the sketches just mentioned suggest, however, that a sense of community can alleviate rural loneliness. City visitors bring friendship to the lonely young woman of "Good Luck," and in "An Autumn Holiday" there are several indications that a rural community can be
close-knit even though its people are scattered. Several episodes and bits of gossip in the sketch suggest such relationships, but the clearest of them is the story of a well-respected older man who became convinced that he was his dead sister and insisted, at certain times, on wearing women's clothing (CB pp. 153-62). Obviously this humorously told story has some unpleasant possibilities, and the way it is broken off (CB p. 162) may indicate that part of it is unfit for a young lady's ears, but the reaction of the man's neighbors to his illness is interesting. They cannot help laughing at his comical behavior, but everyone is kind, and humors him, and seems to feel genuine grief at his disability.25 Thus rural neighborliness undercuts some of the hardship of rural life by making its isolation less complete.

As one critic has pointed out, however, what Jewett is beginning to do is not to ignore the tragic aspects of the existence she portrays but to suggest that her people can manage to overcome them.26 To see this clearly it is only necessary to compare her pictures of abandoned farms with the sentimental musings of Whittier in "The Homestead" (1886). There is a great difference between the poet's vision of "rustic lovers" and cheerful "husking eves"27 and Jewett's evocation,

25 See Cary, Jewett, p. 82.
26 Williams, pp. 146-47.
in "An October Ride," of the life formerly lived "within that steadily narrowing circle of trees" (CB p. 100).

A somewhat special case is presented by "A Guest at Home" (1882), whose explicit theme is the possibilities and compensations of life on the farm. City-educated Annie Hollis comes home determined to share with her family the advantages she has gained, and Jewett affirms that she succeeds in doing so. The effect, however, is to suggest that with great effort rural life can be almost as comfortable as urban, and even this backhanded compliment is undercut by Jewett's evasion of the question of which world Annie will ultimately choose (USS pp. 53-58).

Superficially the story is about country opportunities, but actually its most memorable subject is the dreary rural existence Annie has left, a life in which her parents have "begun to feel like horses in a treadmill" (USS p. 58).

Since rural villages have a built-in form of community, they continue to seem pleasanter than the isolated farms. "A Late Supper" (1878) begins, as Cary has pointed out, with a sweeping statement of Jewett's "microcosmic" (OFN p. 50). In this story and in "A Lost Lover" (1878) and "Miss Becky's Pilgrimage" (1881), the pleasantness and interest of village life are confirmed by the approval of outsiders or returned natives.

28 Jewett, p. 34.
A more explicit discussion comes in "From a Mournful Villager" (1881), which makes clear both the attraction of rural villages and the fact that, like Deephaven, they cannot avoid change. New England's villages, Jewett says, were once part of an "old-fashioned provincial society," but now they are growing more like the American norm, the West (CB pp. 116-17). The "ease and comfort" of modern ways and recent "discovery in the realms of mind or matter" make this a trend to be welcomed, (CB p. 119), but some of what is being lost is worth preserving, and Jewett makes a plea for the preservation of front yards and the privacy and reserve in village life which they represented (CB p. 127).

The change results in part from progress and industrialization (CB pp. 120-21 and 130-31), but some of it also comes from a pre-industrial wave of retrogression, "a last tidal wave of Puritanism" which destroyed much of the grace and distinction of village life (CB pp. 130-31). Thus New England villages, including Deephaven itself, were once havens of rural comfort and sophistication, but although their life continues to be more attractive than that of isolated farms, they have their disadvantages and they are vulnerable to both helpful and destructive change.

Several stories from later in Jewett's first phase confirm the idea that village life can be pleasant but show that it has special disadvantages as well. "The Mate of the Daylight" (1882), "A New Parishioner" (1883), and "Miss Manning's Minister" (1883) all portray relatively close-knit rural villages where individuals find concern and charity among their neighbors, but in each case village life exacts
a price. The somewhat ambiguous hero of "The Mate of the Daylight" almost loses his sweetheart because of village gossip about his shiftlessness, and the heroine of "A New Parishioner" suffers from her neighbors' and her own disapproval when she cannot like a man the community acclaims (MD pp. 120-23). Miss Manning has lived for years in a dull and unchallenging life which she lacks the "energy of character" to try to change (USS p. 83), and the willingness of the rest of the parish to allow her to take over the care of their paralyzed minister exposes the pettiness village life sometimes conceals (USS pp. 85-86).

City

Thus in the stories of Jewett's first phase, country life, whether lived on an isolated farm or in a rural village, is often constricting, usually boring, and sometimes deadly. City life, on the other hand, becomes for the most part an image of all the possibilities rural life denies. At first, in stories like "Mr. Bruce" (1869) and "Miss Sydney's Flowers" (1874), the city is a fairly superficial image, vaguely pleasant and sophisticated. In Deephaven (1877), however, Jewett begins to recognize the economic meaning underlying the social and cultural differences of the city from the country. For the poor people of the hill farms, the city is the only escape to a decent life. In the grim "In Shadow" sketch the downtrodden farm family's sole hope comes from the

29 Sarah Orne Jewett, "The Mate of the Daylight," The Mate of the Daylight and Friends Ashore (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1884), pp. 190-91. Parenthetical references will be labelled MD.
opportunity Boston promises for a son: "But my oldest boy, he's getting ahead. He pushed off this spring, and he works in a box shop in Boston. . . . He sent me ten dollars a spell ago and his mother a shawl" (Dp pp. 141-42). Even more explicit is a humorous episode in which the narrator's friend, a young Brahmin lady, is mistaken for the daughter of the keeper of the Deephaven lighthouse and offered help in going to Boston to work as a saleswoman. The reader's knowledge of Kate's true social and economic position makes the proposal ludicrous, but the unchallenged assumption is that if she actually were a country girl like her would-be helper she would certainly prefer to live in the city, where life is less lonely and one can earn money to send home (Dp pp. 51-52).

The city offers economic help to the country in another way in "A Late Supper" (1878). The heroine, Miss Catherine Spring, is about to be forced to give up her home when two city boarders arrive to provide her with a new source of income. Once again, however, the city's economic potential is mixed with social and cultural offerings, for Miss Spring and her neighbors not only benefit financially but also enjoy the company of "two cultivated, thoughtful, helpful women" (OFN pp. 80-114).

At this point an odd break seems to occur in Jewett's developing image of the city. Although "A Sorrowful Guest" (1879) and "Good Luck" (1879) continue along established lines, two other stories of about the same period adopt, or at least imply, a contradictory vision. The picture of the city as a place of excitement and opportunity coexisted,
in Jewett's time, with an image of it as a place of monstrous poverty and corruption. 30 This second image appears in "Paper Roses" (1879), which in spite of its saccharine plot provides a look into a grim urban world of sickness and unemployment where a lame woman is supported by a cousin with "work from a tailor's" (USS p. 35) and two children are cared for by neighbors when their mother has "a chance to do an afternoon's work" (USS p. 35). 31 Then at some time during this period, probably around 1880, 32 Jewett published "Stolen Pleasures," in which a young man who has moved from a farm to the city struggles to retain his solid rural values and to win his wife over to them. In this story the city again holds economic opportunity, and the hero is prospering, but everything else about the city's environment and values is meretricious. Even a nearby beach becomes part of the urban wilderness, and the only oasis available is the makeshift garden, an extension of the country, the hero creates around his house. 33 His Vermont birthplace, on the other hand, is a source of stability, strength, and moral


31 Oddly enough, a similar portrait of urban poverty, an even grimmer one, is in one of Jewett's children's stories, "Nancy's Doll," which appeared in the Independent, 31 Aug. 1876, and in the 1878 Play Days collection.

32 The date of publication for "Stolen Pleasures" is unknown. Cary assigns it to the 1880s, but notes that it may have been published as early as 1873. See Introd., USS, p. vi.

33 Cary (Introd., USS, p. vi) sees John's choice of the one house that has a tree as a sign that he remains close to nature.
steadfastness; from the minute he sees it again he begins to feel "like himself" and to regret having done less than "the square thing" by coming away from the city without his wife (USS p. 42). The superiority of country to city in this story is clear; not only is there a genuine and explicit conflict between the two, but the story also displays what Cary correctly calls "raw bias" in its definition of the opposition.

Although "Stolen Pleasures" presents an image of the city which diverges from Jewett's usual practice, it illustrates another nineteenth-century stereotype which Jewett was to use extensively. John Webber, the protagonist, is Jewett's first focused portrait of the country boy seeking or achieving success in the city, a figure already glimpsed in Deephaven (1877) and "A Bit of Shore Life" (1879). Anselm Strauss identifies the image of the successful urban businessman with a rural background as a major by-product of the nineteenth-century growth of cities, and suggests that it was a psychologically useful stereotype because it admitted the opportunity for prosperity in the city, but insisted that the physical and moral virtues imparted by a country upbringing were essential in the struggle for success. In "Stolen Pleasures" the hero's success in business and in marriage is dependent on his rural values, but in spite of his love for his country home he returns to the economic opportunity of the city (USS pp. 43-44).

34 Introd., USS, p. vi.
35 Strauss, p. 138.
The unpleasantness of city life in "Paper Roses" and "Stolen Pleasures" is an interruption in Jewett's vision of the city, not a permanent change of direction. In "Andrew's Fortune" (1881) she portrays a country-bred urban immigrant for whom the city has again become a place of expanded horizons as well as economic opportunity, so that late in the story he thinks with horror "how small and narrow his life would have been ... on the farm" (CB p. 85). In "A Guest at Home," similarly, the source of the ideas, skills, and materials to alleviate rural ills is the city (USS pp. 53-58), making urban life again represent cultural and economic opportunity for the rural population. "A Dark Carpet" (1883) asserts that virtues like thrift and cheerful perseverance are not exclusively rural (USS pp. 59-65), and "The Hare and the Tortoise" portrays a financially comfortable class, witty and well bred, who attend concerts, give dinner parties in their Beacon Hill homes, and stay "well informed of the progress of art and literature, as prominent Bostonians should" (USS p. 75). In spite of a little mild satire this final urban story provides an attractive picture of the life those who left the country for the city hoped to achieve.

Thus the city, both as a physical setting and as a symbol, plays a relatively important role in the stories Jewett wrote during the early part of her career. A few sketches—"Mr. Bruce," "A Dark Carpet," and "The Hare and the Tortoise"—are totally urban, with no reference to rural ways or persons. More usually the city functions as an image of a life different from that of the country, one which can supply what
rural existence lacks. During her first phase Jewett comes increasingly to show city and country life as complementary, and only in "Stolen Pleasures" does she show them in conflict. Paul John Eakin has suggested that Jewett's own comfortable relationship with her home in Berwick and her second home in Boston gave her an unusual understanding of both environments and kept her portraits of city and country from falling into any of the stereotyped modes of opposition. Most of the first-phase stories, however, were written before Jewett had begun to spend a great deal of time in Boston, and her management of the city-country relationships during this period seems to suggest that her appreciation of the city also grew at least partly from her perception of the deficiencies of country life, a perception that began in personal boredom and loneliness but grew toward increasing recognition of the isolation and economic hardship endured by many rural families.

Society

Nature, country, and city form the physical background of Jewett's sketches, but they are not the sole components of her settings. The chapter of Bliss Perry's *Study of Prose Fiction* about the short story, a chapter Jewett especially liked, defines setting as "the background,

36 Eakin, p. 212.

37 Although Jewett had spent time with friends in Boston and other cities, the friendship with Annie Fields that gave her a second home on Beacon Hill was not established until 1880. See Frost, pp. 59-67. In a 1904 letter to Charles Miner Thompson Jewett recalled that at the time *Deephaven* was being written (1873-1877) she had not been away from Berwick enough to see the region as an outsider. See 12 Oct. 1904, *Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett*, ed. Annie Fields (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1911), pp. 196-97.
the milieu, the manners and morals of the age, the all-enveloping natural forces or historic movements." Intangibles like codes and patterns of behavior ("manners"), values and ideals ("morals") and trends of social development ("historic movements") are in this view as much a part of setting as natural scenes, constituting what might be called the "social milieu" of the work. For Jewett it is an integral part of the fictional world, for even the essay-sketches of Country By-Ways concerned most purely with nature never entirely exclude human society. The first-phase stories closely examine the complex of central values governing their characters' lives, and they also make it clear that the social milieu is changing and that further change may have beneficial results.

The values the characters of the first-phase sketches live by seem to derive more from the traditional work ethic and the sense of place than from any significant religious feeling. The early "Girl with the Cannon Dresses" (1870) shows a belief in home, order, and work already ingrained in a nine-year-old explaining her idea of a holiday: "Mother . . . said I needn't sew today or do anything after I put away my dishes and swept the kitchen and made my bed" (USS p. 20). Homes and the work of keeping them in order also play a substantial role in

38 A Study of Prose Fiction (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1902), p. 307. For Jewett's approval of the chapter see her letter to Perry, 22 Nov. [1902], Houghton.

39 "Meetin'" as a social gathering is often mentioned, but personal faith seems to play little or no part in the lives of most of Jewett's characters. See Esther Forbes, "Sarah Orne Jewett, the Apostle of New England," Boston Evening Transcript, 16 May 1925, Sec. 6, p. 1; rpt. in Appreciation, p. 77.
Deephaven (1877), where the Widow Jim is defined by her "best room" (Dp p. 62) and respected in the town as "a very useful person" with great skill in sewing, cleaning, and nursing (Dp p. 61).

This complex of values surrounding home, work, and order continues to develop in the years after Deephaven. "A Late Supper" (1878) depends on an economic threat to the heroine's home and the way the home's comfort, created by her housekeeping skills, helps attract summer boarders and avert the crisis (OFN pp. 80-114). In "Stolen Pleasures" (ca. 1880) city-bred Hattie Webber signals her conversion to the country values the story approves by announcing, "you won't know me, I shall be such a smart housekeeper" (USS p. 43). Two delightful elderly sisters in "An Autumn Holiday" (1880) are first seen busily spinning yarn, and when they sit down to visit they begin (like most of Jewett's good housekeepers at rest) to knit, "for neither of them were ever known to be idle" (CB pp. 146-48). The ensuing conversation reveals the community expectations they are fulfilling, for a woman who prefers hypochondria to housework is criticized as "a drag" to her husband, and a pathetic elderly man whose failing mind led to ludicrous behavior is praised for his capacity, even in disability, to work "stiddy as any of the men" (CB pp. 149-60).

Two stories from 1883 provide a final view of the communal and psychological importance of work, home and order in Jewett's early settings. Miss Lydia Dunn in "A New Parishioner" has learned that an orderly life, including regular meals, is necessary if she is to avoid depression and "be any more use in the world." Useful work is important in her busy life, and even in her generous charity she does not
make "dependents and paupers" but rather provides work and pays for it (MD pp. 94-147). The Lear-like protagonist of "A Landless Farmer" has similar habits, and he receives a double blow when he is deprived of both home and work. Accustomed to "spend an almost untired strength and energy in the ceaseless round and routine of his work," without it he feels old and useless and for the first time senses the full impact of his wife's death (MD pp. 34-93). For Jewett home, work, and order are intimately related, and the ability to do work and create or preserve order is an important source of mental and emotional health.

In this view the home, in a rural community often the site of work for both men and women, becomes an integral part of the characters' psychological composition. From Deephaven (1877) on, Jewett shows an increasing appreciation of the significance of place in human thought and emotion. Several Deephaven characters are closely identified with their homes, and the pitifully insane Miss Chauncey is so linked to her ruined mansion that her death results from an attempt to return there in winter (Dp pp. 152-57). In "A Late Supper" (1878) and "A Bit of Shore Life" (1879) important characters care deeply for the homes in which they have been born or lived, and a passage from the second of these clarifies the close relationship between hard work and the love of place:

I was afraid no other house in the world would ever seem like home to her: she was a part of the old place; she had worn the doors smooth by the touch of her hands, and she had scrubbed the floors, and walked over them, until the knots stood up high in the pine boards. (OFN pp. 246-47)
The strength of love of place is also attested by its ability to last, for in "Miss Becky's Pilgrimage" (1881) a woman who has spent years in the West finds happiness when she returns to her native New England village, whose familiar scenes can still restore her spirits (CB p. 232). But familiar places are good only so long as they continue to reinforce and expand individual personalities, for the heroine of "Miss Manning's Minister" (1883), whose life has not called for use of her full abilities, has stayed in her childhood home only through lack of "the necessary energy of character . . . to break away" (USS p. 83). At this stage Jewett's understanding of the love of place is limited to her characters' relations with their homes, but it is nevertheless clear that she has begun to realize how vitally place can affect human development.

Miss Chauncey of Deephaven, with her pathetic and fatal love for the ruined elegance of her home, becomes a symbol not only for the values surrounding place but also for changes occurring in the basic social structure of Jewett's fictional world. Along with the Carews, Mr. Dorsey, the Lorimers, and the more ambiguous Widow Tully, Miss Chauncey represents the rural aristocracy, a class dying out because its families are childless or, like the family of the narrator's friend Kate, no longer belong to the region. Within a few years Deephaven will be "possessed by two classes instead of the time-honored three" (Dp p. 71).

This anticipated disappearance can be seen occurring in the sketches of the years after Deephaven. In "A Lost Lover" (1878) an
aristocratic lady is the protagonist, but the class is not seen again until it appears, in memory only, in "An October Ride" (1881). In "Miss Becky's Pilgrimage" (1881) prosperous farmers seem to form the rural upper class, associating and intermarrying with the families of the clergy. "River Driftwood" (1881) and "From a Mournful Villager" (1881) lament the passing of the village aristocracy (CB pp. 24-28 and 131-33), and thereafter in the first phase the class is entirely absent, with the possible exception of the minister and his bride in "Miss Manning's Minister" (1883). Paralleling this change is an increasing respect for the more rustic inhabitants of Jewett's world, who after "A Late Supper" (1878) have dignity and often a natural gentility. At the same time Jewett drops, with some regressions, the condescending attitude that mars Deephaven in such remarks as the narrator's reference to Mrs. Kew's bedroom, with its family pictures, as "devoted to the fine arts" (Dp p. 50).

The disappearance of the aristocracy is only one of the social changes Jewett records, and her attitude toward such change is considerably more approving than her often-quoted remark that "it is change that is so hard to bear," a remark actually made in a rather

private context,\textsuperscript{41} might seem to indicate. She often laments what change destroys, but she is fully aware of the realities of her time and she has no intention of rejecting all innovation. That change was a fact of her life is shown by Jay Martin's listing of seven areas in which marked change occurred between 1865 and 1914, dates which correspond very nearly to those of Jewett's career. Personal wealth was growing, cities were expanding, immigration brought in large numbers of new citizens, reform movements were growing and spreading to new areas, education was being widened, the pattern of thought imposed by science was gaining dominance, and technology was becoming "the American way of life."\textsuperscript{42} Such overwhelming changes could hardly be ignored, and although in her first-phase work Jewett does not yet make use of all of them, her awareness that change happens and can be good is clear.

Even in Deephaven the predominance of change in the larger society is recognized, and the constancy of the village itself is a matter for comment:

It seemed as if all the clocks in Deephaven, and all the people with them, had stopped years ago, and the people had been doing over and over what they had been busy about during the last week of their unambitious progress. (Dp p. 71)

\textsuperscript{41} "To Annie Fields," Saturday morning, [25 Mar. 1882], Letters, ed. Fields, p. 14. For one citation see Cary, Jewett, p. 19. The letter was written to console Mrs. Fields after the death of Longfellow, who had been a dear friend of hers and her late husband's. Jewett seems to regard Longfellow's death as another in a series of losses; Fields had died in 1881 and Jewett had lost her father in 1878. For an opposite view of Jewett's attitude to change see Eakin, pp. 203-08.

The world outside continues to change as it participates in the general movement of progress, but Deephaven, once a part of that change, is now exempt. Actually, however, the village cannot help changing in another direction. The "ruined wharves are fast disappearing," fishing boats are "slowly going to pieces" beside them, and the aristocratic upper class is dying out (Dp pp. 68-71). Whether or not she intends to do so, Jewett makes it very clear that life cannot stand still and must change in one direction or the other. Her sympathy, however, lies with former things, as a letter written about the time of Deephaven's publication shows:

Berwick itself is growing and flourishing in a way that breaks my heart, but out from the village among the hills and near the sea there are still the quietest farms, where I see little change from one year to another, and the people would delight your heart.

The publication of "A Late Supper" in 1878 seems to mark a shift in Jewett's attitude toward change. In that story the railroad, a symbol of technological innovation which had been twelve miles away in Deephaven (Dp p. 69), runs beside the heroine's house and assumes a central role. At first it seems to be a threatening image, for a train blocks the heroine's path and then, when she steps on board in order to get across, it carries her off with an inhuman disregard for her screams of "Stop! stop!" (OFN pp. 94-95). But the inhuman machine transports compassionate human beings, and because of her accidental

kidnapping Miss Spring meets the two women whose later arrival as boarders solves her financial crisis and relieves her loneliness as well (OFN pp. 110-12). The changes in Miss Spring's life turn out to be for the good, and the railroad is an agent of this beneficial change.

Most later first-phase stories do not make a point of recording change, but is is almost always part of the background, a necessary concomitant of Jewett's interest in the theme of mutability. "An Autumn Holiday" (1880), "An October Ride" (1881) and "River Driftwood" (1881) all emphasize the fact that the author's world is no longer what it once was, that change has been occurring. Although her subject is often the value of what change removes, Jewett's remarks usually imply an underlying conviction that change is primarily good. In "From a Mournful Villager," for example, there is "much to be said in favor of our own day," earlier life was "restricted and narrowly limited," and modern life implies "ease and comfort" reinforced by stimulating discoveries (CB pp. 119-20). Even a reference in "River Driftwood" to "the destroying left hand of progress" (CB p. 17) fits this pattern, since a "destroying left hand" implies the existence of a creative right one as well.

Not only does Jewett recognize the existence and advantages of social change, but upon occasion she suggests by her delineation of the social milieu that certain changes are needed. Earlier critics
frequently reproached Jewett for a complete avoidance of social criticism, but her portrait of rural poverty and desolation—particularly in the "In Shadow" section of *Deephaven* (1877) and in "A Bit of Shore Life" (1879)—obviously calls for some sort of remedy, a remedy toward which "A Guest at Home" (1882) tries unsuccessfully to lead.

More important, however, in the stories of this phase, is Jewett's concern with the social status of women, and particularly with the roles and restrictions imposed by marriage. In her earliest works, including *Deephaven*, there is only such implicit commentary on the subject as that suggested by the story of the Widow Jim's drunken husband (*Dp* pp. 66-67). Explicit discussion begins with "A Lost Lover" (1878), in which the heroine learns that what she has thought of as the tragic loss of a romantic young suitor was actually a providential deliverance from the "shame and despair" of marriage to a drunken beggar. Her faithful housekeeper does not know about the revelation, but a comment she makes sums up the story's apparent lesson: "I've heard it hinted that he was a fast fellow; and if a woman's got a good home like this, and 's able to do for herself, she'd better stay there. I ain't going to give up a certainty for an uncertainty" (*OFN* pp. 38-39 and 14-15). But with her memories of romance spoiled, the heroine suddenly grows old, and so the story's statement about love and marriage remains ambiguous.

For both a repetition of the charge and a partial exoneration that notes Jewett's recognition of "the evils of poverty" and her interest in conservation, see Eleanor M. Smith, "The Literary Relationship of Sarah Orne Jewett and Willa Sibert Cather," *NEQ*, 29 (1956), 472-92; rpt. in *Appreciation*, pp. 123-24.
Implicit commentary on women's lives appears in later stories, and in "From a Mournful Villager" (1881) Jewett ties the decline of front yards to the opening of wider spheres of opportunity for women (CB pp. 120-21). Her clearest first-phase discussion of the problem, however, and her most obvious call for a change in the social conventions of her time, comes in "Tom's Husband" (1882), a story which opens with an ironic comment on the expectations the conventions of romantic love set up for marriage:

But, as has been true in many other cases, when they were at last married, the most ideal of situations was found to have been changed to the most practical. Instead of having shared their original duties . . . they discovered that the cares of life had been doubled. (MD p. 210)

Newly married Tom and Mary Wilson discover that each of them prefers and feels better suited to the role society assigns to the other. Their logical decision that Tom will supervise the house while Mary runs the mill arouses surprisingly little adverse social pressure, and for a time all goes well. Eventually, however, they fall into the pattern of the overworked executive and the bored, harassed homemaker feeling like "a sort of pensioner and dependent" (MD 229-30). Tom, who feels as if he has "merged his life in his wife's," finally realizes what his mounting discontent means:

One day the thought rushed over him that his had been almost exactly the experience of most women, and he wondered if it really was any more disappointing and ignominious to him than it was to women themselves. "Some of them may be contented with it," he said to himself, soberly. "People think women are designed for such careers by nature, but I don't know why I ever made such a fool of myself." (MD p. 232)
This unusual insight gives Tom "a new, strange sympathy" for his mother, a sympathy which leads him to sit "for a long time" beside her grave (MD p. 233).

The story ends with a fiat, not a resolution, when Tom announces that they will spend the winter in Europe, and Mary, seeing "something more than decision" in his face, acquiesces (MD p. 233). There is no suggestion of what will happen when they return, but Jewett has shown clearly that for some personalities the socially defined role of the wife, even without any physical drudgery, is emotionally and psychologically untenable. Instead of reaffirming convention, as Cary suggests, the story calmly exposes its dehumanizing, paralytic effect, and a manuscript note in Jewett's hand makes it clear that her challenge to traditional patterns was both conscious and deliberate.  

Technique

Thus a social milieu that recognizes the importance of values, social structures, and social change supplements the depiction of the physical milieu presented by nature, country, and city to present a convincing fictional world as the background and subject of much of Jewett's work. This world, however, is not equally well drawn in all sketches, nor does the skill of its depiction increase in a steady

45 Jewett, p. 126. Anderson (pp. 158-60) recognizes the significance of the story but assumes that Tom and Mary return to traditional roles.

46 This fairly lengthy fragment, apparently written some years after the story appeared and sparked by something William Dean Howells had written, is with the Howells papers in the Houghton.
pattern. During her first phase Jewett's technique in dealing with setting develops erratically, so that she achieves some of her best effects in earlier stories, but there are traceable lines of development. A pattern of experimentation and inventory is visible in the first half of the phase, and throughout the period many of the sketches work toward a technical equilibrium among setting, plot, and characterization. Jewett is strongest when she is able to fuse realism with symbolism and setting with emotion, but in her first phase she only occasionally realizes these goals.

The settings used in the earlier part of the first-phase work, down through the essay-sketches of Country By-Ways (1880-1881), distinctly suggest that in this period Jewett was experimenting with setting, deciding what milieu she was to portray and how she was to approach it. Each of the six stories prior to Deephaven explores a particular possibility: rural England in "Jenny Garrow's Lovers" (1868), genteel Boston in "Mr. Bruce" (1869), the Gothic mode and the depiction of familiar places in "Lady Ferry" (ca. 1869), rural New England in "The Girl with the Cannon Dresses" (1870), historical perspective in "The Orchard's Grandmother," and physical facts as parallels to

47 Jewett said she wrote "Lady Ferry" when she was "about twenty." See Sarah Orne Jewett, "To Miss Sara Norton," 12 Nov. 1907, Letters, ed. Fields, p. 226. On the Gothic in the story see Cary, Jewett, pp. 97-98, and on its use of a real place see Sarah Orne Jewett, Letter to Annie Fields, Friday afternoon, Houghton. Much of Jewett's correspondence with Mrs. Fields is undated.

psychological events in "Miss Sydney's Flowers" (1874). Neither England nor the Gothic is very successful, but *Deephaven* (1877) and several later sketches adopt and improve upon all of the other tentative settings and techniques, with special emphasis going to the rural New England of "Cannon Dresses." The composite setting which begins to emerge resembles Jewett's own home region, and in the 1880-1881 essay-sketches she seems to pause, as one critic has said, for "an inventory of the literary materials provided by her native environment." "An Autumn Holiday" (1880), "An October Ride" (1881), "River Driftwood" (1881), "From a Mournful Villager" (1881), and "A Winter Drive" (1881) all appeared in a brief span, with the similar "Confessions of a Housebreaker" (1883) coming two years later in the next collection. All explore the natural or social life of Jewett's native region and its possibilities for literature. The recognition that such possibilities existed was important to Jewett professionally and personally, for it was the substance and fulfillment of her favorite realistic theory that life could be interesting anywhere. The *Country By-Ways* essays provided her with a primary milieu and inventoried its parts. There would continue to be change in the setting itself and in Jewett's attitudes toward it, but her period of wide experimentation was at an end.


50 Eakin, p. 208.
Achievement of the technical equilibrium implied by Jewett's habit of allowing setting to generate her characters and plots took longer. Deephaven experiments with an unusual narrative technique in which a setting already introduced seems literally to call up incidents and characters to animate it, and the same method is used again, with more success, in the Country By-Ways essays. A particularly good example occurs in "River Driftwood," where an old mansion brings up several stories, including that of a young girl watching for her lover from one of the dormer windows (CB pp. 17-18). Later in her career Jewett would use this technique again in sketches that were more story than essay, but during her first phase it functioned best in basically factual pieces like "River Driftwood."

Elements of setting also serve to supplement action by reinforcing the unity of a number of first-phase works. The clearest example of this is in Deephaven, where a number of disparate stories are joined by the obvious device of the village and the less obvious technique of continual references, even when the story moves inland, to the sea. All but one of the essays of the early 1880s use a physical journey of some kind as a unifying motif, and "From a Mournful Villager," which instead bases its unity on a single subject, takes changes in the village setting for that subject.

51 See Sister Mary Conrad Kraus, "The Unifying Vision of Sarah Orne Jewett," Diss. Notre Dame 1978, pp. 60-61, where Jewett's use of this technique in a later story is noted. Kraus sees it as a way of uniting past and present, but in Deephaven and Country By-Ways it seems to be a basic structural device.
Plots and characterization both are often strengthened by being set against the order of the seasons. Such symbolic use of natural phenomena is of course a common device, and as Michael Vella has pointed out, Jewett is in a long New England tradition when she uses it. She begins early, in "Lady Ferry" (ca. 1869), where the impression of unimaginable antiquity the title character conveys to the child protagonist is underscored by Jewett's description of her, even in summer, in fall and winter images (OFN p. 192). Such references are common in later works, with the seasons usually carrying the conventional associations of rebirth or renewed life for spring, growth and activity for summer, completion and finality for autumn, and old age and death for autumn or winter. A passage from "An Autumn Holiday" (1880), which is autumnal in themes as well as scenery, shows the life these rather worn symbolic meanings take on for Jewett:

I think the sadness of autumn, or the pathos of it, is like that of elderly people. We have seen how the flowers looked when they bloomed and have eaten the fruit when it was ripe; the questions have had their answer, the days we waited for have come and gone. Everything has stopped growing. And so the children have grown to be men and women, their lives have been lived, the autumn has come. We have seen what our lives would be like when we were older; success or disappointment, it is all over at any rate. Yet it only makes one sad to think it is autumn with the flowers or with one's own life, when one forgets that always and always there will be the spring again. (CB p. 141)

However familiar the ideas, clearly for Jewett the autumn-finality-old age association is a basis for actual thinking, not a stock comparison.

But seasonal imagery is only one of the ways setting relates to characterization in Jewett's works. Several of the first-phase stories suggest that character and environment have an underlying relationship that goes beyond technique. In "Lady Ferry" (ca. 1869) the narrator remarks that "we unconsciously catch the tone of every house in which we live," but she suggests also that the house takes its "tone" from the lives that fill it (OFN pp. 188-89). In "Miss Sydney's Flowers" (1874) a new street that opens a view of the heroine's conservatory to the public also opens her life to new influences, and the relationship is treated as a statement of literal cause and effect (OFN pp. 161-62). For Miss Dane in "A Lost Lover" (1878), "safe and orderly surroundings" have been a bulwark against sorrow and dishonor (OFN p. 39), while "Andrew's Fortune" (1881) extends these earlier ideas in its opening discussion of the blighting effect of the rigor of New England's winters on the lives of country people. The influence of setting on character is not, however, so strong or so final as to make Jewett a determinist, for "A Winter Drive" (1881) asserts that neither for trees nor for men is success "wholly a question of soil and location" (CB p. 168), and "A Dark Carpet" (1883) concludes with the statement that "our circumstances are given to us to use, as chances, and as tools; and as foundations for us to work and grow upon" (USS p. 65).

These ideas about the relations between place and character in reality form a basis for an extended use of details of setting in the
delineation of characters. One of the more interesting early examples is the way the Widow Jim in *Deephaven* is defined by the description of her "best room," which like her is plain and limited to "an exact sufficiency," but also has "a certain dignity." The proximity of four "mourning pieces" on its walls to a sampler worked in her hopeful youth reflects the pathos of the contrast between her early ambitions and a lifetime of disappointment (Dp p. 62). Nothing is unlikely or departs from the reality of a village parlor, but the room functions to reveal the character of its owner.

A similar use of realistic detail to disclose character occurs in "A Late Supper" (1878). Nothing could better reveal distress of mind in a good housekeeper than the difficulty Miss Spring has remembering a familiar recipe. "It was silly!—she had made them hundreds of times, and was celebrated for her skill" (OFN p. 93). When another good housekeeper, Miss Melinda Ryder of "The Mate of the Daylight" (1883), forgetfully lights the special white birch logs she uses to decorate her fireplace (MD p. 16), her mental agitation is equally obvious, and the fact that her father shares it is underlined by his strange failure to buy a fish: "it was seldom that a retired shipmaster in that port forgot to order his dinner" (MD p. 5). Equally successful in combining

53 See Rhode, *Setting*, pp. 115-17 and 135; and Warner Berthoff, "The Art of Jewett's Pointed Firs," NEQ, 32 (1959), 31-53; rpt. in *Appreciation*, p. 151. Both comment briefly on this phenomenon. See also Williams's suggestion (p. 176) that the relationship between place and person in Jewett is too basic to be seen as determinism.
realism and an extra meaning is the scene in "A Landless Farmer" (1883) where the "miserable confusion" of the protagonist's treasures after his daughter has sold the heirloom chest he kept them in (MD p. 65) reflects the misery and disorder into which the old man himself has fallen.

Thus by 1883, at the end of the period under discussion, Jewett's tendency to use realistic detail to parallel and reveal character was well established. Two further examples from the last months of the year emphasize the degree to which she had learned to make setting integral to the structure of her work. The heroine's final choice between two suitors in "The Hare and the Tortoise" is foreshadowed when the more punctilious admirer sends her beautiful hybrid roses with no fragrance, while her less conventional lover stops to pick a dandelion—her own and her author's favorite flower (USS p. 75). In "An Only Son," similarly, the protagonist's estrangement from his son is reflected in the run-down appearance of his farm and the drought that covers the countryside with dust, and after the two men are reconciled they make plans to pursue repairs and a thunderstorm breaks the drought (MD p. 188).

The way Jewett introduces heat and drought in the opening of "An Only Son" is interesting for the vividness of sensations felt through the senses of the characters:

It was growing more and more uncomfortable in the room where Deacon Price had spent the greater part of a hot July morning. The sun did not shine in, for it was now directly overhead, but the glare of its reflection from the dusty village street and the white house opposite was blinding to the eyes. At least one of the three selectmen of Dalton, who were assembled in solemn conclave, looked up several times at the tops of the windows, and thought they had better see about getting some curtains. (MD p. 149)
Later the depth of the drought indicated by the dust on the street is made clear in a conversation between two characters (MD p. 151). This technique of showing setting through the eyes of her characters is a valuable one for Jewett, and it can be seen developing as early as "The Orchard's Grandmother" (1871). The first sections of that story are ruined by the affectation of descriptive passages like the following:

It is one of the most delightful days that ever was. September, and almost too warm if it were not for the breeze that brings cooler air from the sea. Once in a while some fruit falls from the heavily-laden trees, and the first dead leaves rustle a little on the ground. The bees are busy, making the most of the bright day; for they know of the stormy weather coming. (USS p. 25)

Even more detail follows, but no living impression is created; the specifics are too unfocused, and the author is too obviously present. At the end of the story, however, a character's description of an old apple tree achieves both focus and distance:

It looks, and I guess it is, as old as any around here. My father always said it was brought from England in a flower-pot. . . . It's very shaky. The high winds last fall were pretty hard on it. It will never bear again, I am afraid. I set a good deal by the old thing. The very first thing I can remember is my father's lifting me up to one of the lower limbs. . . . (USS p. 32)

Jewett's ability to select details and avoid seeming to catalog them grows as her work matures. In "A Lost Lover" (1878) she creates an impression of a vividly drawn scene in a passage that actually contains only a few specifics: "Melissa was shelling peas at the shady kitchen-doorstep, and Nelly came strolling round from the garden, along the clean-swept flag-stones, and sat down to help her." (OFN pp. 11-12)
Peas, shade, doorstep, and flagstones are sparse details to create a scene from, but when they are joined to the ensuing conversation, with its occasional references to the work, they create an impression of reality. A passage from "An Autumn Holiday" provides more actual description, but close observation and literal and figurative animation of the scene help avoid a catalog effect:

The October sunshine lay along the clean kitchen floor, and Aunt Polly darted from her chair occasionally to catch stray little wisps of wool which the breeze through the door blew along from the wheels. There was a gay string of red peppers hanging over the very high mantel-shelf, and the wood-work in the room had never been painted, and had grown dark brown with age and smoke and scouring. The clock ticked solemnly, as if it were a judge giving the laws of time. . . . There was a bouquet of asparagus and some late sprigs of larkspur and white petunias on the table underneath, and a Leavitt's Almanac lay on the county paper, which was itself lying on the big Bible, of which Aunt Polly made a point of reading two chapters every day in course. (CB pp. 148-49)

The solemn ticking of the clock and the images of touch and smell implied by the breeze and the flowers exemplify another technique that becomes important in Jewett's portrayal of setting. In many of her best descriptive passages, appeals to senses other than sight play a noticeable role. In one case she describes the same scene in both a letter and a sketch, so that it is possible to observe her addition, for the imaginative work, of details that appeal to the senses of hearing and touch. Her description of the real experience, in a letter to a friend, is exclusively visual:

we got up before four o'clock and went out . . . about four miles . . . . after we were a little way out from land, the sun showed itself just above the water—pale red in a soft gray cloud and as
we went farther and farther out, the sea was growing silver colored with pink tops to every little wave. It was like a fairy story... I rowed most of the way out though part of the time we had the sail up to catch the little breeze and I tended that. It was a delicious morning—and it was such fun to see the trawls. We put out about half a mile of lines. 54

In "A Bit of Shore Life," however, visual details are augmented by appeals to several senses:

I remember there was a thin mist over the sea, and the air was almost chilly; but, as the sun came up, it changed the color of every thing to the most exquisite pink, -- the smooth, slow waves, and the mist that blew over them as if it were a cloud that had fallen down out of the sky. The world just then was like the hollow of a great pink sea-shell; and we could only hear the noise of it, the dull sound of the waves among the outer ledges.

We had to drift about for an hour or two when the trawl was set; and after a while the fog shut down again gray and close, so we could not see either the sun or the shore. We were a little more than four miles out, and we had put out more than half a mile of lines. (OFN p. 233)

Along with the replacement of the fanciful "like a fairy story" with the more realistic simile of a seashell, the introduction of aural and tactile imagery serves to make the fictional description here seem more vivid than the actual report.

Yet another important technique, one Jewett only occasionally brought herself to trust during her first phase, is summed up in her advice to an aspiring author that "There is no need to say anything about the bird, but just say it was there and let people feel what they

54 "To Anna Laurens Dawes," 7 July 1878, Letter 18, Hollis, pp. 131-32.
like about it." Apparently Jewett had received similar advice from her father, for in the front of her diary for the period when she was writing Deephaven she records, as if for easy reference, his admonition that a story should not make everything explicit, but should lead readers to supply a great deal for themselves. In the powerful "In Shadow" chapter of Deephaven, which is perhaps the most widely applauded production of the first phase of her career, Jewett created several striking passages by following this precept and allowing setting to express intense feeling. One example comes after the funeral procession of the defeated farmer moves out of sight. In the passage which follows, every word relates directly to physical setting, but the overwhelming effect is to express the desolation and despair of the funeral and of life in this isolated place, assailed by winter and the sea:

It was like a November day, for the air felt cold and bleak. There were some great sea fowl high in the air, fighting their way toward the sea against the wind, and giving now and then a wild, far-off ringing cry. We could hear the dull sound of the sea, and at a little distance from the land the waves were leaping high, and breaking in white foam over the isolated ledges. (Dp p. 148)

The aural images of the birds' cries and the sound of the sea join with a later reference to "the rattle of the wagon wheels" (Dp p. 148)


56 Inside front cover, MS. diary May 1871-Dec. 1879, Sarah Orne Jewett Collection, Houghton.

to create an extraordinarily vivid scene reinforced by the tactile image of the cold wind. A similarly intense impression is produced by the final paragraph of the chapter, in which "the padlock knocks--knocks against the door" (Dp p. 149). A few later passages, notably the breaking of the drought in "An Only Son" (MD p. 188), approximate this technique, but nowhere else during her first phase does Jewett use setting so effectively to construct an objective correlative for emotion.

At the end of the first segment of her career Sarah Jewett had established a creditable record in the depiction of setting. She had formulated a consistent view of nature that recognized and enjoyed its possibilities without ignoring its reality. She had avoided the trap of reductive dualism in her portraits of city and country, and although her interest had come to center on rural life she saw it realistically as neither a sylvan paradise nor a purgatory of poverty and degeneracy. In her portrait of the social milieu her vision was keen enough to perceive both the underlying values and patterns according to which her characters lived and the importance of place and social change in their lives. In technique her work between 1868 and 1883 had been uneven, but she had developed skills and methods in dealing with setting that occasionally showed the kind of work she was capable of doing. When Jewett initiated a new stage of her career by turning to the novels of 1884 and 1885, she was already an experienced author whose fictional world was well defined and coherently related to her favorite themes, and if she had not achieved technical consistency she had at least shown that she could exercise a considerable expertise.
THE SECOND PHASE: 1884-1895

The publication of *A Country Doctor* in 1884 and *A Marsh Island* in 1885 marked a new stage in Sarah Orne Jewett's portrayal of setting. Both were novels rather than sets of linked sketches, and each created a rural New England setting solid and extensive enough to sustain a full-length work. In the decade following 1885 Jewett returned to shorter works, publishing sixty-five stories and essays, many of which retained the widened view of country life the novels had established. Two other works of the period, *The Story of the Normans* (1887) and "The Old Town of Berwick" (1894), indicated a growing interest in history and historical processes, and a new (1893) preface for *Deephaven* looked back to the early days of her career.

The key characteristic of Jewett's second-phase work is the growing intellectual, emotional, and technical maturity shown in her depiction and control of setting. Her perceptions of nature and rural life become more realistic, while the city, earlier a major setting in its own right, is seen increasingly in relation to the country. Her view of the social milieu becomes more sophisticated and reflects her awareness of the changes New England was experiencing. In technique she evolves several new methods of achieving distance, but the major development is her growing skill and consistency in manipulating the same devices used in her earlier work. By the end of her second phase Jewett is a well
balanced, mature artist, and the changes in her fictional world reflect her developing themes.

Nature

While nature remains an important part of the second-phase settings, as Jewett's work matures her attitude toward natural scenes becomes less fanciful, realistic but compassionate in perception and detail. She uses nature more selectively, making it the primary setting in a smaller proportion of her stories, and when nature is her setting she draws it more realistically and less in conventional literary patterns. The result is an interplay between affection and accurate knowledge that produces the balance her contemporary Hamlin Garland described, in his 1894 manifesto *Crumbling Idols*, as essential to realistic art:

> ... landscape painting will not be fantastic so long as men study nature. It will never be mere reproduction so long as the artist represents it as he sees it. The fact will correct the fantasy. The artist will color the fact.

Jewett understands the facts about the natural environment, including the unpleasant ones, and she recognizes that it cannot meet all human needs, but at the same time she retains much of the Romantic respect and the affection for nature. In an 1890 letter she told a friend that "it is impossible not to be one's simple and natural self with nature,"

away from the "artificial conditions" of indoor life. But the artificialities are not to be deplored: "On the whole," she says, "I approve of them." In the second-phase works nature is often a powerful ally to man, reinforcing personality and meeting physical needs, but this Romantic view is tempered by a more realistic recognition of the vulnerability and occasional hostility that also characterize natural phenomena.

Jewett's idea that one must "be one's simple and natural self with nature" is reflected in the experiences of many of her characters who find in nature a companion to reaffirm their selfhood or a mentor to show them reality. Three of her heroines in works from the mid-1880s turn to nature at a crucial point and find there the courage to resist outside entanglements and go on with their own lives. The heroine of A Country Doctor (1884), for example, grows up with "no entertainments . . . except those the fields and pastures kindly spread before her admiring eyes," and when she returns home as a troubled young woman, her encounter with nature is like a visit to childhood friends:

... the birds which she startled came back to their places directly, as if they had been quick to feel that this was a friend and not an enemy, though disguised in human shape. At last Nan . . . went straight to one of the low-growing cedars, and threw herself upon it as if it were a couch. . . . the river sent a fresh breeze by way of messenger, and the old cedar held

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its many branches above her and around her most comfortably, and sheltered her as it had done many times before.

The familiar natural setting enables Nan to shake off the lethargy that has filled her since she finished school and to resolve to carry out her earlier plan of becoming a doctor. The nature that was her best companion in youth helps bring her back to herself at a moment of crisis.

Similarly, in A Marsh Island (1885), the heroine, Doris Owen, resumes her "half-outgrown childish love of wandering" at the moment she is most in danger of loving the wrong man. As she walks, the sun seems to brighten her mood, and she feels "pain and forboding" at the idea of leaving such scenes. Meanwhile her gratitude to the visitor who has taught her a better appreciation for natural beauty subtly puts the inappropriate suitor in his place as an outsider. When she finally meets him the tender inquiry whether she would like to live elsewhere evokes a definite "No, indeed," and a force he does not understand keeps him from proposing. The crisis has passed without any conscious formulation in Doris's mind, and her instinctive return to the nature she loved as a child seems to have kept her true to her own spirit and destiny.


5 Sarah Orne Jewett, A Marsh Island, 4th ed. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1886), pp. 176-83. This work will be cited in the text as MI.
In "A White Heron" (1886), one of Jewett's best-known stories, the same basic pattern is discernible, but the preservation of the heroine's self is identified with and subordinated to a challenge to her loyalty to the natural setting. Sylvia is so close to nature she seems almost identified with it, feeling "a part of the gray shadows and the moving leaves" at twilight and knowing the land and the animals so well "the wild creatures count her one o' themselves." Nevertheless she is attracted by the young ornithologist's offer of money and human companionship for help in finding the nest of an elusive white heron, and she sets out on a quest that threatens to end her "existence heart to heart with nature and the dumb life of the forest!" (WH p. 15). Nature seems to bless what could be a journey of betrayal, and Sylvia is granted, from the top of a huge pine, a vision of sea, ships, forest, "woodlands and farms" that is climaxed when the heron itself flies up "like a single floating feather" from its nesting place to a bough near her in the giant tree (WH pp. 16-18). To betray the bird to the hunter after this moment of identification in which they have "watched the sea and


7 Sarah Orne Jewett, "A White Heron," A White Heron and Other Stories (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1886), pp. 3-5 and 9. Textual citations will be identified as WH.
the morning together" would be to give up personal integrity along with loyalty to nature, and Sylvia chooses instead to sacrifice the chance of money and companionship (WH p. 21). The choice is correct, but Jewett is not blind to its cost, for she ends the story by wondering if the birds are "better friends than the hunter might have been" and urging nature to do its best for "this lonely country child!" (WH p. 22)

The same general pattern of nature as both companion and moral influence can be seen in later stories. As has been noted,8 nature becomes a third watcher in "Miss Tempy's Watchers" (1888), with the "companionable" spring wind buffeting the house and the nearby brook seeming to try "to make the watchers understand something that related to the past."9 The heroine of "An Every-Day Girl" (1892) gives the first evidence of a new pride and resolution by setting her yard in order for spring, and every member of the household, including even the boarder, seems to catch some of her new hope and strength from the little bit of natural beauty that results.10 In "A Neighbor's Landmark" (1894) two gigantic pine trees "remember all the Packers, if they . . . remember anything," and they have served as family friends for generations:


9 Sarah Orne Jewett, "Miss Tempy's Watchers," The King of Folly Island and Other People (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1888), pp. 211-12. This collection will be cited as KFI.

The first great adventure for a child was to climb alone to the great pines... and as the men and women of the family grew old, they sometimes made an effort to climb the hill once more in summer weather... The boys went there when they came home from voyages at sea; the girls went there with their lovers. The trees were like friends... Such a close relationship can be seen as the epitome of nature's role, in Jewett's second-phase works, as mentor and companion.

Further evidence of natural beneficence in Jewett's second phase comes in increasingly frequent references to herbal medicine and women expert in it. In the first phase such figures had been represented only by Deephaven's Mrs. Bonny, whose knowledge of herbs was made less impressive, and probably rendered useless to her neighbors, by housekeeping so slovenly that "the wise women of the town" would touch nothing from her kitchen. The new respect with which Jewett treats the herbalist Mrs. Goodsoe in "The Courting of Sister Wisby" (1887) may be an instance of her growing regard for ordinary country people, or it may reflect a new knowledge of herbal medicine. To Mrs. Goodsoe herbs can preserve "the valley of the whole summer's goodness," and "folks was meant to be doctored with the stuff that grew right about 'em" (KFI pp. 57-59). Herbs, in other words, are nature's provision for illness, and


in them the benefits of the stronger seasons can be preserved for hard times. A neighbor of the afflicted heroines of "In Dark New England Days" (1890) knows that herbs partake of the value of the season in which they are gathered, for she plans to make a cough remedy "quick's the ground's nice an' warm an' roots livens up a grain more,"¹³ and wise Aunt Hannah of "An Every-Day Girl" (1892) can prescribe an "infallible herb" for any illness from her "curious gift of instructive knowledge" (USS p. 188). By the end of her second phase Jewett's references to herbal medicine have become quite common, and the idea that nature supplies remedies for many human ills is well established.

Thus nature in Jewett's second-phase novels and sketches is often a powerfully beneficient force, providing companionship to human beings and ministering to their physical and psychological needs. But Jewett knew nature too well to see it as omnipotent or uniformly benevolent. Several of her sketches emphasize its need for protection, and many admit its indifferent or hostile face.

A number of second-phase sketches echo the earlier conservationist works like "A Winter Drive" (1881) in suggesting that in spite of its power nature can be harmed and must be protected by man. Writing as the conservation movement was beginning, in the same period that saw Roosevelt's Boone and Crockett Club founded (1887) and the authority

¹³ Sarah Orne Jewett, "In Dark New England Days," Strangers and Wayfarers (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1890), pp. 246-47. This collection will be cited as SW.
Jewett was well aware of the need to preserve nature and was herself a member of the Maine Forestry Association. In "A White Heron" (1886) she shows nature depending on the young heroine to banish the hunter and prevent his wanton destruction of the heron and its forest security. "The White Rose Road" (1889), an essay, comments on the damage badly managed industrial wastes do to "our clear New England streams" and inland fishing (SW pp. 277-78). In "A Neighbor's Landmark" (1894), as in "A Winter Drive," Jewett criticizes the lumber industry, associating bad timbering practices with avarice and aggression and making conservation a moral issue:

Ferris had driven a great many sharp bargains; he had plenty of capital behind him, and had taken advantage of the hard times, and of more than one man's distress, to buy woodland at far less than its value. More than that, he always stripped land to the bare skin; if the very huckleberry bushes and ferns had been worth anything to him, he would have taken those, insisting upon all or nothing, and regardless of the rights of forestry, he left nothing to grow; no sapling-oak or pine stood where his hand had been. The pieces of young growing woodland that might have made their owners rich at some later day were sacrificed to his greed of gain. (LN pp. 254-55)

In "A War Debt" (1895) too nature has been harmed by human actions; the trees of a ruined Virginia plantation still look "harrowed and distressed by war" even though a generation has passed since the fighting ended.


As Howard Mumford Jones points out, the recognition of nature's vulnerability did not come easily to Americans, with their long tradition of exploitation and worship of an indulgent nature. In Jewett's settings, however, nature's basic fragility is apparent, and that fact qualifies its role as benefactor and adversary.

The third facet of this triple ambiguity is the indifferent or hostile nature Jewett sometimes shows, a nature occasionally nearly as grim as that seen by naturalism. The winter-like fall weather of "Farmer Finch" (1885), for example, resembles "unmistakable and hopeless death," and sudden cold after a brief thaw has produced mud "like iron, rough and jagged" to jolt man and horse "cruelly." Even the trees, usually companionable in Jewett's world, form "a most unbending and heartless family, which meant to give neither shade in summer nor shelter in winter" (WH pp. 36-37). Although this initial impression of nature as a cruel and unbending force is modified by later events in the sketch, it is too memorable to be eclipsed entirely.

The cruelty underlying nature is also visible in A Marsh Island (1885). While this novel celebrates nature's harmony and beauty, it also portrays bare hills with "no reserve and no secret" and little shelter for any creature (MI p. 129). Even though the tides of the sea create a major part of the island-farm's natural rhythm, any field that slopes to windward is barren and infertile (MI p. 106), and the lives and futures of men who go to sea are endangered (MI pp. 240 and 241).
267). From the imagined perspective of the crow, men in nature are "helpless creatures . . . not worth noticing" as they crawl "to and fro on the face of the earth" (MI p. 242).

The danger of the sea is a frequent reminder of nature's potential maleficence. In "By the Morning Boat" (1890) Maine coastal homes and the women in them "face the sea apprehensively" (SW p. 197), aware of its ability to sweep away both home and family. Characters who have lost husbands, brothers, or sons to the sea are common, and "Decoration Day" (1892), like the earlier "Mate of the Daylight" (1882), mentions that memorial stones frequently replace graves for bodies never recovered.17

Indifference or hostility occasionally characterizes parts of nature other than the sea. The winter weather foreseen by "a horror-stricken little maple" (KFI p. 51) in "The Courting of Sister Wisby" (1887) almost kills the heroine of "Mrs. Parkins's Christmas Eve" (1890-91), revealing to her and her neighbors a "merciless and furious face of nature" in light of which security is impossible (USS p. 156). In "The Town Poor" (1890) nature is a poor substitute for human warmth and companionship, and in "The White Rose Road" (1889) the sound of a brook seems to mock at the sickness and trouble its own marsh has caused (SW p. 266). In the same sketch "a distrust of the deep woods" results from "defenselessness against some unrecognized but malicious influence"

17 Sarah Orne Jewett, "Decoration Day," A Native of Winby and Other Tales (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1893), p. 49. Further citations will be identified as NW.
(SW p. 259), and a similar image, repeating the fear of encroaching forests seen in Jewett's first phase, appears in the woods that "besiege" (NW p. 41) village and farm in "Decoration Day" (1892). Jewett's recognition of nature's "cruel duplicity"\(^{18}\) thus continues in her second phase.

The hostility and vulnerability that qualify the beneficence of natural settings in Jewett's second-phase work represent a realistic modification of the nature worship common in Romantic literature. Jewett knew real nature well, having grown up in close association with natural scenes around Berwick\(^{19}\) and developed, as a doctor's daughter, an interest in science that lasted throughout her life.\(^{20}\) As early as "River Driftwood" (1881) she had given indications that an awareness of evolution and the struggle for survival would temper her response to natural beauty. The natural settings in her second-phase novels and sketches show both that she has assimilated her period's most advanced ideas about the vulnerability of nature and that she recognizes the hostility of nature as seen in recent scientific theories and in New England winters. Balancing these facts against the beauty and

\(^{18}\) The phrase is Cary's. See Jewett, p. 31.


beneficence she also sees in nature results in realism that is affectionate but also honest.

**Country**

A similar combination of growing affection and realistic appraisal appears in Jewett's second-phase portraits of country settings. As in earlier sketches, rural life continues to mean hardship and deprivation, but these disadvantages are increasingly offset by an appreciation of rural advantages that at times seems almost agrarian. Perhaps because she herself began to live a more cosmopolitan life during this period, Jewett also becomes increasingly aware of the value of the rooted sense of place rural people often possess. She seems, perhaps, to have come to terms with rural life in her own experience, and her country settings add to their honest portrayal of suffering an extra dimension that explains why some people choose to remain.

Rural life in the works written between 1884 and 1895 is often lonely and hard, particularly on remote farms. In "A White Heron" (1886), for example, Sylvia and her grandmother enjoy relative comfort in spite of poverty and loneliness, but theirs is "the best thrift of an old-fashioned farmstead," and the young hunter has more often seen rural New England's "most primitive housekeeping, and the dreary squalor of that level of society which does not rebel at the companionship of hens" (WH pp. 7-8). A clear reminder that the price of rural peace is often hardship also comes in the essay-sketch "The White Rose Road" (1889), for although its farmhouses look "serene and placid," they are really reminders of "the sorrows of these farms and their
almost undiverted toil" (SW pp. 262-63). On one, for example, "Every
generation has toiled from youth to age without being able to make much
beyond a living. . . . and sickness and death have often brought their
bitter cost" (SW p. 263). Jewett's concluding remark that "I have
seldom spent an afternoon so full of pleasure and fresh and delighted
consciousness of the possibilities of rural life" (SW p. 279) has been
attacked as evidence that her privileged social and economic position
kept her from any real understanding of rustic hardship, but the
harsh reality of the portrait she has just drawn contradicts that
argument.

After 1890 Jewett places less emphasis on general rural hardship,
but poverty and loneliness continue to lurk in the background of many
country sketches. The sufferings of the Bray sisters in "The Town
Poor" (1890) results from their prosperous neighbors' insensitivity,
but farther north in the town of Parsley there is less prosperity
because "the farms is very poor" (SW p. 37), and the "starved-lookin'
place" (SW p. 44) where the unfortunate sisters are lodged sounds
scarcely better:

. . . beyond a thicket of witch-hazel and scrub-oak, they came in
sight of a weather-beaten, solitary farmhouse. The barn was too
far away for thrift or comfort, and they could see long lines of
light between the shrunken boards. . . . The fields looked both
stony and sodden. (SW p. 38)

21 Paul John Eakin, "Sarah Orne Jewett and the Meaning of Country
Life," AL, 38 (1967), 508-31; rpt. in Appreciation, p. 213. See also a
This poverty is partly due to shiftlessness (SW p. 40), but in "By the Morning Boat" (1890) even the family's industrious work can do little with an unproductive seaside farm, and the hero's mother looks at the fields "almost angrily" as she muses that "if the land was good for anything" her family might stay together (SW p. 215).

The suggestion in "A Native of Winby" (1891) is that even when country life is reasonably comfortable the maintenance of comfort requires an effort that would bring greater rewards elsewhere. Abby Hender, a widow who "has kept her youthful looks through the difficulties of farm life as few women can" (NW p. 29), has achieved modest prosperity by investing "as much industry and power of organization . . . as would have made her famous" in a larger context (NW pp. 31-32). Her old schoolmate, now a senator, is surprised at "her comprehension of difficult questions of the day" (NW p. 30), and he admires the dedication that has found the money to assemble a small library to broaden "her own narrow boundaries" (NW p. 33). Clearly Mrs. Hender is wasted on such a limited world, and the fact that the story emphasizes rural kindness, friendship, and homely comfort does not cancel the background of limitation and deprivation. Later stories of the 1890s share this pattern of emphasizing rural assets without denying liabilities.

As the work of her second phase develops Jewett turns away from rural hardship as a theme even though she continues to recognize its harsh reality. She increasingly focuses instead on rural life's compensations, and she recognizes that they go beyond the closeness to nature and precarious sense of community she had shown in her first
phase. That farming itself can be a source of satisfaction becomes one of her minor themes, leading her at times into a mild agrarianism, and her growing understanding of love of place helps her appreciate the hold a farm or a rural village may have on its inhabitants. By 1884 Jewett was thirty-five, old enough to have outgrown the youthful rebellion against village life seen in her diary for the 1870s. Friendship with Annie Fields had also made Boston her second home and given her widened access to the literary world there and in Europe. Greater experience may have helped her see the good in rural life as well as the bad, and the more cosmopolitan life she herself now led must have made it easier for her to look beyond rural limitations and see what country life could offer.

There is a hint of Jewett's new appreciation of the pleasant side of rural existence in the contentment and pride the Dyer brothers of A Country Doctor (1884) find in farming. Its first explicit statement, however, comes in "Farmer Finch" (1885), where Polly Finch declares that "I always had a great knack at making things grow, and I should never be so happy anywhere as working out-doors and handling a piece of land" (WH p. 64). Her plans to take over her ailing father's farm help her through a hard winter, and her character enjoys "as good a summer's growth as anything on her farm" (WH p. 84) when her industry


23 See Frost, pp. 60-64.
and forethought make her crops succeed. To this suggestion that virtue comes from working the soil Jewett adds an equally agrarian view of farming itself:

There is something delightful in keeping so close to growing things, and one gets a great sympathy with the life that is in nature, with the flourishing of some plants and the hindered life of others, with the fruitfulness and the ripening and the gathering-in that may be watched and tended and counted on one small piece of ground. (WH p. 81)

"Farmer Finch" shares the theme of making the best of life where one is with the first-phase sketch "A Guest at Home" (1882), but honest success in real rural pursuits has replaced the spurious declaration that city leisure can be grafted onto rural struggles.

A Marsh Island (1885), with its celebration of the primal rhythms nature imposes on country ways, carries this theme further. A character who is both a blacksmith and a farmworker thinks that he "would rather handle a good smooth live field and make it do its best than a lump of dirty dead iron" (MI p. 159). In the same novel the aristocratic urban visitor comes to realize that his is "an accident, an ephemeral sort of existence," while the life of the island-farm is "a permanent institution" (MI p. 289). Permanence is also a part of farming in "The Mistress of Sydenham Plantation" (1888), where Jewett suggests fundamental sympathy between free men and the fields they till:

It had a look of permanence, this cotton-planting. It was a thing to paint, to relate itself to the permanence of art, an everlasting duty of mankind; terrible if a thing of force and compulsion and for another's gain, but the birthright of the children of Adam, and not unrewarded norunnatural when one drew by it one's own life from the earth. (SW pp. 28-29)
Several stories of the 1890s extend these expressions of what Jewett called "the truth . . . that one gets something out of simple country life in the green fields that one never does anywhere else!" The hero of "A Financial Failure: The Story of a New England Wooing" (1890) prefers "free life and out-of-door air" to his promising place in a local bank, and he cannot break his ingrained "habit of planning farm work" (USS pp. 158-59). The parents of the heroine of "An Every-Day Girl" (1892) "never ought to have left the farm" in search of advantages for their daughter, and the father's farm-like work in his garden gives him dignity and comfort when urban manufacturing declares him worthless (USS pp. 190 and 199). Farming again promotes mental health in the Civil War story "Peach-tree Joe" (1893), where a patriotic but nervous boy, "naturally . . . of a farming turn," finds temporary solace in caring for a little peach tree in a military encampment (USS pp. 203-04).

The nascent agrarianism of Jewett's second phase culminates in "The Hiltons' Holiday" (1893). With his self-respecting independence and his admiration for learning, John Hilton might be a pattern for the sturdy democratic farmer of agrarian tradition. He and his father before him have "given the industry and even affection of their honest lives" to their fields, and he seems almost "a creature of the shady woods and brown earth" (LN p. 97). One critic has suggested that the

story's final paragraph makes Hilton and his family a sort of rural prototype, but the diction and imagery Jewett uses actually seem broad enough to make these farm people represent the essential human family, rural or urban:

It was evening again, the frogs were piping in the lower meadows, and in the woods, higher up the great hill, a little owl began to hoot. The sea air, salt and heavy, was blowing in over the country at the end of the hot bright day. A lamp was lighted in the house, the happy children were talking together, and supper was waiting. The father and mother lingered for a moment outside and looked down over the shadowy fields; then they went in, without speaking. The great day was over, and they shut the door. (LN p. 127)

Jewett's new understanding of the benefits of farming as a way of life is complemented by her widening appreciation of the hold a farm or a rural village may have on the affections of its people. Such emotions had been limited to houses among the first-phase sketches, but beginning with A Country Doctor (1884) the love of place is more broadly defined. The reactions of the heroine of that novel to her dead father's home seem to suggest that love of place may even be inherited, for she feels "unreasonably at home" in the town, and the old church seems "to have been waiting all her life for her to come to say her prayers" (CD pp. 228-29).

That the period's second novel, A Marsh Island (1885) should also affirm the importance of place is hardly surprising, for Jewett wrote that its inspiration came from a real place:

25 Eakin, p. 205.
Choate Island suggested the island itself, but I never went there until . . . long after the story was finished. It was seeing it in the distance or perhaps earlier still noticing an 'island farm' near Rowley from a car window, on the Eastern railroad, that gave me my first hint of the book.28

Place becomes a central motif for the entire novel. Israel Owen, whose family has lived on the farm for two hundred years (MI p. 39), is first seen ignoring the fatigue of a long day to view "the old place" at its best in a glorious sunset (MI p. 13). His love for the farm is shared by his daughter Doris. "She'll never want to leave the farm" a friend remarks. "I never see anybody have such a passion for anything as she has for the old place" (MI p. 148). Dan Lester, who shares these feelings, is an appropriate suitor (MI p. 199), but Dick Dale, who continually sees the farm as a "picturesque bit of country" (MI p. 12), is not, and eventually Dick himself realizes that it would be wrong to "take Doris away from her own world" (MI p. 205). The terms in which Dan and Doris are described at the end of the novel reiterate the bond between their love of place and their love for each other: "They could not imagine anything better than life was that very day on their own Marsh Island" (MI p. 292).

The later sketches of the second phase further expand this new understanding of the love of place by exploring the psychological and moral influence of place and the relationship between place and memory. Place has such significance because one cannot be truly oneself, or

maintain a proper value system, in an alien setting. The moral impact of place is shown by what happens to the heroine of "The Growtown 'Bugle'" (1888) when she allows enthusiasm for a new town in Kansas to take all her attention away from her own village. Dreaming of gains and growth in a place she knows only by hearsay, she allows her nearest neighbors to die of sickness and malnutrition. "Her neighbors had starved within the sound of her voice, while she made money and took thought of those at a distance. She never had felt so poor in her life . . . " (USS p. 131). For Mercy Bascom of "Fair Day" (1888), return to a familiar place means reconciliation; a visit to the farm where she reared her children leads to a "comfortable feeling of relationship to her surroundings" and puts her "into a most peaceful state" in which she resolves to end a long quarrel with a former schoolmate (SW pp. 131-32). To be out of one's proper place, physically or mentally, may be to have one's values disarranged, and the return to place becomes a return to moral clarity.

The love of place and the ability of place to influence values are closely related to the interaction between place and memory. Mrs. Bascom sees her farm and its house as a tangible remnant of a happy time in her life (SW pp. 129-34), and "Mary and Martha" (1885) contains a particularly clear statement of the link between place and memory:

Mary loved every blade of grass on their fifth part of an acre; she loved even the great ledge that took up part of their small domain, and made the rest scorched and dry in midsummer. It seemed to her, if she had to leave the house, that she must give up, not only seeing the sunsets, but the memory of all the sunsets she could remember. (WH p. 184)
Her new understanding of the power and significance of the love of place helps Jewett to understand that even the scene of loneliness and terribly hard work, like the farm where Mrs. Bascom lived as a widow, may be beloved. It also gives her a new appreciation of the pain involved in emigration of any sort. In Jewett's second-phase works the country people who leave for the city to seek opportunity are in some ways like the Irishmen and French Canadians who have come to the United States for the same reason. In spite of her recognition of the possibilities they discover, Jewett remembers that immigrants are first emigrants, and in several sketches she movingly depicts the pain of leaving one's accustomed place. An exciting new home is no pleasure to the heroine of "Going to Shrewsbury" (1889): "You might as well set out one o' my old apple-trees on the beach, so 't could see the waves come in, -- there would n't be no please to it" (SW p. 141). In "By the Morning Boat" (1890) a grandfather emphasizes the difficulty of leaving home when he encourages a boy's mother to fix a special breakfast on the morning of his departure: "He 'll think o' his breakfast more times 'n you expect. I know a lad's feelin's when home's put behind him" (SW p. 202). In the sketches about Irish immigrants, departures are still more painful. Mike Bogan of "The Luck of the Bogans" (1889), the first of the Irish stories, cuts a square of Irish sod to carry with him to the new land because he is leaving the place where his family has lived for generations, the place where all his memories are:
The golden stories of life in America turned to paltry tinsel, and a love and pride of the old country, never forgotten by her sons and daughters, burned with fierce flame on the inmost altar of his heart. It had all been very easy to dream fine dreams of wealth and land-ownership, but in that moment the least of the pink daisies that were just opening on the roadside was dearer to the simple-hearted emigrant than all the world beside. (SW pp. 84-85)

However hard life may be in Ireland or on an isolated farm, love of place is a deep and abiding emotion, and the decision to leave one's place cannot be easy.

By the end of her second phase Jewett has begun to portray farming as a satisfying, independent way of life that keeps its practitioners close to basic human values and allows them the benefits of a rooted sense of place. Her earlier realistic recognition of rural hardships continues, but it is now balanced by an equally realistic understanding of the offsetting compensations country life affords.

City

Although the city becomes considerably less important as a physical setting during Jewett's second phase, it continues to play a major role as a counterpoint to the country in many of the sketches. Figures who represent urban values—usually city visitors but sometimes returning rural emigrants—are increasingly prominent,27 and the city continues to represent a way of life different from, and often complementary to, the life of the farm. Its image becomes more complex, since while it remains a source of opportunity, it becomes at times a place of moral

or economic danger for its inhabitants. For the country, however, the urban influences brought home by travelers or extended by city visitors are uniformly good, and the city in Jewett's second phase remains ambiguous, not evil.

The "new association and dependence" enjoyed by city and country after the Civil War seemed to Jewett by 1893 to have been her primary motive in the early stages of her career. In her preface added to *Deephaven* that year, she remembered writing out of "a dark fear that townspeople and country people would never understand one another."

City visitors who knew only Yankee stereotypes and understood nothing of country ways filled the young author with foreboding:

> It seemed not altogether reasonable when timid ladies mistook a selectman for a tramp, because he happened to be crossing a field in his shirt sleeves. At the same time, she was sensible of grave wrong . . . when these same timid ladies were regarded with suspicion, and their kindnesses were believed to come from pride and patronage. (Dp pp. 31-32)

Jewett's disquiet is easy to understand in light of articles like that in the *Nation* for 1887 which concludes, "These are a few of the simple lessons which the bucolic mind in time will master. . . . " "Bucolic minds" might well resent this kind of patronage, and such an attitude would no doubt misinterpret rural ways. Comments from nearer

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28 See also Sarah Orne Jewett, "To Louisa Loring Dresel," 10 Mar. [1893], Letter 21, in Cary, "Jewett to Dresel," p. 38. (Date supplied by Cary.) Jewett expressed these ideas in several places, but all of them seem to cluster around 1893.

29 "Country Living for City People," *Nation*, 44 (1887), 205.
the time of Deephaven (1877) suggest, however, that Jewett's preoccupation with city visitor and country host may have been stronger when she wrote the preface (1893) than when she wrote the book. At some time before 1882 Jewett wrote to a friend that in Deephaven she intended to "help people look at 'commonplace' lives from the inside instead of the outside," to see virtues and truth "where at first sight there is only roughness and coarseness and something to be ridiculed." The intent to defend is the same, but the division into city and country is missing. By 1893 Jewett thought in terms of city-country understanding because she herself divided her life between the two, but Deephaven does not really reflect that orientation, and the city visitor who is solely a paying guest becomes a major figure in her stories only after her second phase begins.

The purely commercial city visitors described in the 1893 preface appear only once in the first phase, in "A Late Supper" (1878). One of the two young lady visitors in Deephaven is descended from a prominent family of the town, and she and her friend stay in a family home and take up an inherited social position (Dp p. 55). "Good Luck" (1879) repeats this pattern, while in "Cannon Dresses" (1870) the city-bred narrator spends the summer with an old family servant. The second phase, on the other hand, begins with a sketch, "The Becket Girls' Tree"

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30 Quoted from a letter to Prof. Theophilus Parsons in Matthiessen, p. 51. Matthiessen gives no date, but he implies that the letter is from the Deephaven period; at any rate, it must have been written before Parsons's death in 1882.
(1884), about rural characters who derive important income from providing services and building lots for summer vacationers (USS pp. 91-92), and thereafter the stream of city visitors, which Jewett saw as a "reflex current" (Dp p. 31) to the flow of country emigrants to the city, becomes part of the impact of urban values on the rural world.

Although she lamented some of the changes country people themselves made with the money their new guests brought, Jewett made it clear that the influx of city visitors was good for the country. "It has certainly been a great means of broadening both townsfolk and country folk," she wrote. "I think nothing has done so much for New England in the last decade." Visitors brought "both thought and money," and the result had been an "enlargement and great gain" in New England life. In the second-phase fiction many stories dramatize city visitors as a source of economic and cultural improvement. In "The Becket Girls' Tree" (1884) the sale of building lots has made "a worthless pasture next the sea" a source of wealth, and the child-protagonists' lives have been enriched by the knowledge and affection of a Sunday-school teacher from the city (USS p. 92). A new hotel in the country gives the heroine of "An Every-Day Girl" (1892) a chance to earn money with her homemaking skills and helps make it possible for

31 See, for example, an essay on "Deplorable Improvements" in the "Contributors' Club," Atlantic Monthly, 49 (1882), 856-57. Cary identified Jewett as the author in "Some Bibliographical Ghosts of Sarah Orne Jewett," CIQ, 8 (1968), 141. See also the 1893 Deephaven preface, pp. 32-33.

her country-bred parents to return to rural life (USS pp. 179-201). The economic stimulus visitors provide to rural regions is more explicitly presented in "The Life of Nancy" (1895), where the building of several summer houses gives a "fine effect and impulse to the local market" (LN p. 39). Thus the new influx of city visitors means opportunity and growth in the rural economy and brings cultured and sympathetic neighbors into the rural environment.

Of course the benefits are not all to the country people, and the city visitors gain not only from being in the more natural rural environment but also from knowing their country hosts. The heroine of "An Every-Day Girl" (1892), after a summer's experience working in a hotel, explains that the visitors want and need to know the natives of the area: "It makes 'em have a great deal better time up here to know somebody on the farms, and be asked in and taken notice of" (USS p. 201). A specific example of such interaction is shown in "The Life of Nancy" (1895), where the members of the Aldis family are "most affectionately befriended by their neighbors," and their youngest child learns "confidence and ambition," which city instructors have failed to impart, when a skilled rural dancing teacher takes him in charge. Such examples clearly illustrate the mutual enrichment Jewett envisioned in the 1893 *Deephaven* preface:

... town life will ever have in its gift the spirit of the present, while it may take again from the quiet of hills and fields and the conservatism of country hearts a gift from the spirit of the past. (DP p. 33)
The reciprocal benefits to be derived by city visitors and rural hosts are particularly clear in the novel "A Marsh Island" (1885), in which the visitor motif generates and organizes the entire plot. Randall R. Mawer has pointed out that city-bred Dick Dale and the rural Owen family both learn from their encounter, and that much of the mild action of the novel comes from their initial failure to recognize the precise meaning of their lessons. The Owens do not need Dick's money; they are "noways obliged to keep boarders" and take him in primarily because he has "a pleasant way" and resembles their dead son (MI p. 28). They do, however, derive economic benefit from supplying hay to a nearby seaside estate, and "a pleasant bond of interest and respect" already links them to that urban family (MI p. 243). Dick contributes to their lives in a different way. His cultured, artistic view of their farm gives them new insight into the beauty around them, and his habits draw them toward wider horizons: "He was a revelation ... in many ways, with his knowledge of books and his love of nature" (MI pp. 177 and 196). The benefits he derives from his rural visit are even greater, for he takes home "a new respect for his own life and its possible value" (MI p. 290), and the pictures he has painted make up a very successful exhibition (MI p. 292). City visitor and country hosts all lead richer lives because of the time they have spent together.

The city visitor is thus both benefactor and benefited, and by his agency the city continues to serve as a source of opportunity for

country inhabitants. The image becomes more complex than in Jewett's first phase, however, for now the country also has social benefits to offer, and visitors may not only relieve rural loneliness but find companionship for themselves. A similar new complexity enters the image of the country as a source of health as the second-phase works progress. Characters in *A Country Doctor* (1884), "The Hiltons' Holiday" (1893), and "In a Country Practice" (1894) gain health from rural surroundings, and "A Garden Story" (1886) and "Miss Esther's Guest" (1890) both describe the health and happiness poor people from the city find during a charitable "Country Week" (NW p. 166). But though the country provides a more healthful life it cannot make the best medical help available, and "The King of Folly Island" (1886), "The Flight of Betsey Lane" (1893), and "The Life of Nancy" (1895) all have characters who need the help of urban doctors and techniques.

The same complexity appears when Jewett reverses her usual situation and depicts country people who pay brief visits to the city. Sometimes, as in "The Life of Nancy" (1895), a country visitor finds a revelation of beauty and proportion, "a measure to live by" (LN p. 35). But other visits do not turn out so well. Cary points out that the deceptions suffered by naïve countryfolk in "The Dulham Ladies" (1886) and "Fame's Little Day" (1895) show the "heartless" villainy possible in the city. It is worth noting, however, that neither the

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34 The initial publication of this story is identified by Cary in "Jewett to Dresel," p. 26n.

35 *Jewett*, p. 44.
Dobin sisters nor the Pinkhams seem likely to suffer the humiliation of knowing that they have been duped. In the case of the Pinkhams it even seems likely that the city reporter's joking paragraph is a good thing, for when they begin to feel important, their "happy increase of self-respect" (LN p. 59) allows them to enjoy and appreciate New York, and the reporter who plays the joke decides to see to it that their neighbors hear of and believe in their new "fame" (LN p. 59).

More truly damaging to the image of the city is its failure to live up to Mrs. Pinkham's mental image of a "metropolis of dignity and distinction, of wealth and elegance" (LN p. 47). If the city is to represent economic and cultural opportunity to the country, it ought to provide the same possibilities for its own inhabitants, but it does not. Even though Jewett is not primarily interested in portraying the city, she does show the plight of the orphaned Peggy in "A Garden Story" (1886), and the visitor in "Miss Esther's Guest" (1890) is Mr. Rill, who has been "getting stiffer and clumsier than need be" in the pinched life of his city garret (NW p. 167). Two other stories go further. "The Luck of the Bogans" (1889) describes the struggles of an Irish couple who have come to a city in the "golden country of hard work" primarily for the sake of their children (SW pp. 88-90). Economically they prosper, but their only son falls into bad company and habits in the city and dies in a drunken brawl (SW pp. 92-115). Another kind of urban danger is seen in "The Failure of David Berry" (1891), the story of a good and gentle craftsman ruined by urban growth and his creditors' rapacity (NW pp. 109-36). Such portraits create an image of the city as
an abyss of vice and inhumanity where the weak and the good are swallowed up in spite of hard work or native virtue. It is an image that conflicts with the vision of the city as a place of economic and cultural opportunity, but the inconsistency is less in Jewett's work that in her age's dual stereotype of the city as a place of exciting opportunity but also a place of sin and danger. 36

In spite of its growing ambiguity, however, the city remains a refuge for the rural dispossessed and continues to offer considerable opportunities to those with the rural virtues of hard work and inventiveness. Jewett's attitude toward young people who emigrate to find a wider field of action becomes particularly clear in A Country Doctor (1884), where she says that those whose ambition makes them leave the decaying village of Dunport for the city or the West are "the more enterprising" young people. George Gerry, a young lawyer who has remained at home, has some real "excuses," but "there is no question whether it would not have given his family greater happiness and done himself more good" if he had been "possessed of the stern determination which wins its way at all hazards" (CD pp. 287-88). Those who do have the ambition to leave are still likely to succeed. In "A Business Man" (1886) young William Chellis and his wife, who retain "the simple ways of country folks," seem likely to win places in the city. In

spite of her reluctance to leave the farm Mrs. Peet in "Going to Shrewsbury" (1889) finds a comfortable home with nieces, and later she objects to a proposed return to rural life because in leaving the city "they would miss too many privileges" (SW p. 154). Even "Fame's Little Day" (1895), with its apparent suggestion that country people are likely to be gulled in the city, contains two examples of country boys who have done well, the business associate who receives the Pinkhams (LN pp. 51-52) and the reporter who announces their visit (LN p. 59).

Thus in Jewett's second-phase work the city functions less as a physical setting than as a source of visitors and a place country people may move to or visit. Its image becomes somewhat ambiguous, although the portrait of the unpleasant side of city life never approaches the bitterness of the aberrant first-phase sketch "Stolen Pleasures" (ca. 1880). The city may at times be a place of moral or economic danger, and for many people country life, in Jewett's growing appreciation of it, is safer. The ambitious young, however, still find opportunity in the urban environment, and the city's influence on the country is almost entirely good, whether it is brought home by rural tourists like the heroines of "The Flight of Betsey Lane" (1893) and "The Life of Nancy" (1895) or extended by city visitors spending the summer in the country.

Society

Jewett's second-phase settings also depict an increasingly complex social milieu. The rural communities she creates have a social fabric that offsets rural loneliness and boredom, paralleling in human
relationships her new understanding of the affection rural people have for farming and the land. Her social settings also recognize the changes that marked her times, showing the moral and numerical dwindling of the rural aristocracy and the increasing cosmopolitanism of a New England influenced by other regions and altered by a stream of immigration. Jewett's belief in progress explains her acceptance of this change, and her scattered social criticism shows that she was sometimes willing to urge it.

Since the rural world of Jewett's second phase grows from that of her first, it is not surprising that the earlier communal values associated with work, order, and the home continue to be important. Most of her fiction contains some approving reference, by narrator or character, to diligent work or a well-run home. In "Marsh Rosemary" (1886), for example, "the clean orderliness" of Ann Floyd's home seems to be one reason for Jerry Lane's attraction to her (WH p. 91), and "the comfort that came from such good housekeeping" helps to account for his initial good behavior after their marriage (WH pp. 98-99). When he has deserted her and married another woman, the snug good housekeeping she sees through the window has a part in dissuading Ann from exposing him (WH p. 121), and in her sorrow and humiliation her own familiar home seems "full of blessed shelter and comfort" (WH p. 121). Another example is Tempy Dent of "Miss Tempy's Watchers" (1888), who has not only kept her own house well but also used her homemaking skills to earn "most of her livin'" by helping others so enthusiastically as to make herself indispensable:
None o' the young folks could get married without her, and all the old ones was disappointed if she wa'n't round when they was down with sickness and had to go. An' cleanin', or tailorin' for boys, or rug-hookin', -- there was nothin' but what she could do as handy as most. "I do love to work," -- ain't you heard her say that twenty times a week? (KFI p. 225)

A sketch from late in the second phase further illustrates the place of careful household work in the value-system Jewett portrays. Working at a resort hotel, Mary Fleming of "An Every-Day Girl" (1892) realizes that the impressive competence of the highly respected housekeeper is "nothing but common housekeeping splendidly done" (USS p. 192), and she learns how much the details of order and cleanliness contribute to everyone's comfort. Household skills, orderliness, peace of mind, and the willingness to work are closely related cardinal values in Jewett's second-phase social milieu, and those who exemplify them make rural life happier and more comfortable for everyone around them.

Also helping to improve rural life are several forms of communal interaction that create a sense of common interest and concern. Gossip, which Jewett's characters call "news," is in this world a cohesive social force rather than a divisive one, though its effects are often comic. In "The News from Petersham" (1884) a woman's slightly exaggerated report of a friend's illness grows in "the usual exchange of greetings and inquiries for news" (WH p. 204) until it returns to her as a report of the friend's death. She later says she has learned her lesson, but admits "I shall always like to hear what news there is a-goin'" (WH p. 210). Gossip is equally comic in "The Passing of Sister Barsett" (1892), in which the allegedly departed Sister Barsett has
been valued for her invariable possession of "somethin' interestin' to tell" (NW p. 148). In both stories "news" demonstrates the concern community members have for each other. Less innocuous gossip unjustly threatens the comfort of men and their housekeepers in "The Taking of Captain Ball" (1889) and "A Second Spring" (1893), but Jewett arranges her plots so that instead of being harmful the talk in both cases precipitates a happy ending, reinforcing her mildly satirical portrait of country "news" as an innocent pastime that strengthens community bonds.

Closely related to the desire for "news" is the frequently expressed desire to "see passing," to live where one can see people going by. The loss of such opportunities is one of the worst sufferings of the Bray sisters in "The Town Poor" (1890); Ann Bray bravely says that they could be content with their wretched and lonely life if only they had shoes for church and lived in a front room where they could "see passin'" (SW p. 53). A passage from "Told in the Tavern" (1894) confirms the importance of "passing" to isolated rural folk and clarifies its relation to "news":

"Snow's about all gone," said Jackson, after some deliberation. "Seemed kind o' quiet all up along. There was a woman's head to every pane o' glass'n some o' them houses. I come in a sleigh far's Crooked Falls, where I took the cart; I guess I was stopped many's six times to the mile to know what news there was. There was a good many folks I had to stop and deal with . . . I couldn't pass one o' them old-fashioned winters an' come out in the spring half so lively as some o' them poor fly creatures that was so ardent to pass the time o' day." (USS p. 208)
Other customs also reinforce the rural social fabric and alleviate country life's isolation and loneliness. Many characters join the Bray sisters in valuing "meeting" as a social occasion, although only "The Quest of Mr. Teaby" (1890) contains a clear reference to religion as a personal comfort (SW p. 68). Formal and informal visiting, though seen satirically in "The Guests of Mrs. Timms" (1894), brings pleasure to lonely women in stories as varied in time and theme as "A Visit Next Door" (1884), "The Town Poor" (1890), and "An Empty Purse" (1895). Even more productive of comfort and security is the continuation or renewal of childhood friendships. "Fair Day" (1888) depicts a woman's decision to end a long feud with a sister-in-law who shares her memories of "friendly foregathering and girlish alliances and rivalries; spinning and herb gathering and quilting" (SW p. 125). The successful emigrant who comes home in "A Native of Winby" (1891) begins to enjoy his visit only when he visits an old schoolmate; he has earlier wished he had never returned (NW p. 22), but with Abby Hender he finds undimmed friendship and interest, "talk of old times" (NW p. 30), and "the best visit in the world" (NW p. 36).

The common interest and concern of Jewett's rural farmers and villagers is peculiarly dependent on memory, since their communities share an oral culture which can be transmitted only as it is remembered. "Peg's Little Chair" (1891), an older woman's reminiscence of her community's reception of the returned Lafayette, is an example of such transmission. Music as well as history may be dependent on individual
memory, for in "A Little Captive Maid" (1891) the heroine recalls that her mother, living in an Irish rural society, "had tunes" which her neighbors did not know (NW p. 270). An American version of the same phenomenon is seen in "The Passing of Sister Barsett" (1892), where friends think that if Sister Barsett is dead "a good deal of knowledge has died with her" (NW p. 150). "Decoration Day" (1892), on the other hand, emphasizes group memory and commemoration, as older members teach younger residents about the community's role in the Civil War (NW pp. 60-61).

The rural custom of feuding, however, repeatedly interferes with the social fabric that memory and common interest create. Although they are not the violent affairs of common stereotypes, these feuds subvert the sense of community by isolating rural neighbors and creating awkwardness in the larger community. In "The King of Folly Island" (1886), for example, a man's political quarrels separate his wife and daughter from both adequate winter shelter and all human society (KFI p. 25). The daughter's pathetic pleasure at seeing a funeral through her telescope (KFI pp. 36-37) shows her need for the community life denied her, and her shell model of a church gains double significance from the fact that in her New England speech it is called a "meeting-house" (KFI p. 40). Another feud also has physical as well as psychological results in "Law Lane" (1887), for the quarrel of nearest neighbors not only leaves them without companions but also exposes them to the real danger of having no help at hand in emergencies (KFI p. 128).
During her second phase Jewett also becomes increasingly interested in the effect of her New England setting on individual personality. *A Country Doctor* (1884) provides the best-known passage:

"... for intense, self-centered, smouldering volcanoes of humanity, New England cannot be matched the world over. It's like the regions in Iceland that are full of geysers. ... now and then there comes an amazingly explosive and uncontrollable temperament that goes all to pieces from its own conservation and accumulation of force. (CD p. 100)"

In "The Taking of Captain Ball" (1889) the same image emphasizes emotional repression rather than the violence of the suppressed feelings: "She had loved him deeply in the repressed New England fashion, that under a gray and forbidding crust of manner, like a chilled lava bed, hides glowing fires of loyalty and devotion" (SW p. 161). Several later stories mention the difficulty with which New Englanders express emotion, and "An Empty Purse" (1895) values Christmas as "a day when we New England folks can seem to speak right out to each other" (USS p. 237).

Also explicitly discussed is the besetting New England sin of parsimony, which Jewett does not confuse with the respected virtue of frugality. Both "The Landscape Chamber" (1887) and "In Dark New England Days" (1890) depict men whose miserliness becomes imprudence and waste of material resources and human life (KFI pp. 89-113 and SW pp. 230-36). In the second story the miser is only a slight exaggeration of his neighbors, for he lives in "a community where the sterner, stingier, forbidding side of New England life" finds illustration (SW p. 237). Similar
traits are pilloried in "The Growtown 'Bugle'" (1888), in which a woman lets her nearest neighbors starve, and in "The Night Before Thanksgiving," whose heroine is in danger of going to the poor house because of a neighbor's greed. Only in "Mrs. Parkins's Christmas Eve" (1890-1891) is a miser allowed to reform.

The idea that New England's men have lost their ambition and strength, an opinion Cary attributes to Jewett, appears explicitly in only one place in her work. Miss Prudence Fellows of "The Growtown 'Bugle'" (1888) remarks that "I should like to live in . . . a place, where there was a bustlin' drive 'mongst the men folks, and buildin's a puttin' up, and all them things" (USS p. 125). But since her desire for such activity leads Miss Fellows to become absorbed in the affairs of the distant Growtown while her nearest neighbors die, it seems unlikely that Jewett means to make her opinions a part of her analysis of New England character.

Depiction of New England's rural and village society and the character it produces is supplemented, in Jewett's second phase, by a continuing interest in change that is or should be occurring in the social milieu. The novels and sketches record the disappearance of rural aristocracy and the growing cosmopolitanism of the population. Both fiction and nonfiction clarify the philosophical basis of Jewett's acceptance of social change. Her earlier criticism of traditional

37 Jewett, pp. 81-82.
feminine roles reaches full expression in A Country Doctor (1884) and her interest in society's responsibility to the poor develops.

The works published between 1884 and 1895 not only continue to depict the decline of the rural aristocracy but also suggest that Jewett has begun to lose respect for the class she lamented in Deephaven (1877). Her work after that book shows a steadily increasing admiration for the farmers and other ordinary citizens who people her sketches, and as they become more interesting Jewett seems to like the remnants of the upper class less, perhaps because they have lost the enterprise and public spirit of their ancestors but have retained a lofty pride that becomes destructive cut off from the standards it once maintained. Jewett continues to admire the aristocratic code, but the aristocracy no longer upholds it, and the middle- and lower-class characters show the spirit, industry, and concern for the community Jewett had admired in earlier aristocrats.

The novels of 1884 and 1885 have a clear if mild anti-aristocratic tone. A Country Doctor (1884) contrasts Nan Prince, whose gentility is infused with ambition and strength inherited from her lower-class mother's family, with her more purely aristocratic aunt. In spite of being "an admirable member of society" (CD p. 202), Anna Prince is haughty and unattractive, but Nan is very appealing in her strength of personality and her resolution to use her talent to become a doctor.

Donald Robert Anderson ("Failure and Regeneration in the New England of Sarah Orne Jewett and Mary E. Wilkins Freeman," Diss. Univ. of Arizona 1974, p. 161) also notes the unpleasantness Miss Prince shares with many of her fellow aristocrats.
In *A Marsh Island* (1885), the urban aristocrat Dick Dale is more prepossessing than the older Miss Prince, but the comments of his host Israel Owen suggest that the wise old farmer is a much more useful citizen:

"He promised he'd write an' tell me when he'd been an' voted to this next election . . . " added the farmer, who was a conscientious politician. "No wonder the country's been goin' to the dogs, when such folks don't think it's wuth their while to take holt." (MI pp. 285-86)

When the farmer must teach public spirit to the gentleman, the ideals of aristocracy have been seriously undermined.

More damaging to the upper class, however, is a sequence of stories published between 1886 and 1888 that mock the remnants of rural aristocracy and openly question their values. In "The Dulham Ladies" (1886) Jewett treats two aristocratic sisters with what Cary calls "the sharpest satire of which she is capable." In light of the sisters' innocence and ignorance their efforts "to hold the standard of cultivated mind and elegant manners as high as possible" (WH pp. 134-35) are ludicrous, and their aristocratic self-assurance makes it impossible to keep them from making themselves ridiculous (WH p. 149). Jewett also mocks aristocratic pride when the lawyer-hero of "The Two Browns" (1886) is secretly ashamed of his honest and ingenious success in manufacturing (WH p. 235), and in "A Business Man" (1886) she treats the aristocratic children the protagonist has "housed in palaces" (WH p. 173) with scorn. In *A Marsh Island* (1885) and many sketches

aristocratic descent is an advantage to country people, but in "The Landscape Chamber" (1887) it is associated with the pride that clings to hopeless parsimony (KFI pp. 98 and 114).

The culmination of Jewett's disillusion with the village aristocracy appears in "A Village Shop" (1888). Esther Jaffrey, an acknowledged parallel to Hawthorne's Hepzibah Pyncheon (KFI p. 239), is an admirable woman, but Jewett's scorn for her brother, "the only son and last hope of his house and name" (KFI p. 230) is almost vicious:

> It did not naturally occur to this learned gentleman that his own duty lay in the direction of wise counsel and devoted interest [in a new public library]: to him the practical affairs of life or any sense of personal obligation were as foreign as the problems of astronomy to a blind man. (KFI pp. 262-63)

Leonard Jaffrey's abdication of aristocratic obligations also allows him to ensure his future by becoming engaged to a young girl whose wealthy yeoman father has entrusted her to Miss Jaffrey's care. Both he and his sister, on the other hand, regard her gallant shopkeeping as "a melancholy alternative" even though they display with pride the papers of the merchant who founded the family fortunes (KFI pp. 241-43). In spite of Esther Jaffrey's strength and courage, the story makes it obvious that her class, though descended from worthy ancestors, are as bankrupt in values as they are in money.

Another notable change is the shift in the composition of Jewett's fictional society with the introduction of places and persons from outside New England. Except for vague references to England and Baltimore in three very early stories, the first phase had seen no such attempts,
but the growing interest in "the immensity of America" which Jewett mentioned in an 1891 letter\textsuperscript{40} was reflected between 1884 and 1895 in stories about New York and the South as well as stories involving the westward movement. Sketches set in Canada and Ireland, on the other hand, showed her awareness of the origins of the foreigners who were becoming part of the New England scene, still her major focus. Irishmen and French Canadians figure slightly in four stories written before 1887, while in the later part of the phase they dominate three stories and interact significantly with the older New England stock in two others. Jewett suggested in an 1894 interview that the Irishman, like the Yankee, had suffered from fictional caricature, and deserved a more realistic treatment.\textsuperscript{41} Later critics have not found her attempts to provide that treatment, or her excursions into non-New England settings, very successful,\textsuperscript{42} but in her own time such critics as Horace Scudder applauded her Irish stories as accurate portrayals of a part of the New England scene too long ignored.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{40} Sarah Orne Jewett, "To Louisa Loring Dresel, 4 Mar. 1891, Letter 14, in Cary, "Jewett to Dresel," p. 29.

\textsuperscript{41} In Walter Blackburn Harte, "A Rural World Has Been a Fertile Field to Sarah Orne Jewett," \textit{Boston Sunday Journal}, 4 Feb. 1894, p. 18, col. 6.


\textsuperscript{43} See [Horace E. Scudder], "New England in the Short Story," \textit{Atlantic Monthly}, 67 (1891), 848-49. See also Horace E. Scudder, "Miss Jewett," \textit{Atlantic Monthly}, 73 (1894) 130-33; rpt. in \textit{Appreciation}, p. 19.
Granville Hicks touches on the primary basis for Jewett's acceptance of social change and its frequent benefits in his disdainful remark that as "a New England old maid" she "believed in piety, progress, and propriety." Jewett's letters and historical writings as well as her novels and sketches make it clear that she believed in progress in spite of her fondness for the past. Her letters express delight that a railway extension makes mountain visits easier and record her wish to introduce "possible betterments" in Berwick. An article on her native town is described as a "hasty sketch of the town's progress." The clearest evidence that the doctrine of progress was one of her fundamental beliefs comes in her only nonfiction book, *The Story of the Normans* (1887), a history written for G. P. Putnam's Sons' *Story of the Nations* series. In this book Jewett clearly shares the earlier romantic

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46 Quoted by Frost, p. 89.

historians' view of human progress as a part of natural law, but she also relates progress to evolution and divine providence. The Norman Conquest of England, for example, is good in spite of its horror for the English:

Progress was really what the English of that day bewailed and set their faces against, though they did not know it. William and Matilda had to insist upon the putting aside of worn-out opinions, and on coming to England had made the strange discovery that they must either take a long step backward or force their subjects forward.

Insofar as the efforts of the Conqueror are progressive, they are ultimately good, and form part of "the slow processes by which God in nature and humanity evolves the best that is possible for the present with something that forestalls the future." The "destroying left hand of progress" may sometimes have unfortunate effects, but social development in general results from the beneficent action of natural and divine law.

A Country Doctor (1884), Jewett's most sustained and possibly strongest work of social criticism, is the best fictional illustration


50 Normans, p. 364.

of her attitudes toward progressive change. The novel's protagonist is Nan Prince, a young woman who rejects marriage and chooses instead to study medicine. Although her decision comes partly from fear of her genetic inheritance, its primary justifications are based on the doctrine of vocation and a belief in progress and evolution. Medicine, she feels, is her "calling," and God has given her a talent for it rather than for marriage (CD p. 193). Clearly she is one of those women who by "natural progression and variation" have come to be suited to "certain public and social duties." In "the higher development of civilization" more such women are bound to appear, especially since "preservation of the race" is no longer paramount (CD pp. 335-36). A woman must choose where "her duty" lies, and labels of "a man's work or a woman's work" are irrelevant (CD p. 106). Thus the novel argues, partly on the basis of progress, that women should be able to have careers, but unlike "Tom's Husband" (1882) it does not attack the institution of marriage, and it specifically rules out "public careers" for married women (CD p. 285).

Though Jewett never retreats from the belief that women can function outside their traditional sphere, after A Country Doctor her use of it as a theme diminishes. "Farmer Finch" (1885) portrays a young woman who becomes a better farmer than her father and for whom farming is preferable to the teaching for which she has no talent (WH p. 83), but it is "not very likely" that she will farm all her life (WH p. 84). Similarly, A Marsh Island (1885) ends conventionally with the heroine's happy marriage, and most of the later sketches deal with women who lead
relatively ordinary lives. The harshest criticism of traditional feminine roles and expectations in these later stories comes in "A Village Shop" (1888), where Esther Jaffrey, who has sacrificed and struggled to send her indolent brother to Harvard and support him in later years, continues to think of herself, quite sincerely, as "only a woman" (KFI p. 232).

Other strands of social criticism occur in Jewett's second-phase works, though they are less prominent than her feminist ideas. A Country Doctor (1884) defends reformers, who may be made uncongenial by "opposition and ignorance" but whom the world will honor when it "is reaping the reward of their bravery and constancy" (CD p. 279). The problems of poverty and proper relationships between the rich and the poor are touched on in several stories. In "The Night Before Thanksgiving" (1895) and "The Town Poor" (1890) traditional ways of caring for the destitute are severely criticized, and neighbors who allow such treatment to continue are characterized as neglectful at best and more often cruel and avaricious. "The Failure of David Berry" (1891) also attacks the greed and apathy that allow virtuous weakness to be crushed by the system, and many other works, like "Mary and Martha" (1885) and "Miss Esther's Guest" (1890), portray the destitution that threatens the old and the sick even as they show an individual character's escape. The rural emphasis of the second phase would preclude extensive analysis of the new urban capitalism even if Jewett were tempted to provide it, but her awareness of a need for social adjustments in this area is shown by a passage in "The Two
"Browns" (1886) in which the hero plans to provide his laborers "some share in the business" as a part of his "experiments in the puzzling social questions of the day" (WH p. 250).

Jewett's occasional social criticism is important because it confirms her belief in progress and emphasizes the change that occurs in her settings. Change characterized her times, and her rural communities, though out of the path of the more dramatic alterations, reflect enough of their era to avoid becoming scenes for static rural idylls. The rooted, close-knit communities most of her country people share are, however, a particularly attractive aspect of her settings, and their existence alleviates rural hardships as effectively as does love of farming and of the land.

**Technique**

The uses to which Sarah Jewett puts setting in her second-phase works and the techniques she uses to portray it represent a blend of new developments and the skills learned from her earlier work. Several largely new devices help her achieve artistic distance and increase the scope and complexity of her settings. The use of realistic setting as an aid to plot, characterization, and theme continues with uneven success, and, although she still lapses into sentimentality at times, many of her best effects depend on setting.


Jewett uses four rather conventional distancing techniques in her second-phase works, and in general they serve her well. The Gothic mode, historical backgrounds, holiday settings, and Biblical or mythological allusions all become useful ways of giving a story perspective, emphasizing its significance, controlling its emotion, or heightening its suspense. In one sense the Gothic is the least important of the four, since it only rarely dominates a setting, but the frequency with which it recurs and the suspense it adds to relatively weak plots make it worthy of discussion. *A Country Doctor* (1884), for example, begins with two expository chapters in which the reader's interest is held by a thickly Gothic atmosphere created from, among other things, darkness, ruins, solitude, a graveyard with imagined ghosts, a brook "crying out against a wrong," and a long-lost daughter who faints on her mother's doorstep (*CD* pp. 1-4). Other noticeably Gothic works include "The Gray Man" (1886), "In Dark New England Days" (1890), and "Told in the Tavern" (1894). In both "The Landscape Chamber" (1887) and "A Village Shop" (1888) an ancient house creates a mood of suspense and foreboding; both stories are reminiscent of Hawthorne, and the second contains an explicit reference to *The House of the Seven Gables* (*KFI* p. 239). None of these works, however, ever really moves from the realistic world of the novel into the moral and psychological world of the romance. In spite of her preference for mood pieces Jewett is basically more novelist than romancer.

54 See Cary, Jewett, pp. 84 and 105.
Her basic affinity for the social complexity, if not the length, of the novel may account for the difficulty Jewett has with purely historical settings. The technique of allowing a present-day setting to suggest earlier events is as successful in the later essay "The White Rose Road" (1889) as it had been in "River Driftwood" (1881), and in stories like "Miss Tempy’s Watchers" (1888) and "A Native of Winby" (1891) Jewett is able to return the same method to fiction, avoiding the implausibility and inconsequence of similar passages in Deephaven (1877) by allowing a character in the present to remember or tell the story from the past. Given her success with this technique, and given also her preoccupation with the past, the reader expects—as many of Jewett’s friends apparently also expected—that she would excel in historical fiction. But "Peg’s Little Chair" (1891), though it has a present-day narrator, shares the curious flatness of the similar, very early "The Orchard’s Grandmother" (1871), and "A Dark Night" (1895), Jewett’s first purely historical story, is a disjointed series of adventures. It is totally without the "density of material" Ferman Bishop finds in the stories where history is an added dimension, and as a


57 Bishop, p. 138.
preliminary study for Jewett's historical novel it does not bode well. Perhaps historical fiction belongs to a world of romance which is closed or uncongenial to Jewett, or perhaps a total absence of contemporary characters establishes a distance too great for her realistic mode.

The association of a story's theme and its temporal setting with a specific holiday is more successful. Though none of the earlier works use this device, it occurs in "The Becket Girls' Tree" (1884), the first of the second-phase sketches, and outside of the novels nearly a fifth of the period's works use a holiday motif. Occasionally, as in "A Neighbor's Landmark" (1894), the references seem tacked on to make a magazine story seasonal, but in many cases they are important and effective. The symbolism and emotion attached to a holiday often seem to help Jewett express feeling and achieve a didactic purpose without veering into excessive sentimentality. The associations of generosity and reconciliation carried by Christmas, for example, reinforce the themes of "The Becket Girls' Tree" (1884), "Law Lane" (1887), "Mrs. Parkins's Christmas Eve" (1890-1891), and "An Empty Purse" (1895). The contrast between Easter's renewal and rebirth and the ruin of the heroine's mind and home in "Mistress Sydenham's Plantation" (1888) makes direct authorial comment unnecessary. Most of the holiday stories are reasonably successful works, and as a distancing device the holiday motif appears to serve Jewett better than either unmixed history or the Gothic.

The remaining setting technique used to channel the stories into a wider significance is the common device of mythological and Biblical allusion. Randall R. Mawer has suggested that the underlying sexual rivalry of the romantic triangle in *A Marsh Island* (1885) is covertly recognized by a loose but real reference to the Ares-Aphrodite-Hephaistos myth. 59 A Biblical pattern, however, is more basic to the atmosphere of significance and permanence which the novel exudes. The "patriarchal" Owen family is ruled by Israel Owen, a "gentle old farmer, with his flocks and herds" (MI p. 109) who still mourns the loss of his son in the Civil War just as the Biblical patriarch mourned the loss of Joseph. The modern Israel, however, will not recover his son, nor has he any other sons, and the whole future of his farm, which becomes the promised land of an archetypal life, depends on his daughter Doris and her choice of a husband. When Dick Dale interferes with Doris's growing love for Dan, he threatens a pattern which has taken on fundamental importance from its patriarchal associations. Mawer suggests that the classical references give the story a "more-than-parochial significance," 60 but the Biblical parallels are even more effective in accomplishing that same end.

Though Biblical imagery is less important in the shorter works of the period, it functions effectively in "Mary and Martha" (1885), where the explicitly recognized parallel between the heroines and the New

60 Mawer, "Classical Myth," p. 86.
Testament sisters extends to temperament as well as name, and the reference widens the importance of the story's suggestion that gentle, traditionally feminine women like Mary and aggressive, capable women like Martha are both necessary and useful (WH pp. 181-83 and 196-97). The parallel between the Irish maid who Cheers the last months of her New England employer in "A Little Captive Maid" (1891) and the "little maid" brought "captive out of the land of Israel" in II Kings is less exact, since it is noted that Nora's Father Dunn "could tell the captain of no waters of Jordan that would make him a sound man" (NW p. 295). In the contrast, however, there is a delicate pathos, and the reminder that Nora feels herself a captive heightens the reader's pleasure in her eventual return to Ireland and her sweetheart. In "A Neighbor's Landmark" (1895) the Biblical allusion is more specifically appropriate. The admonition from Deuteronomy (19: 14) that "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance" rings through the whole story, giving family tradition and prudent timber management the wider sanction of ancient law, and contradicting the villain's assertion that the protagonist should do as he likes with his "own property" (LN p. 246).

The various devices Jewett uses to broaden the significance of her second-phase sketches and establish an appropriate aesthetic distance from them all help to objectify her emotions and didactic purposes, but they often also participate in another of her setting-related techniques, her tendency to use realistically depicted parts of the milieu to reinforce plotting, characterization, or theme. The seasons, their weather,
and other setting elements often foreshadow or reiterate her plots, and her characterization also frequently depends on seasonal references, as well as on family heirlooms and other physical objects. Objects of the same sort often help to convey theme and emotion. Jewett's ability to draw setting is one of her greatest skills, and she often uses it to reinforce the other aspects of her fiction.

Seasonal imagery, weather descriptions, and various other parts of setting sometimes provide a needed adjunct to Jewett's rather weak plots. The seasons continue to carry largely traditional associations, as they did in the first phase, and since those associations are largely based on nature the effect is to create a satisfying harmony among setting, action, and season. New hope and renewal belong to spring, and in "Miss Tempy's Watchers" (1888) April and sunrise both seem emblematic of the dead woman's continuing good influence and the renewed friendship of her "watchers" (KFI pp. 208 and 228). "A Financial Failure" (1890) ends with a joyous marriage "in early planting time" (USS pp. 164-66), and in "A Second Spring" (1893) three successive springs serve as an aching contrast to a beloved wife's death, a nurturant beginning for recovery in a remarriage of convenience, and a glorious parallel for the realization that the new wife is also beloved (LN pp. 156-202). Summer connotes completion or fullness and usually serves as a single, discrete block of time for an action. Both "An Every-Day Girl" (serialized in the summer of 1892) and "Little French Mary" (1895) use a summer time-frame to give a sense of unity to a rather disjointed plot.
As for autumn, Jewett's description of November as "an epitome of all the months of the year" (CD p. 344) recognizes its dual possibility of pleasant Indian summer or harsh prelude to winter. The question whether an opening springlike November afternoon that gives way to "dense and early darkness" (CD p. 1) bodes well or ill for the heroine of *A Country Doctor* (1884) is not completely answered until a parallel scene ends the novel. Both "Farmer Finch" (1885) and "The Night Before Thanksgiving" (1895) also use the double nature of autumn by beginning with a bleak, foreboding scene but hinting, before the scene is ended, that "late golden rays" (WH p. 40) or "a sudden gleam of light" give a truer picture of what is to happen. "The King of Folly Island" (1886), reversing these connotations, sets most of its action in lovely September weather (KFI p. 3), but continually mentions the coming winter (KFI pp. 13, 30, 35 and 41) to subvert any sense of the idyllic. Bleak meanings often attach to winter, which Jewett herself disliked and found unhealthy, but when stories are set in winter its bitter hostility often serves mainly to underline human warmth and concern. In both "A

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Winter Courtship" (1889) and "The Life of Nancy" (1895) cold weather emphasizes the pleasure of companionship, and in several stories like "Mrs. Parkins's Christmas Eve" (1890-1891) forbidding weather outdoors promotes the reconciliation associated with Christmas.

Weather usually works with the seasons in Jewett's plots, but occasionally it has significance of its own. Typical is "Fair Day" (1888), where the title describes both weather and action on a "bright October morning" that gives "a sense of companionship" (SW pp. 124-31). On such a day the heroine's decision to be reconciled with an old friend is not surprising. In more complex cases changing weather parallels changing fortunes. In A Marsh Island, for example, frost is deadly to "ungathered fruit" (MI p. 250) and covers the land when it appears that Dan Lester has left and the farm's life will not be renewed by his marriage to Doris (MI p. 268). Later in the same morning, when their engagement has been announced, the weather is warm and bright (MI p. 279). In "Told in the Tavern" (1894) the indication that a reunion of long-separated lovers has gone well is seen in the statement that "The rain had stopped and the young moon was shining in the sky" (USS p. 211). The device can turn mawkish, as it does when the "very elms overhead" groan "'Oh, no!' . . . in the late autumn winds" (OT p. 224) in "The Night Before Thanksgiving" (1895), but generally Jewett uses it more discreetly, and it provides an effective reinforcement of the action in her stories.

Other elements of the physical milieu also strengthen Jewett's plots, especially in the loosely structured novels. Opening and closing
scenes set in the same place and season help unify the episodic plot of *A Country Doctor* (1884), and its theme, which requires the heroine to choose a career instead of marriage, is underscored when she rejects a marriage proposal in a beautiful, fruitful natural setting more commonly associated with acceptance (CD p. 323). In *A Marsh Island* (1885), as Randall Mawer has pointed out, the setting-based images of the fertile island-farm, the venerable clock that regulates community life, and the Edenic innocence threatened by Dick Dale's intrusion all reinforce both the conventional love story and the theme of loyalty to one's own place. 63 Bits of setting also have structural uses in individual scenes, as when suspense in an episode is heightened by a clock which ticks a warning (MI p. 173) and then is released, when no harm has come, by the author's remark that some dooryard flowers (like the heroine) are "still unhurt" (MI p. 189). Such harmony between realistic details of the milieu and the action of the novels and sketches strengthens Jewett's work not only by reinforcing her sometimes disjointed plots but also by achieving an integration of plot and setting, avoiding incongruity between the skillfully realized milieu and the often less memorable events.

Similar realistic setting detail in characterization, begun in Jewett's first phase, makes particular use of seasonal images and family homes and heirlooms, but almost any physical item can reveal a character's personality. Dick Dale's inability to face a rural winter

(MI p. 184) contrasts with the happiness Dan and Doris enjoy amid its bleakness (MI pp. 291-92) and reveals Dick's inappropriateness as a suitor for Doris in A Marsh Island (1885). The affinity of the grasping father in "The Landscape Chamber" (1887) for winter rather than summer (KFI p. 111) is emblematic of his inability to make use of any good fortune he has. The hero in "The Quest of Mr. Teaby" (1890), on the other hand, reveals his hopeful disposition by wearing summer clothing on an autumn day, while Sister Pinkham shows the caution that rejects his proposal by dressing for an early winter (SW p. 62). Another item of clothing, the umbrella he leaves behind, may bring them together when her prudence makes up for his forgetfulness (SW pp. 77-78).

Jewett's characters often reveal their own taste and perception by caring or not caring for the buildings and furniture of earlier times, Deephaven had hinted at Jewett's own reverence for such items, and near the end of the first phase "A Landless Farmer" (1883) had condemned a greedy daughter by her sale of an heirloom chest. In the second phase, an appreciation for older homes and furnishings regularly indicates underlying taste and good sense. In A Marsh Island (1885) the shallow Mrs. Owen prefers a "best parlor" she has refurnished to the old family furniture (MI p. 211), while her naturally refined husband and daughter instinctively prefer their family heirlooms (MI p. 112). The city interloper Dick Dale reveals genuine gentility and artistic

taste in his admiration for the family antiques (MI pp. 111-12), but his early hope to buy some of them (MI p. 43) shows an initial exploitative attitude. In "A Village Shop" (1888) Leonard Jaffrey's willingness to sell the family silver (KFI p. 246) is additional evidence of his decline from true aristocracy, but in "A Little Captive Maid" (1891) the Irish Father Dunn reveals his worth and dignity when he recognizes the "fine and simple" beauty of an unaltered colonial home (NW p. 296). In these and other second-phase stories heirlooms valued by the truly perceptive and physical items like old houses and family silver become touchstones of taste and awareness.

Other material items also serve at times to reveal or explicate human personality. The tendency of the farm in A Marsh Island (1885) to appear to Dick Dale in picturesque terms (MI pp. 12, 136, 186, 203) emphasizes how out of place he is there, and the heroines of "Mary and Martha" (1885) are economically revealed when Mary enjoys a muted autumn scene which seems "a very bleak, miserable sort of day" to Martha (WH p. 185). In "A Second Spring" (1893) newly-widowed Israel Haydon's loneliness is paralleled by a solitary spruce tree (LN pp. 156 and 182), and his growing love for his second wife is disclosed when the everyday sights of his farm remind him of her (LN p. 197). In "The Only Rose" (1894), Mrs. Bickford's anxiety to be fair to her three dead husbands makes her bouquets for their graves symbolic (LN pp. 136-37), but when the rose finds its way to her nephew's lapel it indicates both her preference for her romantic first husband and her healthy return to concern about the present generation (LN p. 155).
Jewett is often less successful when she attempts to use setting in conjunction with the theme or emotion in her second-phase stories, but when the combination works it can be very effective. Sentimentality and overemphasis are the dangers she risks, and an example from "Farmer Finch" (1885) can illustrate their result. A barberry bush becomes an emblem of hope and courage to the heroine when she notices that it seems "gray and winterish" on one side but is "glowing with rubies" on the side in the sun. Walking "with brisker steps," she looks at both sides again, and then she tells herself, "There are two ways of looking at more things than barberry bushes" (WH pp. 40-41). Even in a character's thoughts the message can be too explicit, and the initial impact of the image is swallowed up in sermonizing. An authorial intrusion similarly spoils the comparison of the heroine to an overlooked flower in "Marsh Rosemary" (1886). In other cases, however, coordination between setting and theme is better handled. At the end of "Miss Tempy's Watchers" (1888), a pre-dawn scene conveys a sense of a new beginning and the necessity of going on without a dead friend (KFI p. 228). Even more effective, and perhaps closest to the skill of Deephaven's "In Shadow" chapter, is a passage from "Decoration Day" (1892) describing the thoughts of veterans who hear taps played:

They had a sudden vision of the Virginian camp, the hillside dotted white with tents, the twinkling lights in other camps, and far away the glow of smouldering fires. They heard the bugle call from post to post; they remembered the chilly winter night, the wind in the pines, the laughter of the men. (NW pp. 57-58)
In this passage memories of setting provide a perfect vehicle for emotion and the theme of the sketch. The passage is an example of Jewett's coordination of setting with other fictional ingredients at its best.

The use of taps to initiate such a passage and the number of aural and tactile images the memories include illustrate Jewett's continuing use of non-visual imagery to make her descriptions live. Such passages occur throughout the second phase. In *A Country Doctor* (1884) a seaport in spring is vividly rendered when an open window admits "the knocking of shipwrights' hammers" and "a fine salt breeze . . . well warmed with the May sunshine" (*CD* p. 209). The heroine of "A White Heron" (1886) becomes especially real, as do the natural scenes she loves, when she is seen "letting her bare feet cool themselves in the shoal water, while the great twilight moths struck softly against her" (*WH* p. 4). In "The Passing of Sister Barsett" (1892) the sounds of crows calling and thrushes "singing far away in the walnut woods" give reality to a "deep rural stillness" (*NW* pp. 156-57), and in "All My Sad Captains" (1895) the lingering smells of tradestuffs in an old warehouse both give the scene life for the reader and carry the characters back into their past (*LN* pp. 298-99). Such carefully selected sense impressions, often describing sensations familiar to many readers, are both effective and economical.

It is in fact Jewett's growing sureness in choosing the right details to use and the right language to make them real that most strongly marks her technique with setting in her second-phase work. Often a single observation, lightly treated but accurately recalled,
gives an extraordinarily vivid sensation. The moonlight that floods Mercy Bascom's bedroom in "Fair Day" (1888) has that effect (SW p. 137), and so does the dripping from the eaves that saves the end of "Law Lane" (1887) from Christmas-card triteness:

It was Christmas Day, whether anybody in Law Lane remembered it or not. The sun shone bright on the sparkling snow, the eaves were dropping, and the snow-birds and blue-jays came about the door. The wars of Law Lane were ended. (KFI p. 166)

One of James Russell Lowell's last letters spoke of Jewett's ability to avoid "overcrowding" her work "with scenery or figures" and remarked that she was "lenient in landscape." It seems likely that it was her economical but effective choice of detail that he intended to praise.

Two passages, both singled out by F. O. Matthiessen, illustrate the selection and organization of detail in the best of Jewett's second-phase work. The beginning of "By the Morning Boat" (1890) seems to Matthiessen to sum up the ability to transmute observation into art which left Jewett ready to write her masterpiece:

On the coast of Maine, where many green islands and salt inlets fringe the deep-cut shore line; where balsam firs and bayberry bushes send their fragrance far seaward, and song-sparrows sing all day, and the tide runs plashing in and out among the weedy ledges; where cowbells tinkle on the hills and herons stand in the shady coves, -- on the lonely coast of Maine stood a small gray house facing the morning light. (SW p. 197)

65 Quoted in Matthiessen, Jewett, pp. 89-90.

Here carefully chosen visual, aural, and olfactory images combine to give an unusually vivid impression, and even the absence of sound is precisely conveyed when the herons are suddenly seen, but not heard, after songs and plashing and bells. The scene is a general one, until a specific house is mentioned, but the details manage to achieve generality without ceasing to be specific.

Matthiessen attributes these qualities to "Wordsworth's revolution in poetic diction" when he praises the ending of "The Hilton's Holiday" (1893):

It was evening again, the frogs were piping in the lower meadows, and in the woods, higher up the great hill, a little owl began to hoot. The sea air, salt and heavy, was blowing in over the country at the end of the hot bright day. A lamp was lighted in the house, the happy children were talking together, and supper was waiting. The father and mother lingered for a moment outside and looked down over the shadowy fields; then they went in, without speaking. The great day was over, and they shut the door. (LN p. 127)

In a similar passage from Hawthorne, Matthiessen suggests, broad generalization prevents even real sensations from moving the modern reader. Jewett, writing after Wordsworth's ideas have transformed the language of art, still communicates a living impression. Both Jewett's language and the details she chooses to describe fit Matthiessen's comments. It is a simple scene simply rendered, but the felicity and restraint that mark it are a major accomplishment. Jewett occasionally attained

68 Matthiessen, Renaissance, pp. 210-11n.
them in earlier works, notably "In Shadow" (1877), and even at the end of her second phase they are not invariably hers, but her growing ability to command them in many of her stories marks her increasing maturity as an artist.

Increasing maturity, in fact, is the hallmark of Jewett's second-phase settings. New complexity in her view of nature, country, and city marks her abandonment of more simplistic youthful attitudes for a view that sees good and bad in a realistic balance. Her portrait of the social milieu, on the other hand, becomes more complicated because she comes to understand more of what society involves and clarifies her thinking about the social meaning of history. In technique, as in the other areas, she builds on what she had learned in her first phase, but here growing maturity is shown in the development of new devices like the holiday settings, in an increasing mastery that improves the average sketch even if it does not preclude lapses, and in a growing ability to select the details that will make her effects most vivid and the language that will render those details most immediately. At the end of her second phase Jewett has become competent at both the art and the craft of writing, and her settings already play a major role in giving her work, as Willa Cather was to say, a "quality that one can remember without the volume at hand." 69

CHAPTER IV
THE THIRD PHASE: 1896-1902

From 1896, the year *The Country of the Pointed Firs* appeared, until the end of her career, Sarah Orne Jewett wrote as a mature, accomplished artist in command of her themes and craft. The perspective on country life achieved in *Pointed Firs* allowed her to accept rural ambiguity, recognizing the peace and beauty of bucolic life without denying the deficiencies she had deplored since girlhood. The meaning and acceptance of place became one of her major themes, and in depth and richness her rural settings reflected the balance, the "equilibrium," which Eudora Welty traces to a well-founded sense of place.¹ In her third-phase work Jewett was writing at the height of her powers, and much of it is very good indeed, almost good enough to justify Willa Cather's remark (made in 1925) that *Pointed Firs* belongs with *The Scarlet Letter* and *Huckleberry Finn* on a list of the three American books likely to endure.²


² Preface, *The Best Stories of Sarah Orne Jewett* (1925; rpt. as *The Country of the Pointed Firs and Other Stories*, Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., [1956]), p. 11. This text, abbreviated PF, will be used for citations of *Pointed Firs* and "William's Wedding," but only the twenty-one chapters originally included in *Pointed Firs* will be treated as part of the book itself. See note 31.
Although she lived until 1909, Jewett did little or no significant writing after a serious carriage accident in 1902. The seven preceding years had been some of her most productive, witnessing the publication of two unified books (The Country of the Pointed Firs, 1896, and The Tory Lover, 1901) and twenty-four individual sketches. Two other sketches, apparently written earlier, appeared after the accident.

The Country of the Pointed Firs (1896) is a series of connected sketches reminiscent, in form, of Deephaven (1877). Its setting, the rural fishing village of Dunnet Landing, is also the scene of four later sketches (1898-1910) with the same narrator. Jewett actually called the first of these "a new chapter" about one of the characters, regarding it as an extension of the Dunnet world, and so it and the others cannot be ignored when the Landing is studied. A developmental view of Jewett's work, however, requires that they be treated as separate stories, presumably written two to twelve years after the appearance of Pointed Firs. The Tory Lover (1901) presents different problems; its historical action gives it an exciting but disjointed plot, and its

3 See John Eldridge Frost, Sarah Orne Jewett (Kittery Point, Me.: The Gundalow Club, 1960), pp. 130-36.


setting reproduces some of Jewett's more successful scenes without acquiring, Henry James thought, any of the reality and allusiveness of Dunnet Landing. It seems, moreover, to lack any central theme, though close examination of its setting may reveal one.

The twenty-six individual sketches for the most part contribute to the emergence of a composite New England rural village strongly resembling Dunnet Landing. Not all are explicitly given seaside settings, but fewer than before are identifiably set inland, and village settings are common, while urban, exclusively natural, and even farm settings appear less often. Non-New England settings disappear, and Irish characters are increasingly assimilated to the native stock in sketches like "Bold Words at the Bridge" (1899) and "A Landlocked Sailor" (1899). The tendency to regard the Irish as part of New England is best expressed, perhaps, in the fact that in The Tory Lover (1901) Master Sullivan, the respected schoolmaster of Berwick's ancestors and the father of two American generals, is Irish. Even the holidays Jewett continues to use in the third phase are more characteristic of rural New England, since the recently adopted Christmas, most common in the second phase, is

6 For example, compare the heroine's voyage in chapter ten with the details of Jewett's own excursion on the same river in "River Driftwood" (1881).


8 For the idea that the major achievement of the Dunnet Landing sketches is to create a fictional world that can be re-entered, see Green, "The World of Dunnet Landing," pp. 413-15.
entirely neglected, while Thanksgiving, Decoration Day, New Year's, and the Fourth of July dominate the scene.

The newly homogeneous rural village world of Jewett's final phase is set against a nature that continues to be ambiguous, and it reflects an integrated vision of country life that acknowledges hardships and benefits in realistic balance. The city, even as a symbol, becomes far less important than in earlier phases, but the portrait of the rural social milieu is strikingly expanded and filled in. Her full, realistic portrait of rural village life shows, more clearly than any explicit statement could, that Jewett has overcome her earlier resistance and rebellion toward village life and learned to appreciate its virtues without losing her ability to see it clearly. She has come to love it without idealizing it, and the resulting balance allows her to achieve the combination of emotional and aesthetic distance with the love and insight of the native that her work has always needed. Paradoxically, Jewett sounds less like a patronizing visitor in The Country of the Pointed Firs (1896), where she has achieved distance and writes about a part of Maine northeast of her home, than in Deephaven (1877), where she is closely involved with a setting based on her own village and its neighbors.\(^9\) Her new equilibrium gives the work of her third phase greater poise and polish, and her skilled use of the techniques learned

\(^9\) On the area represented in Pointed Firs, see Sarah Orne Jewett, "Letter to Mary E. Mulholland, 23 Jan. 1899, Letter 96, Letters, ed. Cary, p. 116. For Deephaven, see Francis Otto Matthiessen, Sarah Orne Jewett (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1929), p. 120. (See also Chapter I, note 26.)
earlier supplements and expresses her new attitudes. Most striking, however, is the new understanding of the love of place apparent in Jewett's later work. In achieving distance from her village world she seems also to have accepted it, and to have realized how important place is to human thought and emotion. In her final works place itself becomes a major theme, one that is significant in several of the period's more important productions.

Nature

Nature remains important in the third-phase stories primarily because the general rural setting is usually seen against a natural background. Jewett continues to recognize its potential for both maleficence and beneficence, a duality which is at the same time ambiguous and realistic. The deep love for nature manifested in her second phase still leads her to show natural scenes accurately but with perceptive affection, resulting in what one critic has characterized as a conjunction of a realist's accuracy and a Transcendentalist's insight. 10

The potential maleficence of nature, what Cary calls its "cruel duplicity," 11 is manifested in the dangers posed by sea and forest. Many women of the third phase are like Mrs. Almira Todd, the central character of Pointed Firs, whose husband Nathan drowned in sight of the unspoiled natural headland where they had courted and planned their


Such women, Mrs. Todd says in a later story, are "made desolate" by the sea, and the third-phase sketches keep nature's ability to create such desolation constantly in view with a nearly ubiquitous succession of characters who have lost husbands or fathers or brothers at sea.

But even ashore untamed nature always stands ready, as in "An October Ride" (1881) and the "In Shadow" chapter of Deephaven (1877), to overrun cultivation and overtake unwary humans. In Pointed Firs (1896) Elijah Tilley, a fisherman so close to nature that his mind seems "fixed" on it and his occasional remarks are "almost as if a landmark pine should suddenly address you," nevertheless has a pasture "being walked over and forested from every side" by the spruces (PF pp. 101-04), as if nature were trying to push him off his land. "The Queen's Twin" (1899) goes beyond such symbolic expression to allow Mrs. Todd to say of an abandoned farm, "Seems sometimes as if wild natur' got jealous over a certain spot, and wanted to do just as she'd a mind to. . . . I tell you those little trees means business!" Afterwards the narrator perceives in the growth of the trees "a persistence and savagery . . . that put weak human nature at complete defiance" (QT p. 16). Mrs. Todd's ensuing story of the fear neighbors once had of the nearby woods (QT p. 17) comes as no surprise, but serves only to confirm the


13 Sarah Orne Jewett, "The Queen's Twin," The Queen's Twin and Other Stories (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1899); p. 16. This volume will be abbreviated QT.
sense of danger in nature that has already been established. The entire passage is so grim that one critic has suggested that in it Jewett briefly depicts the New England "North of Boston" that Robinson and Frost were to portray. 14

But the beautiful and beneficent aspects of nature, intimately concerned with human life and identity, are also very much in evidence in the third-phase sketches. Nature still helps one be one's best self, creating a sense of identity and healing human ills. Such services go a great way toward mitigating both the rigors of lonely rural life and the fear inspired by the "persistence and savagery" (QT p. 16) of natural forces.

Nature's capacity to encourage and reinforce human identity had been a minor theme of the second phase, especially in "The White Heron" (1886), and it often plays the same role in later works. In "A Landlocked Sailor" (1899), Jewett compares a busy man's trout-fishing excursion on a familiar stream, or any similar "closeness to nature," to a Sabbath rest that allows time to hear nature's voice:

... the Doctor ... had that comfortable sense of existence and continuance which made him, for the moment, know and understand himself. One possesses very seldom this unaffected sense of self ... . Solitary and undisturbed, we are now and then aware of ourselves: not the person the world takes us to be, not the ideal person our hopes and ambitions are trying to evolve, but the real man. This is the clear self-consciousness that mirrors the surroundings of a happy solitude. (USS p. 288)

A similar passage in "A Dunnet Shepherdess" (1899) says that trout fishing above all other activities allows one to be "so close to nature that one simply is a piece of nature" in "perfect self-forgetfulness" (QT p. 44). Thus time spent alone with nature allows one to forget the false and busy selves one creates and, perhaps paradoxically but also bibli-cally, to find the real self in the act of forgetting. When the heroine of The Tory Lover (1901) visits some gigantic trees she has known from "her earliest childhood," she is refreshed and renewed, 15 while a char-acter in "The Coon Dog" (1898) says, "I don't feel a day older 'n ever I did when I get out in the woods this way" (QT p. 176).

Perhaps because of nature's ability to make one be oneself, many of Jewett's characters feel a deep sense of kinship with the natural world. By far the best example of this is Almira Todd, the landlady and herb-woman who becomes the narrator's guide in Pointed Firs and the other Dunnet sketches. Mrs. Todd and her mother Mrs. Blackett have both lived so close to nature that they can foretell the weather with certainty (PF pp. 35 and 42), and although the narrator's comment that her hostess "came to an understanding with the primal forces of nature" before begin-ning an expedition literally refers only to her careful observation (PF p. 76), the words have haunting overtones of consultation and control. The same suggestion appears when Mrs. Todd, sailing a dory, makes a gesture that seems "as if she urged the wind like a horse." Immediately, says the narrator, "There came . . . a fresh gust," but the

15 Sarah Orne Jewett, The Tory Lover (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1901), pp. 141-42. This book will be cited as TL.
possibility of a causal connection is left implicit (PF p. 38). This woman who seems to the narrator to personify "some force of Nature" (QT p. 18) has learned to use nature's gifts of healing, and she asserts that any illness but the unnatural one of hypochondria has a natural cure: "There's some herb that's good for everybody, except for them that thinks they're sick when they ain't" (PF p. 51). Mrs. Todd, unlike earlier herbwomen, is so close to nature as to seem a cousin of the ancient natural gods (QT p. 18), but her communion with the natural world is greater than that of other third-phase characters primarily in degree. Mrs. Fellows in "Sister Peacham's Turn" (1902) also possesses the experience and closeness to nature that allow her to foretell the weather (USS p. 372), and the heroine of The Tory Lover (1901) feels a sense of kinship to the stars that represent "the great processes of the universe" (TL pp. 289-90).

Almira Todd, so close to nature she seems to control it but nevertheless "made desolate" by the sea, is a nearly perfect emblem of the ambiguity with which Jewett finally invests nature. Too honest to fall wholly into nature worship, but too much a daughter of New England and nature itself to allow its evil to blind her to its good, Jewett attains in her later works a realism founded in the maintenance of both

attitudes but above all in her ability to see the natural world clearly and depict it vividly:

... at the first step out of doors the sunshine always laid a warm hand on my shoulder, and the clear, high sky seemed to lift quickly as I looked at it. There was no autumnal mist on the coast, nor any August fog; instead of these, the sea, the sky, all the long shore line and the inland hills, with every bush of bay and every fir-top, gained a deeper color and a sharper clearness. There was something shining in the air, and a kind of lustre on the water and the pasture grass, -- a northern look that, except at this moment of the year, one must go far to seek. The sunshine of a northern summer was coming to its lovely end. (PF p. 157)

Country, City, and Society

Jewett's final view of rural life is also two-sided, but its duality represents integration and a hard-won balance rather than ambiguity or ambivalence. The hardships found on farms and in country villages often temper her pleasure in their benefits, but the benefits are real, and the latest writings seem to imply that Jewett believes they are worth the cost. The city, on the other hand, loses most of its importance as either setting or symbol. In Pointed Firs (1896), unlike Deephaven (1877), rural life is measured against an ideal of human fulfillment rather than against the city, and the narrator, again unlike the speaker in Deephaven, makes only the vaguest references to her usual life (PF pp. 1, 16 and 158). In some of the other third-phase works the city represents a life of hurry or indifference, and occasionally it still provides opportunity to those for whom rural life is too confining, but in the third phase of her career Jewett is far more interested in rural communities, and depiction and examination of rural villages like Dunnet Landing absorbs her lingering interest in social change.
In spite of its air of bucolic peace, *Pointed Firs* (1896) does not idealize rural life. The narrator's visit to Green Island, the book's strongest depiction of rural felicity, leads to the remark that "It was impossible not to wish to stay on forever," but in the next paragraph Mrs. Blackett remarks that her daughter Mrs. Todd is fortunate to live ashore where she has "more scope" (*PF* pp. 50-51). In the later sequence of chapters dealing with the Bowden Reunion, Mrs. Todd discusses her cousin Sant Bowden, a shoemaker by circumstance but a general by talent and inclination: "'T was," she says, "most too bad to cramp him down to his peaceful trade" (*PF* pp. 91-92). A little later the narrator, observing how in stimulating surroundings Mrs. Todd herself shrugs off her "limited and heavily domestic" air, meditates on the abilities that are wasted in rural life:

> It was not the first time that I was full of wonder at the waste of human ability in this world. . . . The reserve force of society grows more and more amazing to one's thought. More than one face among the Bowdens showed that only opportunity and stimulus were lacking, -- a narrow set of circumstances had caged a fine able character and held it captive. (*PF* p. 95)

"The Queen's Twin" (1899) confirms this picture of Dunnet's lack of opportunity with its description (again voiced by Mrs. Todd) of "three good hard-workin' families" defeated by the poor soil of one farm (*QT* p. 16). The sketch's major subject, however, is rural loneliness rather than hardship; Mrs. Abby Martin, "a beautiful old woman" in spite of "the hard work of a farmhouse," has in her isolation come to think of herself as the "twin" of Queen Victoria, whose day and hour of birth she shares. Hers is a very reasonable delusion, but it is
lived out so intensely that one day she makes all the preparations for the Queen to come to visit: "... when I see the dark an' it come to me I was all alone, the dream left me, an' I sat down on the doorstep an' felt all foolish an' tired" (QT pp. 33-34). Generally, however, her thoughts of the Queen are "a sight o' company for her" (QT p. 7), and her pathos lies not in her delusion but in the loneliness it assuages. 17

In spite of its hardships, however, rural life is fundamentally good in Jewett's third-phase stories, especially if it is lived with spirit and courage. This attitude is less a result of the nostalgia for "a golden time" that Warner Berthoff suggests 18 than a corollary, reached near the end of Jewett's career, of her idea that "it is not one's surroundings that can help or hinder--it is having a growing purpose in one's reach." 19 The best single illustration of this theme among the third-phase sketches is "The Parshley Celebration" (1899), a story about country people who plan and enjoy their own Decoration Day observance instead of waiting for "them" to do it. "We're 'they,'


19 Sarah Orne Jewett, "Looking Back on Girlhood," Youth's Companion, 65 (7 Jan. 1892), 5-6; rpt. in USS, p. 7.
aren't we," says one character. "We've got to do things ourselves if we want 'em done, in a little place like this" (USS p. 281).

The Country of the Pointed Firs (1896) is made especially remarkable, as one critic has pointed out, by the fact that it achieves status as "a kind of wish-fulfillment" even though it basically depicts "restricted, frustrated, and aging lives." That the narrator finds Dunnet Landing's life attractive, and that most readers agree, is clear, but the sources of attraction are elusive. Just before leaving, the narrator comments on the "pleasant engagements" her interaction with Dunnet citizens and scenes has created, and she goes on to say that while such pleasure may have limitations, "the ease that belongs to simplicity is charming enough to make up for whatever a simple life may lack, and the gifts of peace are not for those who live in the thick of battle" (PF p. 158). Simplicity and peace, then, are among the virtues of Dunnet life, and perhaps of rural life in general. The characters of Pointed Firs also live close to a nature that is often achingly beautiful, and scenes in which Mrs. Todd and her brother William share lovely prospects with the narrator (PF pp. 33 and 45-46) show that Jewett no longer imagines, as she seemed to do in A Marsh Island (1885) that city taste must teach rural people to appreciate the beauty.

Country dwellers have the additional advantage of a way of life given peace and beauty by its repetitive correspondence to universal human rhythms. Mrs. Todd, the narrator feels, is "like a renewal of some

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historical soul, with her sorrows and the remoteness of a daily life busied with rustic simplicities and the scents of primeval herbs" (PF p. 49). The assembled Bowdens, in a similar way, share "the instincts of a far, forgotten childhood" and represent the archetypal family (PF p. 90).

The primeval pattern of her life seems to sustain Esther Hight in "A Dunnet Shepherdess" (1899) as well. The sole support of a querulous and paralyzed mother, imprisoned on a stony farm and separated from the man she loves, Esther seems a prime example of rural deprivation. In actuality, however, she has made her unpromising land pay by adopting the ancient but innovative plan of shepherding her sheep, work that leaves her "refined instead of coarsened," and she and her unacknowledged lover are "happy in being together in the world" because she can see his fishing grounds from her pastures and he can catch sight of the ledges of her farm from his island home (QT pp. 55-72). Courage and inventiveness allow them to endure and overcome the hardships of their lives.

An even clearer summary of Jewett's final attitude toward farm life can be discerned in "A Born Farmer" (1901). Jacob Gaines, a man who enjoys working and loves his farm, nevertheless agrees to move away from what is "unwelcome drudgery" to his wife when he inherits a small fortune. His son adapts to the city, but his daughter eventually misses her country suitor, his wife sinks rapidly toward mental and physical illness from boredom and lack of exercise, and Jacob himself, "a born farmer," grows more and more restless and feels that only his
capital is of use to the business firm he has joined (USS pp. 340-44). At the story's end husband, wife, and daughter have all returned, ostensibly for a visit, but actually to live under "the starlit sky and the dim familiar shapes of the old Maine hills" (USS p. 344). In one sense, then, the story celebrates the superiority of country life to the city, but this simple implication is qualified by the fact that Jacob's son chooses to remain in the city, with its greater opportunities (USS p. 344), and by the fact that the inheritance has ended the "dreadful anxious times" Gaines has suffered in trying to pay off his mortgage. Where only the severest industry and drudgery kept them afloat before, there is now plenty of money, and work becomes "a perfect delight" (USS pp. 336-39).

The rural life the Gaines family eventually chooses is more honestly rural than the transplanted city existence of the first phase's "A Guest at Home" (1882), and they adopt it more permanently than did Polly Finch in the second-phase "Farmer Finch" (1884), but it is still a rural life with the harshest exigencies removed. The differences between the three stories of rural acceptance show how Jewett's ideas have developed: At the end of her career she sees that rural life, even on a farm, can be far preferable to life in the city, but she still balances this vision with the knowledge that some people, like young Gaines and Mrs. Todd, require "more scope" (PF p. 51), and she still recognizes that the poverty stalking the rural landscape undermines both pleasure and serenity.

Besides offering wider opportunities for occasional characters like young Jacob Gaines and the Halletts of "A Spring Sunday" (1904) (USS p. 386), the city figures in Jewett's final works primarily as a place of hurry and indifference. Apparently some of its disadvantages are relative, because in *Pointed Firs* (1896) there is one woman, reared on a farm, who has found even Dunnet Landing too crowded and noisy: "The people lived too close together for her liking, at the Landing, and she could not get used to the constant sound of the sea" (PF p. 19). The narrator reacts the same way when she returns from her visit to quiet Green Island: "The town of Dunnet Landing seemed large and noisy and oppressive as we came ashore. Such is the power of contrast" (PF p. 52). "The Gray Mills of Farley" (1898), Jewett's only real attempt to treat the evils of industrialization, also seems to imply that urban ills are not necessarily related to size, for Farley is "small but solid; you fancied yourself in the heart of a large town when you stood midway of one of its short streets, but from the street's end you faced a wide green farming country" (USS p. 265).

The real problem with cities, some sketches suggest, is indifference. In "A Born Farmer" (1901) the Gaines family enjoy visiting relatives in Boston, but they are dissatisfied when they try living "unnoticed by a cold world of indifferent neighbors in another part of the city" (USS p. 339). "A Village Patriot" (1896), though it is primarily about the happy Fourth of July created by a country man's
initiative, also implies that cities need to substitute some of the
same public spirit for their usual self-centered apathy (USS pp. 248-51).\textsuperscript{22}

The strongest explicit reaction against city life in Jewett's
third phase comes in her last sketch, "William's Wedding," left "uncom-
pleted," presumably unrevised, at the author's death, and published in
1910.\textsuperscript{23} The narrator of Pointed Firs returns to Dunnet Landing because
"The hurry of life in a large town, the constant putting aside of pref-
ERENCE to yield to a most unsatisfactory activity, began to vex me."
(PF p. 147). Coming back allows "life" to replace "anxious living" in
"a return to happiness" (PF p. 147), and later Mrs. Todd says that
people in cities are "prone to run themselves to death" (PF p. 149).
To the charge of urban indifference, then, Jewett eventually adds the
possibly explanatory charge of being always in a hurry. Neither is a
great evil, but both are ills which often contrast with country life.

The single story of the third phase that uses a city as its only
physical setting in some ways confirms this image, but it seems

\textsuperscript{22} See Cary, USS, p. xv.

\textsuperscript{23} Cather, p. 9. The sketch reaches an adequate conclusion, so
one presumes that what it lacked was revision. It has generally been
assumed to have been written before Jewett's accident in 1902, but
Williams (p. 237) suggests the possibility of a later date. Jewett's
pleasure in publishing again in 1908 ("a verse that I found among my
papers") implies that she either wrote "William's Wedding" later (she
tells Cather she hopes to write again soon), considered it unfit to
publish (because of needed revisions or perhaps because its tone did
not fit the other Dunnet works), or did not remember that it was avail-
able. See, on Jewett's hopes and the 1908 poem, Sarah Orne Jewett,
"To Miss Willa Sibert Cather," 17 Aug. 1908, Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett,
primarily to suggest that the appearance of unrelatedness that fuels city indifference is an illusion. "The Spur of the Moment" (1902) details the serious and fortunate consequences of an offhand decision. Because a bored city woman pities a cab horse on an icy day and sends the cabman to an elderly, impoverished friend, the friend continues to receive a pension and the nearly desperate driver resumes a comfortable position as gardener on a wealthy estate (USS pp. 365-71). Jewett sees this as an illustration, not of coincidence, but of interrelatedness: "... we seldom really know how much we have to do with other people's lives" (USS p. 371).

The real reason for the city's diminishing importance in Jewett's later settings is not its indifference or unattractiveness, but Jewett's growing interest in depicting a composite rural village whose sense of community offsets the disadvantages of rural life. Her final works focus on Dunnet Landing and villages like it, and they explore the customs and lifestyles of such villages minutely, showing them subject to the change that characterizes other places but making them quiet and attractive.

Even idyllic spots like the Landing are vulnerable to social mobility and openness. Before the Bowden family can become the archetypal clan it must celebrate "its own existence and simple progress" (PF p. 90), as if change is the essence of family succession and

24 See Eakin, p. 206; and Stevenson, p. 7.
continuity, and the experiences of Mrs. Fosdick, now a visitor on her native farm (PF p. 56), and Mrs. Blackett, separated for years from the sister who married an inland farmer (PF p. 85), emphasize the presence of change in the most ordinary lives. The universality of change is the major lesson learned by the Pointed Firs narrator when she returns to the Landing in "William's Wedding" (1910). Fleeing from the city, she hopes to begin rural life where she left off, and both Johnny Bowden's growth and the visible effects of winter surprise her (PF pp. 147-48). To impress upon her the lesson that Dunnet Landing is not a paradise immune to time, Mrs. Todd immediately asks about the fashion in bonnets (PF p. 148), and later when the narrator has received a wordless but "just rebuke" the older woman repeats the question (PF p. 153). In trying to make Dunnet ageless and unalterable the narrator has been denying its reality, and she cannot be at home there until she admits that like all other places it is subject to change.

In its depiction of one specific change, the decline of the rural aristocracy, the third phase completes the pattern set in earlier phases. An upper class is entirely missing in Pointed Firs (1896), except perhaps for the occasionally glimpsed doctor and the lover "far above her" whom Mrs. Todd mourns (PF p. 17). "Martha's Lady" (1897) depicts a mistress-and-servant household much like that in the earlier "A Lost Lover" (1878), but the narrative interest has shifted to the country-born maid. In The Tory Lover (1901), set in earlier times, the

colonial rural aristocracy is in its prime, but this fact seems to be one of the novel’s problems, since making the central characters aristocrats by definition relegates the people Jewett has become most skilled at portraying to supporting or villainous roles. At one point Jewett almost contemptuously remarks of her genteel hero that coming "face to face with life as plain men knew it" has humbled him and made him more a man (TL p. 236), and the novel is strung with a series of lower-class minor characters (like the butler Caesar, the housekeeper Peggy, the nameless innkeeper, and especially the sailor Cooper) who seem more vividly alive and more interesting than all but the most important of their superiors.

The sharpest social criticism of Jewett’s final phase is aimed at those who control and exploit the new industrialization, and "The Gray Mills of Farley" (1898), a depiction of an industrial village, is her most concentrated social fiction since the feminist A Country Doctor (1884). The chief directors of the Farley mills, having refused their agent’s appeal to hold back money for coming bad times with virtuous mouthings about "duty to the stockholders," declare a large dividend and enable themselves to sell out at a profit. The resulting shut-down causes great misery to the workers, and the happy ending that finally comes is only an ironic return to the usual insecure employment (USS pp. 365-80). Cary accuses the story of endorsing "Noblesse oblige" and portraying misery while it "shrinks from expostulation," but

26 USS, p. xiii.
Jewett's unadorned portrait of the workers' sufferings protests more effectively than didactic moralizing, and while she does not suggest a solution she does reject noblesse oblige in an ironic scene that shows the irresponsible major stockholder accepting the paternalistic role of the old-world "gentry" (USS p. 270). Such behavior has no place in America, but the story seems to warn that industrialization could create a new feudalism.

The primary emphasis in the third-phase social milieu is, however, a minute explication of the ways of the rural villages where almost three-fifths of the sketches (as well as the whole of Pointed Firs) are at least partially set. Dunnet Landing is the center of this portrait, and, although the other villages present minor differences, they basically confirm and expand its depiction. In "William's Wedding" (1910) the narrator announces that people like the Blacketts and Mrs. Todd "are in every village in the world, thank heaven" (PF p. 151), and she also suggests that understanding the villages requires sympathy and experience. Her story, she says, "is written for those who have a Dunnet Landing of their own: who either kindly share this with the writer, or possess another" (PF p. 150). Understanding or possessing a village does not mean idealizing it, for the composite village Jewett depicts has its flaws and absurdities, but it does mean giving careful attention to the institutions, habits, and values that the villagers share.

Aside from rural economic hardships, only two unpleasant characteristics are attributed to the composite rural village, and both of them have a humorous side. Feuds, the bane of rural communities in
the second phase, are still common in the third. In *Pointed Firs* (1896) the narrator mentions that "feuds had been overlooked" in the interest of the Bowden Reunion (*PF* p. 98), and earlier Mrs. Todd describes two families who share an island but have not spoken for three generations, "even in times of sickness or death or birth." She seems, however, to regard the feud as a therapeutic relief of boredom: "There, they enjoy it: they've got to have somethin' to interest 'em in such a place" (*PF* p. 37). "Bold Words at the Bridge" (1899) is the comic story of a summer-long feud between next-door neighbors (*QT* pp. 118-34), but "the unsettled rivalries and jealousies of a most independent neighborhood" (*TL* p. 99) are more serious when they threaten the mission of John Paul Jones in *The Tory Lover* (1901). Also serious are the petty insularity and prejudice that ostracize a dead sea-captain's French widow in "The Foreigner" (1900), but these traits too take a comic turn in *Pointed Firs* when Mrs. Todd, like the citizens of *Deephaven* (1877), makes fun of an even smaller place than the one in which she lives (*PF* p. 37). In her final works Jewett is willing to admit that village life has social disadvantages as well as economic ones, but she no longer always sees them as serious.

The third phase sketches depict at least four important formal or informal institutions of village life: religion (or "meeting"), family, the visit, and parlors. The primary significance of religion in the sketches is social, for the church provides a major scene for community


28 See Fike, p. 173.
interaction. In *Pointed Firs* (1896), Mrs. Blackett, almost a personification of rural community at its best, makes a special point of timing a mainland visit to allow her to attend (*PF* p. 79), while in "The First Sunday in June" (1897) Lydia Bent persuades her neighbors to resume attendance with the social argument that "'tis all going to meeting together that makes the best of it" (*USS* p. 259).

The importance of family in the rural world is most clearly depicted in *Pointed Firs*, where family members offer each other not only love and affection (*PF* p. 33), but also material aid (*PF* pp. 52 and 106), and where the Bowden Reunion becomes a quintessential symbol for the "Clannishness" that "is an instinct of the heart" (*PF* p. 98). A speech of Mrs. Todd's (*PF* p. 94) makes it clear that one must acknowledge relatives, but one need not like them. Another aspect of the family in village life is clarified in "A Pinch of Salt" (1897), when a teacher's thoughts show how one's family gives one a place and even a reputation in the community.

Visits and parlors are less formal social institutions, but they also are important in the third-phase fiction. Visits, as Francis Fike has pointed out, both celebrate and reinforce the bonds of community. Mrs. Todd in *Pointed Firs* (1896) speaks "as if to visit were the highest of vocations" (*PF* p. 55), and many of the sketches, including "Martha's Lady" (1897) and "The Queen's Twin" (1899), take their pattern from the visit motif. Visits may be long, as in "Martha's Lady," or brief, as in

29 Fike, pp. 176-77.
"A Change of Heart" (1896), but they always serve to bring rural people, usually women, together. A rough equivalent of the visit for the male population is going for the mail, which provides a chance for conversation in "The Gray Mills" (1898), "The Honey Tree" (1901), and "The Lost Turkey" (1902).

The final institution, the "best parlor" of the rural home, had been treated satirically or scornfully in earlier works like A Marsh Island (1885), but Jewett's growing appreciation of the meaning of rural social ties leads her to appraise it differently in Pointed Firs (1896):

It was indeed a tribute to Society to find a room set apart for her behests out there on so apparently neighborless and remote an island. . . . Mrs. Blackett was of those who do not live to themselves, and who have long since passed the line that divides mere self-concern from a valued share in whatever Society can give and take. There were those of her neighbors who never had taken the trouble to furnish a best room, but Mrs. Blackett was one who knew the uses of a parlor. (PF p. 42)

The parlor, in this final analysis, is the embodiment of social concern and participation.

Various other village ways also evidence and reinforce the sharing and concern at the root of village life. The sharing of "news" is as popular in the final phase as in the second. In Pointed Firs (1896) a farm woman is anxious to hear some, while in "The First Sunday in June" (1897) neighbors welcome Lydia Bent because she "always had something interesting to tell" (USS p. 259). The Tory Lover (1901) and "The Honey Tree" (1901) comment on the speed with which "news" spreads (TL pp. 244 and 402; USS p. 357), while in "A Dunnet Shepherdess" (1899) an invalid who can neither read nor knit during the long days is dependent on "new
things to think of" (QT p. 69). Another important habit, illustrated by "A Change of Heart" (1896) and "Bold Words at the Bridge" (1899), is the daily interaction and consultation that draw near neighbors close. Mrs. Todd's practice as an herbalist is a special instance, but most rural neighbors depend on each other for advice and help. In cases of real need such interdependence becomes a very personal kind of charity, as when neighbors, unlike those in "The Town Poor" (1890), are glad to sustain Mrs. Price in "The Coon Dog" (1898), not only because she is good company and helps with extra work, but also because "'T ain't much for a well-off neighborhood" to do (QT p. 173). In Jewett's time the sharing of village life also involves going to war together, and the veterans in "The Parshley Celebration" (1899) remember a dead comrade's neighborliness and kindness (USS p. 287), while in The Tory Lover (1901) men from Berwick not only sail together (TL pp. 97-99) but also comfort and care for each other when they are taken prisoner (TL pp. 281-84). A final custom that encourages neighborly interaction is hospitality. In both "The Honey Tree" (1901) and 'Sister Peacham's Turn" (1902) a member of the community learns the joy of hospitality, and in the second the woman who has learned sums up her own lesson: "I'd got way down to livin' for myself alone, an' there's nothin' makes life so dull an' wearin', let alone the shame to a Christian person!" (USS p. 377).

A final aspect of the village life Jewett portrays is the communal values that sustain it. The same complex of values surrounding work and the home that has been traced in earlier phases still applies in the third, as even a cat is expected to work in Pointed Firs (PF p. 52), and the heroine's hard work and homemaking skills create a successful tavern
and win a distinguished husband in "The Stage Tavern" (1900). Closely related is the value assigned to individual initiative and public spirit in sketches like "A Village Patriot" (1896) and "The Parshley Celebration" (1899), where individuals plan and carry out successful holiday observances, and "The First Sunday in June" (1897), where one woman brings a town back to church. Another value, that of trust and safety, is expressed in Mrs. Todd's unconcern when she leaves her door open as she departs for a day's excursion (PF p. 81), and also in the lack of fear with which the heroine of "A Pinch of Salt" (1897) goes to her spring at midnight (USS p. 255). A final outstanding value, one which pervades all of Jewett's work, is the respect and affection given to older people.30 Many examples might be cited, but "Aunt Cynthy Dallett" (1896), in which a middle-aged niece volunteers to give up her own home so her elderly aunt can remain in hers (QT pp. 220-21), will suffice.

Although Jewett's mild interest in social change lingers into her final phase, her depiction of rural village life becomes the main focus of her later work, absorbing most of the emphasis in her portraits of country and society and relegating the city to an unimportant symbolic role. The hardships of rural life are not ignored or denied, but they are balanced by Jewett's most detailed and convincing social setting. The composite rural village of the third phase, with its mutual concern and interdependence, joins with rural closeness to nature and primeval rhythms to provide a viable reason for Jewett's growing preference for

rural life and to help sustain the delicate beauty of the atmosphere of *The Country of the Pointed Firs*.

**Technique**

Jewett's technique in the portrayal and use of setting is generally at its best in her final phase, and it is most consistently at its best in the Dunnet Landing sequence. In essence, however, the techniques are still those she had developed earlier in her career, and the improvements come from growing skill and discrimination and from the depth allowed by elaboration of the village world and lengthy attention to the physical milieu of Dunnet Landing. Setting as a supplement to action and character, setting presented in vivid detail, and setting used to express emotion are still the basic devices on which the author relies, but in each case she shows a new consistency and at some point brings her technique near to perfection.

In *The Tory Lover* (1901) Jewett gives a rationale for the parallelism of setting to plot and character that she has always practiced when she remarks of a character bent on a difficult mission that "It was one of the strange symbolic correspondences of life that her path led steadily up the hill" (*TL* p. 82). Such "symbolic correspondences" are common in the third phase, and they serve to particular effect in *The Tory Lover*. By their use Jewett is able to employ setting to reinforce both plot and characterization.

The technique of allowing setting to call up action in the form of reminiscence works fairly naturally in most of its third-phase uses. In *Pointed Firs* (1896) Mrs. Todd's confidences about her marriage are
evoked by the scene of her courtship and her husband's death (PF pp. 48-49). Setting begins "The Foreigner" (1900) in a different but equally natural way: when a storm reminds Mrs. Todd of "the night Mis' Cap'n Tolland died," the narrator, to keep her hostess's mind away from the storm's threat to her family, encourages her to tell the tale (USS pp. 307-09). In "The Green Bowl" (1901), however, the technique operates awkwardly when a character explicitly asks for the story of an unusual china bowl (USS p. 351). "A Spring Sunday" (1904), the last of Jewett's sketches to use the pattern, is again natural, as an elderly couple's visit to the scene of their first home logically calls up the story of their lives (USS pp. 384-90).

Realistic detail, seasonal or otherwise, is used to echo and reinforce plots in the final phase much as it had been in earlier works. The seasons still retain their conventional significance, as when the coming of winter parallels growing troubles in The Tory Lover (1901) (TL p. 135). Spring motivates a farmer's return to his land in "A Born Farmer" (1901), and in "A Change of Heart" (1896) it witnesses the rebirth of love. Particularly significant is the use of summer as a completed time-frame to unify Pointed Firs (1896) in its original form, a sequence that is destroyed when "William's Wedding" (1910), which clearly belongs to a later spring (PF p. 147), is treated as a part of the book. 31 The fact that the narrator leaves before autumn comes

31 See Vella, pp. 281-82, n. 1. In 1910, after Jewett's death, her publishers added "A Dunnet Shepherdess" (1899) and "William's Wedding" (1910) at the end of Pointed Firs. In 1919, the late-summer "The Queen's Twin," which Jewett published along with "A Dunnet
(PF p. 157) is also important, since it protects her initial Dunnet experience from the disillusion suffered by the narrator of Deephaven (1877) and ends the book on a less pathetic note. Other realistic details of setting also supplement plot both in Pointed Firs (1896) and in the rest of the fiction. Like Deephaven, Pointed Firs is continually projected against the sight and sound of the sea, but it uses the device more effectively because the references to the sea that occur in every chapter are considerably more substantial. Minor details also reinforce plot; tide and conversation turn together in the narrator's encounter with Captain Littlepage (PF p. 26), while a sparrow that lights on the coffin of "poor Joanna" symbolizes her retreat from human life (PF p. 72). The melon that reconciled neighbors share at the end of "Bold Words at the Bridge" (1899) even more effectively represents their revived friendship, since early in the story its growth was part of the cause for their quarrel (QT pp. 118-34)

Setting is particularly important in The Tory Lover (1901), where it lends needed support to an action whose interesting possibilities are not well realized. Parallel opening and closing scenes, the same device

Shepherdess" in another book, was added, and all three were inserted into the Pointed Firs time scheme by placing them before "The Backward View," the final, end-of-summer sketch in the original book. Since then argument over the proper arrangement has continued, but "William's Wedding" clearly occurs in a later spring and assumes that some time has passed since "A Dunnet Shepherdess," so there seems no reason for even a non-chronological study to place it before "The Backward View." See Clara C. Weber and Carl J. Weber, A Bibliography of the Published Writings of Sarah Orne Jewett (Waterville, Me.: Colby Coll. Press, 1949), pp. 18-19; Warner Berthoff, "The Art of Jewett's Pointed Firs," NEQ, 32 (1959), 31-53; rpt. in Appreciation, pp. 160-61, n. 9; Fike, pp. 170-72; and Green, pp. 412-13.
that unified *A Country Doctor* (1884), depict a boat coming up the Piscataqua River (*TL* pp. 1-4 and 403-05). Other views of the river, both actual and remembered, provide a scaffolding throughout the novel, and Mary Hamilton's vision of "sailing home again up the river, with our errand well done" (*TL* p. 277) foreshadows the happy conclusion. Numerous other details of setting, like the heavy clouds that announce a mob's attack (*TL* p. 248) or the twilight that urges Mary to go on without delaying (*TL* p. 336), also prefigure later events and help articulate the episodic action. *The Tory Lover* is not a successful novel, but Jewett's skillful use of setting to reinforce its plot gives it more coherence than it would otherwise possess.

The basically similar use of realistic setting detail to draw character also continues to function in the third phase much as it had in the second. In *Pointed Firs* (1896) it is an important device, and its use is rationalized by the narrator's belief that "a man's house is really but his larger body, and expresses in a way his nature and character" (*PF* p. 104). Hard-working, devoted Mrs. Blackett, with her deep love for her family and her island, is effectively characterized by her bedroom:

> I went to the door of the bedroom, and thought how pleasant it looked, with its pink-and-white patchwork quilt and the brown unpainted paneling of its woodwork.

> "Come right in, dear," she said. "I want you to set down in my old quilted rockin'-chair there by the window; you'll say it's the prettiest view in the house. I set there a good deal to rest me and when I want to read."

> There was a worn red Bible on the lightstand, and Mrs. Blackett's heavy silver-bowed glasses; her thimble was on the narrow window-ledge, and folded carefully on the table was a thick striped-cotton
shirt that she was making for her son. . . . Here was the real home, the heart of the old house on Green Island! I sat in the rocking-chair, and felt that it was a place of peace, the little brown bedroom, and the quiet outlook upon field and sea and sky. (PF p. 52)

In the same way, "poor Joanna" is depicted by the ascetic order of her bare home and by the natural objects she inventively employs to make it "homelike, though so lonely and poor" (PF p. 68), and Elijah Tilley is characterized by the careful housekeeping that makes his home a shrine to his wife's memory (PF pp. 105-07).

Individual sketches of the period make use of the same device. The protagonist of "Martha's Lady" (1897) reveals her emotion by putting a table mat crooked (QT p. 153), and in "A Dunnet Shepherdess" (1899) the line of sight between the heroine's mountain pastures and her lover's island is an emblem, both to them and to the reader, of their love (QT p. 71). The orphaned lamb Esther brings with her when they finally marry in "William's Wedding" (1910) also helps to characterize her; not only does its meekness match her own, but her unwillingness to leave it alone (PF pp. 156-57) has overtones of the Biblical Good Shepherd. Such use of setting to depict personality not only makes Jewett's characters vivid but also helps blend her fictional world into a living continuum.

Jewett's ability to use detail in creating her settings had always been notable, but in her final phase she reaches a skill that is in many passages little short of perfect. Non-visual imagery continues to play a major part in her descriptions, and details that appeal to something in the memory of most readers also have an important role.
Jewett employs von-visual imagery to add vividness to her descriptions so frequently in her third phase that it is possible to identify passages primarily dependent on the individual senses. Sound, for example, is particularly important in the passage in "The Coon Dog" (1898) in which the hunters follow their dog's progress by his "voice" (QT pp. 190-91). It also carries a special significance in the Pointed Firs (1896) passage in which Joanna, having "said all she wanted to" about her plans, falls silent: "It was real sweet and quiet except for a good many birds and the sea rollin' up on the beach" (PF p. 71). The sense of smell, which one critic suggests was particularly acute for Jewett, contains the essence of memory for the Irishman in "Where's Nora?" (1898) who often awakens after dreaming of Ireland "wit' the smell o' the wet bushes in the mornin'" (QT p. 77). Jewett exploits the ease with which smells stir memory and imagination by making the scents of Mrs. Todd's herbs a motif for the whole of Pointed Firs, and her first vivid depiction of the herbwoman's home takes its life from the first such passage:

... the sea breezes blew into the low end-window of the house laden with not only sweet-briar and sweet-mary, but balm and sage and borage and mint, wormwood and southernwood. If Mrs. Todd had occasion to step into the far corner of her herb plot, she trod heavily upon thyme, and made its fragrant presence known with all the rest. (PF p. 14)

32 Margaret Farrand Thorp, Sarah Orne Jewett, Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers, No. 61 (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1966), p. 7.
This passage also illustrates the more copious detail of the Dunnet Landing sketches, since except for Mrs. Goodsoe, who gathered mulleins and discussed pennyroyal in "The Courting of Sister Wisby" (1887), Mrs. Todd is the first of Jewett's herbalists to deal with and be described by specific herbs. 33

Touch and feel also play a major role in many of Jewett's more vivid descriptions, sometimes alone but often also in combination with smell. In "A Spring Sunday" (1904) a "spring breeze" that blows in through an open window suffices to describe a lovely morning (USS p. 384), while a walk in Pointed Firs comes to life at the remark that "The hot sun brought out the fragrance of the pitchy bark; and the shade was pleasant as we climbed the hill" (PF p. 45). But of course Jewett's skill with non-visual imagery does not mean she cannot also appeal to sight, as in the following passage from Pointed Firs:

When I thought we were in the heart of the inland country, we reached the top of a hill, and suddenly there lay spread out before us a wonderful great view of well-cleared fields that swept down to the wide water of a bay. Beyond this were distant shores like another country in the midday haze which half hid the hills beyond, and the far-away pale blue mountains on the northern horizon. There was a schooner with all sails set coming down the bay from a white village that was sprinkled on the shore, and there were many sailboats flitting about. (PF pp. 84-85)

Jewett also at times achieves a special kind of reality by selecting details that may be familiar to many readers or that call up special associations. Nails in the entry for coats and a desk in front for the

33 On uses and associations of the specific herbs Jewett mentions see Sylvia G. Noyes, "Mrs. Almira Todd, Herbalist-Conjurer," CLQ, 9 (1972), 643-49.
teacher (PF p. 18) make the schoolhouse the narrator of *Pointed Firs* rents spring to life even for those who have never attended a one-room school, and a kitten who can "mew with pathos" while her "fierce young claws" hold her up to beg from the table (PF p. 46) makes a Dunnet supper seem vivid indeed. The curious evocativeness of a night scene viewed from the window of a darkened room underlines a particularly vivid chapter (TL pp. 363-67) of *The Tory Lover* (1901), reinforcing the sounds from the moonlit street to make eighteenth-century Bristol live for a time in the reader's mind. Thus in her selection of detail, as in her coordination of setting with plot and character, Jewett uses basically the same techniques in her final phase that she had depended on earlier, but she often achieves effects that go far beyond the work she has done before.

In her correlation of setting and emotion in her last phase Jewett finally regains and surpasses the high level she had achieved, as if fortuitously, in the "In Shadow" chapter of *Deephaven* (1877). During the last years of her active career Jewett advised an aspiring writer to end his story with "three or four lines of description" and leave them alone, allowing readers "to feel what they like about it."34 Her advice exactly describes a technique she uses frequently both in *Pointed Firs* and in other third-phase works to end sketches or other recognizable units with distinct sense impressions and fragile, almost

indefinable emotion, contributing greatly to the "intangible residuum of pleasure," the unique "cadence," that Willa Cather finds in her mentor's work. In *Pointed Firs* (1896), for example, the visit to Green Island, which leads to the comment that Dunnet Landing seems noisy in contrast, ends with an evocation of the silent Dunnet night:

... the village was so still that I could hear the shy whippoorwills singing that night as I lay awake in my downstairs bedroom, and the scent of Mrs. Todd's herb garden under the window blew in again and again with every gentle rising of the sea-breeze. (*PF* pp. 52-53)

The end of the book is a lengthy descriptive passage of this sort, but its final clauses can represent its poignant quality: "... when I looked back again, the islands and the headland had run together and Dunnet Landing and all its coasts were lost to sight" (*PF* p. 160).

These muted endings are characteristic of *Pointed Firs*, ending chapters and even episodes within chapters, but they also appear in other third-phase works. "Where's Nora?" (1898) has a section that closes with "the headlight of the express like a star, far down the long line of double track" (*QT* p. 106), and the end of "The Queen's Twin" (1899) describes how the narrator and Mrs. Todd "set out upon our long way home over the hill, where we lingered in the afternoon sunshine, and through the dark woods across the heron-swamp" (*QT* p. 37). *The Tory Lover* (1901) approaches the same method when a chapter ends with the villain listening to the Ranger's sounds as it is "running

35 Cather, p. 7.
free before the east wind, and . . . almost at the fishing grounds" (TL p. 376). Actually, however, Jewett rarely uses this characteristic and effective device in her historical novel, perhaps because she senses the truth of Henry James's later dictum that it is almost impossible fully to enter the mind and consciousness of the past and therefore fears to trust modern readers "to feel what they like" about her eighteenth-century scenes.

The setting-related techniques of Jewett's final phase are not new to her work after 1896. She had been using setting to supplement other parts of her fiction and handling detail with increasing skill throughout her career, and the wistful, muted endings that express emotion by an objective correlative from setting are also a logical extension of her earlier methods. The difference between the latest works and those which came before lies in matured skills, sureness of touch, and a consistency that makes The Tory Lover (1901) the period's only noticeable failure.

Place

The relationship between people and the places they inhabit had figured slightly in Jewett's earliest sketches, primarily in the connection between women like Deephaven's Miss Chauncey and their homes. In the second phase the significance of real places to those who live there became important in Jewett's literary settings because of its role in her new perception of the value of rooted country life and the difficulty

36 James, pp. 202-03.
of emigration. The third phase makes the love of place, the emotional
collection of human beings to their own personal settings, into a theme
in its own right. Jewett had always depicted places skillfully and used
place as a stimulus for her stories, but at the height of her career she
seems to become fascinated with the human meaning of place. "Aunt
Cynthy Dallett" (1896) is about the relation among place, independence,
and love (QT pp. 195-222); "Where's Nora?" (1898) shows Ireland rejoicing
for her child's success (QT p. 111); and "A Spring Sunday" (1904)
explores the effect of place on memory (USS pp. 384-90). More signifi-
cant, however, are the discussion of place in Pointed Firs (1896) and
the extension of that discussion in "William's Wedding" (1910). The
Tory Lover (1901) too involves a lengthy examination of the subject,
and in its case place becomes a unifying theme.

The importance of one's own place is a submerged theme in The
Country of the Pointed Firs (1896). The book's first chapter is enti-
tled "The Return," and amid its description of Dunnet Landing there is
a clue to the narrator's reason for coming there:

When one really knows a village like this and its surroundings, it
is like becoming acquainted with a single person. The process of
falling in love at first sight is as final as it is swift in such
a case, but the growth of true friendship may be a lifelong affair.

After a first brief visit . . . in the course of a yachting
cruise, a lover of Dunnet Landing returned. . . . (PF p. 13)

This is not to say that Jewett writes about "place for its own
sake," but that she writes about the need and love for place that
underlies human emotion and her own art. See Chapter I and Welty, p.
68.
The narrator has been to the Landing before and, experiencing "love at first sight," has become its "lover." Now, however, she has returned to stay long enough to begin "the growth of true friendship," to know the village as she might know a person. Place thus provides the motive for her summer in Dunnet.

Finding lodgings with Mrs. Todd, the unnamed narrator settles in to study her village. Before the third chapter ends Mrs. Todd's house is referred to as "home" (PF p. 19), and in the fourth sketch the new lodger, untroubled by the Deephaven narrator's feeling of intruding, has attended a village funeral. She considers the deceased "an acquaintance and neighbor" (PF p. 19), and she regrets leaving before the burial procession and reminding herself and her new friends "that I did not really belong to Dunnet Landing" (PF p. 21). Though she feels momentarily estranged at this point, she has already settled into her new place and applied some of the most intimate place-related words, like home and neighbor, to her surroundings.

In order to know both Mrs. Todd and the "surroundings" (PF p. 13) of Dunnet Landing better, the narrator must go to Mrs. Todd's home on Green Island. She finds that the house there is both a "beacon" (PF p. 37), a guide, and "rooted" (PF p. 40), planted firmly in place, and she learns how basic this place is to Mrs. Todd, her brother and her mother Mrs. Blackett (PF pp. 33, 46, and 52). Later when she hears the story of "poor Joanna," who fled to Shell-heap Island after disappointment in love spoiled her "nest," her own place (PF p. 62), the narrator

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visits the "dreadful small place to make a world of" (PF p. 62) that became Joanna's home in order to know her better. While there she muses, or perhaps learns, that place is a metaphor for human individuality: "In the life of each of us . . . there is a place remote and islanded" (PF p. 75). The Bowden Reunion sequence that follows is concerned primarily with other themes, but it is significant that the gathering is held at the Bowden homeplace, and that the "Old Bowden house" is like a "motherly brown hen" awaiting its brood (PF p. 88).

When the narrator visits Elijah Tilley in a later chapter she learns about the relation between place and personality and between place and memory. It may be, too, that she learns that when a place becomes an unchanging shrine (PF p. 107) it experiences stagnation, for although Tilley's devotion to his dead wife is touching it is hardly healthy, and Mrs. Todd's remark that she prefers not to visit the house with Sarah Tilley gone (PF p. 111) seems to suggest that she disapproves of Tilley's behavior. The episode also gives a clue to the narrator's acceptance in Dunnet Landing. His wife, Tilley says, would have been pleased to meet "somebody new that took such an int'rest" (PF p. 106). The narrator's desire to know the village apparently makes the village willing to return the act of friendship.

The book ends, as has already been shown, with a lengthy description of place and with Dunnet Landing's gradual blending back into its surroundings. The narrator has formed many human attachments but she has also come to know the place: "Once I had not even known where to go
for a walk; now there were many delightful things to be done and done again, as if I were in London" (PF pp. 157-58).

Since she has already remarked that forming a friendship with a place one loves "may be a lifelong affair" (PF p. 13), the fact that the narrator returns in the later Dunnet sketches is not surprising, and the fact that one of them, "William's Wedding" (1910), says more about the theme of place is also to be expected. In this final sketch the narrator comes back because she is "homesick" (PF p. 148), again identifying the Landing as home, and she comes seeking to retrieve her own identity in a place that can make her "feel solid and definite again, instead of a poor, incoherent being" (PF p. 147). At first, however, she not only tries to ignore the change inherent in Dunnet's being a real place but also fails, when Mrs. Todd begins to detail the land-ownership arrangements so vital to rural life, to take her usual interest. "I couldn't stop for details," she says, and so when Mrs. Todd repeats the requested central information her attitude is "not without scorn" (PF p. 149). Because the narrator is thus out of touch with Dunnet Landing and the interest that is the condition of her acceptance there, she has "an odd feeling of strangeness," and Mrs. Todd's house is like "a cold new shell" (PF p. 149) instead of the cozy "larger body, or . . . double shell" it had become in her earlier visit (PF p. 53). The weather, silent and gray (PF p. 149), parallels her feelings. When finally on her second morning back she has managed to rid herself of the "distractions and artifices" of her other world, she wakes to bright spring weather and "the familiar feeling of interest and ease" (PF pp. 149-51). Although in her absence she had "lost
instead of gained" in interest and understanding (PF p. 152), she is finally ready to resume the empathy of her earlier visit, and so she is able to divine Maria Harris's feelings about William Blackett's marriage and earn Mrs. Todd's "how you do understand poor human natur'!" (PF p. 155). Reinstated in her Dunnet status, she participates with Mrs. Todd and William and Esther in the wedding cake and wine that are "like a true sacrament" (PF p. 156), and after she and Mrs. Todd see the newly married couple off they appear in a muted final scene that expresses the narrator's spiritual acceptance in Dunnet Landing: "We went home together up the hill, and Mrs. Todd said nothing more; but we held each other's hands all the way" (PF p. 157). In spite of her temporary estrangement, the narrator's "friendship" with Dunnet Landing has stood the test of separation, and her right in the place she has adopted is secure.

If The Tory Lover (1901) is viewed in light of the preoccupation with place seen in Pointed Firs (1896) and "William's Wedding" (1910), it becomes possible to see it as in one sense the culmination of Jewett's career rather than an unfortunate anticlimax. The only one of Jewett's longer works to be set openly in a real place, the novel depicts her native area at the time of the Revolution and gives a sympathetic picture of the difficulty many people of the time had in deciding to follow or reject the Patriot cause. Herself the descendent

Edward Wagenknecht's remark that it is "but one historical romance among many others of its time" is one of the kinder evaluations The Tory Lover has received. See Cavalcade of the American Novel (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1952), p. 172.
of both Tories and Patriots, Jewett is unusually willing to depict fairly the reasoning and suffering of the two sides. *The Tory Lover* becomes a novel about the choice of one's own place, and about the difficulty with which place-related affections came to center on the new country rather than the old.

Many characters have already made their choice as the novel begins. John Paul Jones, born in the British Isles, has joined the Patriot cause so thoroughly that he can say, as he attacks a town, "Come after me. . . . I am at home here!" and suffer no apparent pangs at the incongruity (*TL* p. 217). The hero's mother, although a child of the New World (*TL* p. 291), has also made her choice. At one point she asks to have read to her the Patriot oath, abjuring allegiance to the King, but though it would secure her house and lands for herself and her son she cannot swear to it (*TL* pp. 261-62), and when her American-born son Roger tells her he must fight for his country, she says "All your country, boy! . . . not alone this willful portion of our heritage. Can you forget that you are English born?" (*TL* p. 89).

Mary Hamilton, the story's heroine, is an ardent Patriot, but she still feels the attraction of England. In arguing her party's case she says, "we are English folk, and are robbed of our rights" (*TL* p. 312). Leaving New England to help Madam Wallingford search for Roger is difficult for Mary; it is "a great change" to leave "this dear landscape

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and . . . home" (TL p. 267), but she discovers that the English landscape also has claims upon her:

. . . she was in England at last, and the very heart of the mother country seemed to welcome her. . . . The fields and hedges, the bright foxglove and green ivy, the larks and blackbirds and quiet robins, the soft air against her cheeks, — each called up some far-inherited memory, some instinct of old relationship. All her elders in Berwick still called England home, and her thrilled heart had come to know the reason. (TL p. 319)

For a moment Mary is "half afraid that she had misunderstood everything in blaming old England so much," but thoughts of New England scenes and her accustomed friends and surroundings bring her back to her usual loyalties and make her feel homesick (TL pp. 320-21).

What is for Mary a momentary doubt is a choice of major proportions for Roger Wallingford. Influenced by Loyalist guardians, the young man has been slow to declare his mind (TL pp. 15-16). As the book begins he still opposes the war, but says that "since there is a war . . . my place is with my countrymen" (TL p. 37), suggesting that it is friendship and personal loyalty, more than love of country, that motivate him. His psychological conflict reaches its crisis as the Ranger is about to make its first attack on the English coast:

These were the shores of England, and he was bound to do them harm. He was not the first man who found it hard to fight against the old familiar flag which a few months earlier had been his own. (TL p. 211)

Remembering a lengthy stay in England, Roger recognizes the ignorance behind talk of an easy victory, and he regrets finding himself "the
accomplice" of France. But then his inherited thoughts of England are replaced:

They were the thoughts that had been born in him, not his own determination: he had come to fight for the colonies. . . . The lieutenant looked down at the solid deck planks where he stood, -- they had grown out of the honest ground of his own neighborhood; he had come to love his duty, after all, and even to love his ship. (TL pp. 211-12)

Built from Berwick lumber and manned with Berwick men, the Ranger becomes for Roger a visible extension of his true home, the place where he belongs, and the sight of the ship cancels out the pull of England's shores. When he later needs to identify himself in a letter it is as "Roger W____, of Piscataqua, in New England" that he does so (TL p. 384). His final speech concludes with a declaration of his loyalty to his country, and the book ends as he and Mary step ashore at home (TL pp. 404-05).

Place thus seems to supply a unifying theme for The Tory Lover (1901), and in this sense the historical novel grows naturally from Pointed Firs (1896) and the other works of the third phase. The psychological significance of place had long supported Jewett's use of setting, allowing it to express her themes and reinforce her plotting and characterization. It had also, if Eudora Welty is correct about its meaning for fiction, 41 been the source of her work's validity and life. In her final works Jewett seems to become consciously aware of what place does for human beings, and in this sense setting becomes,

not for its own sake but because of its human meaning, a theme in its own right.

Conclusion

From the point of view of setting, the work of Jewett's final phase is the culmination of her career as well as its close. Her view of nature has evolved from a whimsical affection to a solid realism based on genuine love that knows nature well enough to appreciate it without ignoring its maleficent potential. The city's image has remained basically the same, but its importance has diminished during the very years when Jewett was more often living an urban life. The country, on the other hand, has become more important, and has come to seem more and more pleasant and fulfilling, even though Jewett never forgets its potential for loneliness and hardship. Perhaps as she matures her appreciation of the offsetting advantages increases, or perhaps she is increasingly able to come to terms with her own feelings about Berwick and accept the ideas about the basic similarity of life everywhere that underlie both her realistic art and the code inculcated by her more didactic works. As her career advances her fiction is more and more concerned with portraying the social milieu of the rural village and depicting its values, but she never becomes so engrossed in this interest as to forget the reality of the social change progress implies. Throughout her work this knowledge that change occurs produces occasional bits of social criticism, but the only period in which social criticism becomes a major concern is the time in the early 1880s, at the end of
the first phase and the beginning of the second, when "Tom's Husband" (1882) and *A Country Doctor* (1884) appear.

The techniques Jewett uses to create setting and put it to service in her stories also reach fruition in her third phase, particularly in *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896), but their development has not moved in a straight line. The "In Shadow" chapter of *Deephaven* (1877), published less than ten years after her first sketch appeared in print, has a setting almost as vivid and skillfully used as all but the very best of the third-phase work. Development in this area is thus as much a matter of increasing consistency as of increasing skill, and part of the impact of *Pointed Firs* comes from the nearly flawless consistency with which Jewett exercises her best skills throughout the work.

Almost all of Jewett's writing implies an interest in place, since the depiction of setting is always one of her strongest abilities. She begins, often, with a real place, or rather with an imagined spot set in a real region. In spite of her inconsistency in technique, her settings on the whole grow more vivid over the years, thus becoming more and more real in the reader's mind as well as Jewett's. At the same time

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42 *Deephaven* combines aspects of Berwick, York, and Wells; the island-farm of *A Marsh Island* is suggested by Choate Island or a similar place; Dunnet Landing is "somewhere 'along shore' between the region of Tenants Harbor and Boothbay" or farther east (and either way lies considerably northeast of *Deephaven*); *The Tory Lover* is explicitly placed in the Berwick area. See the letter to William Dean Howells quoted in Matthiessen, *Jewett*, p. 120; see also, in the *Letters* ed. by Cary, "To Maria H. Bray," 1 Mar. 1888, Letter 30, p. 56, and "To Mary E. Mulholland," 23 Jan. 1899, Letter 96, p. 116.
time the love of place becomes increasingly important as a theme, moving from a sentimental linkage of women and their houses to a serious understanding of the depth and persistence of the affections that attach to place and an interest in the growth and transferal of place-related emotions. If Eudora Welty's analysis of "regional" writing is correct, it is this firm basis in place that makes it possible for Jewett to gain balance in her view of rural life and to transmit emotion delicately and without direct statement:

And as place has functioned between the writer and his material, so it functions between the writer and reader. Location is the ground-conductor of all the currents of emotion and belief and moral conviction that charge out from the story in its course.

Setting in Sarah Orne Jewett's work is not mere ornament, nor can it be reduced to her opinions about nature or the contrast between city and country. Because it represents place, and because place is fundamental to human emotions and to the kind of writing she does, setting for Jewett is the origin and anchor of her art, the most memorable and the most basic part of the fictional microcosm she creates.

43 "Place in Fiction," p. 67. Bert Bender ["To Calm and Uplift 'Against the Dark': Sarah Orne Jewett's Lyric Narratives," CLQ, 11 (1975), 222-23] suggests that Jewett's "predominant mood of consoled acceptance" is rooted in "her firm sense of place."
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