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Local-Color Literature and Modernity: The Example of Jewett

Josephine Donovan

ABSTRACT

Affirming local *difference* in the face of the ideological colonizations of modernity, local-color literature may be seen, it is argued, as one manifestation of a widespread cultural resistance to its impositions. Beginning with Walter Scott and Maria Edgeworth, local-color writers found themselves on the cusp between the premodern region, to which they were emotionally attached, and the power/knowledges of modernity, in which (by virtue of their class) they were schooled. The work of American writer Sarah Orne Jewett similarly displays an intimate and affectionate knowledge of her New England region, at the same time reflecting the perspective of one who is aware of the formations of modernity and who represents the local in counterposition to them. Local-colorists thus evince the "double vision" characteristic of the postcolonial author who has one eye on the hegemonic audience and the other on their native subjects. Translating from the latter to the former is what local-color literature does.

KEY WORDS

local-color literature, modernity, colonialism, Jewett

Local-color literature is a literary movement that flourished in most Western countries, including the United States, in the nineteenth century. A fictional offshoot of Romanticism, which was largely restricted to poetry, local-color literature (mainly short stories and a few novels) took hold in the U. S. in the 1840s and remained popular until the early twentieth century. It was distinguished by its realistic focus on a particular geographical locale, highlighting its customs, environment, and dialect. Pioneered by Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896) and Rose Terry Cooke (1827-1892), it was dominated by women writers, with Maine author Sarah Orne Jewett (1849-1909) generally considered the greatest of the American local-colorists. Perhaps because it was perceived as a women's literary movement or because it focused on marginalized cultures, local-color literature has been until recently ignored, trivialized, and (when they did pay it attention) disparaged by literary critics and scholars.

Beyond its importance in women's literary history, which is now acknowledged, the local-color movement merits further and renewed attention as an early expression of what became a widespread cultural resistance to the colonizations of modernity. As such, it may be understood, like other post-colonial literatures, as a literary movement that "emerged . . . out of the experience of colonization and asserted [itself] by foregrounding the tension with the colonial power, and emphasizing . . . differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre" (Ashcroft et al. 2). More often than not, colonization of non-Western countries by Western powers entailed—indeed was ideologically justified by—the imposition of modernity upon colonized natives (the "white man's burden"). Most of the native cultures seized

and colonized by the imperial Western powers were premodern oral cultures deemed by the colonizers as inferior to Western modes of modernity. Similarly, in the construction of modern nation-states, regions within states were culturally colonized, that is, held up as inferior to externally imposed cultural standards of modernity, to which regional natives were urged instead to conform.[1]

With the imperial power representing and enforcing modernity, the indigenous author, writing from the standpoint of the colonized, Edward Said notes, often expressed a "negative apprehension . . . of 'civilized' modernity," celebrating instead premodern traditions ("Yeats" 81). Such was the case with regionalist writers within states, the local-colorists; schooled in the perspectives of modernity by virtue of education or class background, they were also knowledgeable about native local culture, which as a rule they affirmed in opposition to modernity. In their case the opposition was more cultural than overtly political in nature, as the bearers of modernity to U. S. regions, for example, were not (except in the case of the South) conquering armies but rather the ideological instruments of the modern nation-state in alliance with capitalist industrialism. Local-color writers thus evince the "double vision" Ashcroft et al. note as characteristic of the postcolonial author (26): keeping one eye on the hegemonic authority and the other on the native subject, translating, in effect, from the latter to the former.

In *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920*, Jackson Lears notes that in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the United States experienced a "second industrial revolution." Launched by the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, it saw the rise of not just technological innovations but also, more importantly, of "organized corporate capitalism" and a concomitant "rationalization of economic life," the imposition of Enlightenment modes of "technical 'rationality'" on much that had been unregulated theretofore (9). "The process of rationalization" ushered in by modernity "did more than transform the structure of economic life," Lear notes; "it also affected the structure of thought and feeling" (10). It was this ideological colonization that the

local colorists wrote against, affirming instead the value of non-standardized, idiosyncratic, *local* tradition.

Because of women's historic location in premodern sites, their status became a central issue in the struggle between modernity and its discontents. Should women be seen as "persons" and accorded the natural and civil rights guaranteed all citizens, according to liberal political theory, one of the most influential inventions of modernity; or would doing so imperil the premodern traditions and kinship life-world women historically sustained? Women writers of the nineteenth century were often torn between the attractions of modernity—in particular the liberative prospects it offered women—and attachments to various aspects of the premodern, particularly its social provision of *Gemeinschaft* or community.

Sarah Orne Jewett, a white upper-middle-class woman with feminist leanings but also a resident of a marginalized region, appreciative of premodern values, and an affirmer of regional ethnic identity, provides an intriguing model of a writer whose works manifest the local-color resistance to many aspects of modernity but who also appreciates and supports those aspects that were liberative for women.

Her story, "The Flight of Betsey Lane" (1893), an acknowledged *locus classicus* of her work, encapsulates the conflict between the modern and the premodern in nearly allegorical form. The eponymous protagonist is an elderly woman who lives on a "poor-house" in rural New England. She conceives a desire to visit the 1876 Centennial in Philadelphia and thanks to a financial windfall is able to make what is in effect a pilgrimage to the exposition. Betsey is enlightened and excited by the new inventions she sees there, but the author also points up the urban anomie that has accompanied modernity by remarking how an animated Betsey stood out against the "indifferent, stupid crowd that drifted along . . . seeing . . . nothing" (188). In the end, Betsey returns to her rural community—where "people knew each other well" (183)--to live out her life with her friends. The story affirms therefore the virtues of rural *Gemeinschaft* even while acknowledging the positive aspects of modernity; in particular, the liberties it affords women, for, in making the trip by herself Betsey is, in effect, rehearsing

her own "declaration of independence."

Reading local-color literature as a site of resistance to modernity—and recognizing the role that writers like Jewett played in creating a counter tradition to its impositions—offers a counter view to that recently argued by such critics as Richard Brodhead who regard local-color literature as corrupted by unacknowledged ideological agendas and indeed complicit in the expansion of capitalist modernity.[2] Brodhead's view fails, in my opinion, to appreciate the subversive aspects of local-color literature, which may be seen in Foucaultian terms as a "subjugated knowledge" resistant to the "totalizing" disciplines we associate with modernity, such as modern science and social science, which effected "normalized" social and linguistic standards that were imposed on regional populations by the imperial center (Donovan, "Breaking" 226-27; Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 81-85).

In a perceptive recent article, "Regionalism and Nationalism: Maria Edgeworth, Walter Scott and the Definition of Britishness" (1998), Liz Bellamy argues that the works of both writers—acknowledged progenitors of the American local-color school—"are explorations of colonialism, as well as the cultures of the colonized" (55). Both writers are positioned on the cusp between colonizer—the English—and colonized—the Irish and Scot, respectively. Scott, by virtue of education, and Edgeworth, by virtue of her privileged class status as a member of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, understood the perspective of the colonizer; but both as well, because of their status as natives to Ireland and Scotland, respectively, knew and understood the standpoint of the colonized native. To a great extent their work is devoted to articulating the latter's perspective; Maria Edgeworth, for example uses an illiterate Irish servant Thady Quirk as her narrator in *Castle Rackrent* (1800), usually considered the first local-color novel. Thady speaks in dialect and his standpoint comically ironizes the behavior of his Anglo-Irish landlords. At the same time, Edgeworth wrote at least in part to educate the English reader about conditions among the peasantry in Ireland. In his famous general preface (1829) to *Waverley*, Scott acknowledged Edgeworth as his

model and said he hoped "to introduce [Scottish] natives to [England], in a more favorable light than they have been placed hitherto, and to procure sympathy for their virtues and indulgence for their foibles" (qtd. in Bellamy 54).

The colonizer-colonized dialectic is nearly always mediated literarily through class positions: the colonized equates to the peasant, folk, native society whereas the colonizer is upper-class, urban, and located outside the region. The writer enjoys an intermediate class location, however—as noted in the cases of Scott and Edgeworth, being of a literate upper class but one that is itself quasi-rural and indigenous.

The colonizer-colonized dialectic reflects the larger historical transformation of the pre-modern to the modern. Bellamy notes how Scott in his fiction represented "the clash between the old traditional culture [*Gemeinschaft*] and the structures and systems of a new commercial system [*Gesellschaft*]" (65), "the forces of modernity that are destroying the old order" (66). Rural peasant culture, which is "precommercial" (66), is thus seen as a site of resistance to the colonizing forces of capitalist modernity, identified with the middle and upper classes who more readily accommodate to and assimilate into the new order via education (74).

The American local-color school followed the format laid out in the literature of its British predecessors. In the earliest local-color stories—those by Harriet Beecher Stowe and Rose Terry Cooke—the subjects are indigenous New Englanders who speak in authentic local dialect and are rooted in authentic locales. Often the narrator is more educated and views the "native" from an urban perspective, expressing the viewpoint of the metropole toward the province, with, however, the values of the premodern rural area receiving respectful attention.

In what is probably the first local-color story published in the U.S., Stowe's "A New England Sketch" (1834), we find the characteristic clash between an older rooted vernacular figure, Uncle Lot Griswold, and a young, educated, "modern" figure, James Benton. As schoolmaster, James is an outsider to Newbury, the "Yankee village," where Uncle Lot holds sway (33). James is also headed for college (he

is eighteen), which further designates him as a representative of modernity, and he speaks in standard English. Uncle Lot, by contrast, speaks in dialect and is educated largely in local knowledges or *mētis*: "He had the strong-grained practical sense, the calculating worldly wisdom of his class of people in New England" (36). As James is courting Uncle Lot's daughter, he has to overcome the older man's skepticism about his cocky confidence and claims to authority. In the process, however, ironically, it is James who comes to appreciate the accomplishments and wisdom of the native, Uncle Lot.

Like Scott's and Edgeworth's, and even more forcefully than her immediate New England predecessors' (Jewett acknowledged Stowe as a major influence), the writings of Sarah Orne Jewett may be similarly seen as "explorations of colonialism [and] . . . the cultures of the colonized" (Bellamy 55), for, as noted, rural Maine in the latter half of the nineteenth century—Jewett's home turf—was being colonized by the nation and by the forces of economic and cultural imperialism that were imposing modernity upon the premodern region. Like her Scottish and Irish predecessor, Jewett articulated the standpoint of the premodern peasant, lower-class residents of rural Maine. But also like her predecessors, that standpoint was also usually mediated through an upper-class, literate narrator who, though herself native to the region, is conversant with the colonizer by virtue of class and education and writes in part to apprize said colonizer of the realities of the colonized. Secondly, Jewett similarly comprehends the colonization process in terms of the clash between the premodern and the modern. Much of her work may be seen as an affirmation of instances of premodern "cultural resistance" (Said, *Culture* xii) she found in her rural locality. At the same time a decided ambivalence toward premodern "backwaters" is registered throughout her work, usually through the mediating narrator (as seen in *The Country of the Pointed Firs* [1896]) who has herself been urbanized and modernized to the point of being almost a stranger in the rural world of folk *Gemeinschaft* and who yet longs on a certain level to rejoin it.

Literate upper-class women in the latter nineteenth century found themselves in a unique historical moment, one in which "harsh

generational conflict" had broken out between mothers and daughter on just this issue (Smith-Rosenberg 33). Unlike their male counterparts who at least since the early modern period had been able to leave the premodern—the rural—for the city where they would have had access to the power/knowledges of Enlightenment modernity, most women in the Western world had been confined to the largely illiterate, oral culture of the premodern until Jewett's generation. It was only in her day that universities and the professions–sites of modernity—began opening up to women, and even in her day it was still considered highly deviant for a woman to leave the premodern bower and engage in a "professional" career. Jewett's novel *A Country Doctor* (1884) in fact deals centrally with this issue.

While there was much that was attractive to a woman of Jewett's position in the power/knowledges of modernity—in particular, the rights, freedoms, and opportunities envisaged for women in liberal feminism, as well as the comforts and easements offered by modern inventions—there was also much that was threatening to the rural "female world of love and ritual" to which Jewett belonged emotionally. Like many women in her generation, Jewett was, I believe, genuinely torn between the two worlds, which were represented geographically in her life by Boston and rural Maine—the one the world of the "daughters," the other of the "mothers." Those women who were educated in the discourses of modernity, the younger generation, necessarily became alienated from the premodern worlds of their mothers. Such education served, as Carroll Smith-Rosenberg remarks, "to draw young women out of their mothers' and grandmothers' domestic mindset"; they learned instead "to think and feel 'as a man'" (252-53).

Thinking "as a man" meant adopting the abstract, universalizing modes of Enlightenment secular rationalism, seen especially in the epistemology of the modern sciences and social sciences, which were gaining hegemony in the latter nineteenth century. The classificatory hermeneutic of modern science and modern medicine, as well as pseudo-sciences such as sexology, require that the individual "case" be fit into broad identificatory schemes in order to be recognized. These

disciplines therefore established normalizing ideological standards that by the latter nineteenth century were effectively colonizing everyday life-worlds even in rural areas remote from the metropoli where the professional experts and bureaucrats conversant in the disciplines and practices of modernity lived.

The nineteenth colonization of the local premodern world of rural Maine by the powers and institutions of modernity was both literal and figurative: corporate industrial development and expanding communication and transportation systems were by the latter 1800s making incursions into rural territory—a form of creeping economic imperialism; but the domination was as well of the mind. An ideological colonization also occurred during this period through the growing imposition of normative standards in language, behavior, and culture by Enlightenment disciplines, such as science, pseudo-science, and social science. While numerous theorists have recognized that regional and local-color literature in the U.S. must be understood in terms of the post-Civil War effort at national unification (Louis Renza's work is especially perceptive in this regard), most critics in the fields of American Literature/American Studies have failed to locate the local-versus-national dialectic within this larger global transformation—the transition from premodern to the modern.

Sarah Orne Jewett's work reflects the author's complex negotiation between the colonized territory to which she belonged—that was home to her but from which she was in a sense exiled—and the increasingly hegemonic world of modernity to which she was in some ways attracted but by which in many ways repulsed. Her work engaged in this dialectic on several fronts. First and most obvious is her articulation of the regional voices and idioms that are threatened with erasure by the nationalizing project of federalism. Second, in several works she establishes the claims of the sociologically deviant as against the imposition of pseudo-scientific norms of behavior; in a few of these works this takes the form of a resistance to modern medicine. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Jewett voices a refusal to accommodate to capitalist development, especially of the natural world. In this she was manifestly a

proto-ecologist.

On the first point, as noted above, Jewett's work resembles Edgeworth's and Scott's in negotiating between the claims of the premodern rural world in resistance against colonization by the modern. Her and other local-colorists' use of dialect established a "deterritorialized" standpoint, a "point of under-development," a "*patois*," a "third world" from which to resist colonization from without—terms used to describe "minor literature" by French theorists Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (33, author's translation). In applying the Deleuze/Guattari theory to Jewett, Renza notes how in, for example, her story "A White Heron," Jewett represents "'points of nonculture and underdevelopment, the zones of a linguistic third world' intent on sabotaging the major language of American patriarchal culture" (35). Jewett's and the other local-colorists' use of dialect throughout their work defiantly affirms the solidity and reality of this colonized linguistic realm—notwithstanding the fact that Jewett's frame narratives are in standard English (while she herself probably spoke in a Maine dialect). One might argue that such a use of a "normalizing" frame might serve to set off the dialect as deviant, if not inferior, a point that would tend to support Renza's conclusion that Jewett finally accedes to the "federalist perspective" (56). I would argue to the contrary, however, that the frames in Jewett's work do not dominate or erase the embedded dialects; they rather serve to accentuate them, even to elevate them much as a picture frame highlights the picture it encases or a setting enhances a gem. Such a frame says: "different but valuable." It affirms—indeed, emphasizes—the ontological presence of the items scored. The embedded dialect also often serves to ironize the frame language rendering it less authoritative, less "normal," much as the narrator's "modern" viewpoint in *Pointed Firs* and other works is undercut as authoritatively dominant by indigenous premodern views.

Other practices, customs, and characters of premodern rural culture are similarly rendered ontologically present in Jewett's treatment. A work like *Pointed Firs* is a veritable catalog, for example, of use-value production practices from Mrs. Todd's herbal

preparations to Elijah Tilley's knitting. Dunnet Landing is not a world of capitalist entrepreneurs engaged in economic imperialism. Mrs. Todd does charge for her herbs and presumably also charges rent of her tenant, but the relationship between the two quickly eclipses economic roles operating finally in terms of kinship relation. Dunnet Landing is in fact largely a subsistance economy, close in fact to being an exemplar of the premodern gift economy, governed as it is by kinship ties and codes of hospitality. Most of the economic exchange in the work is through gifts, and most of the products exchanged are hand-crafted. The increasing dominance of factory-made goods is lamented by another Jewett character, a tailoress, the title character in "Miss Debby's Neighbors" (1883), who complains of how people are now buying "cheap, ready-made clothes," which has the effect of making everyone look alike. "She always insisted . . . that the railroads were making everybody look and act of a piece, and that young folks were more alike than people of her own day" (191). Miss Debby is speaking of the ontic depletion effected by the commodity form.

In the same story the urban narrator, expressing the viewpoint of modernity with its emphasis on unifying hypotaxis, offers a complaint that the indigenous speaker's method "of going around Robin Hood's barn between the beginning of her story and its end can hardly be followed at all" (191). The indigenous narrator is uneducated and her narrative style reflects the oral mentality A. R. Luria famously identified in illiterate peasants, who resisted organizing material into deductive or hypotactic patterns (Ong 49-57). In his study of oral culture, *Orality and Literacy* (1982), Walter J. Ong lays out several features that characterize oral thought and expression, among them that it is "additive rather than subordinative," "aggregative rather than analytic," "redundant or 'copious,'" "empathetic and participatory rather than objectively distanced," and "situational rather than abstract" (36-49). All of these features readily describe the narrative technique of not just Miss Debby but of the numerous indigenous Jewett characters who narrate tales within her stories. In this way aspects of oral culture are embedded or transcribed in print in Jewett's and other local-colorists' work—another instance of the author serving

as mediator between two cultures—oral and print, premodern and modern.

Many, if not all, of Jewett's embedded narrators similarly speak in the fashion Ong describes, using primarily parataxis, and at the extreme (as in "Miss Debby's Neighbors") losing the unifying hypotactic thread of the narration. Significantly, in this story it is the modern author—urban, literate, and educated–who criticizes this round-about narrative tendency, looking vainly for some sort of deductive climax.

Many of Jewett's stories are constructed in layers of narration where an outsider narrator from the metropole comes to a rural region, encounters an insider who tells her tale paratactically in vernacular idiom. This technique is used most famously perhaps in *Pointed Firs* but may also be seen in such masterful stories as "The Courting of Sister Wisby" (1887) and "An Autumn Holiday" (1881).

In "Sister Wisby," for example, an urban I-narrator, wandering in the country (the first few pages read indeed like a nature essay), encounters an herbalist, Mrs. Goodsoe, who is in the process of gathering "mulleins," an herb. The two engage in a meandering gossipy conversation in which the herbalist reveals herself to harbor typically antimodern attitudes (see further discussion below). Her grasp of local knowledge or *mētis* is immediately apparent: when the urban narrator (who speaks in standard English, as opposed to Mrs. Goodsoe's dialect) asks whether the herbalist plans to gather the herb pennyroyal, she is immediately put down: "'Pennyr'yal!' repeated the dear little old woman, with an air of compassion for inferior knowledge; ''tain't the right time, darlin'. Pennyr'yal's too rank now. But for mulleins this day is prime'" (57). When the narrator offers to help her cut the mullein, Mrs. Goodsoe tells her how: "'Now be keerful, dear heart . . . choose 'em well. There's odds in mulleins same's ther is in angels'" (57). The narrator "listened respectfully" (57), while Mrs. Goodsoe rambles on anecdotally, finally (two-thirds of the way through the story) reaching the main story about "Sister Wisby," which is sparked by a discussion of another herb, "Goldthread."

"An Autumn Holiday" similarly starts out as a nature essay, an

I-narrator wandering the countryside with her dog. Eventually (four pages into the story) she comes upon a house where she finds two women spinning wool. They stop and chat with the visitor and after several shorter anecdotes the main tale emerges (more than half-way through the story), which concerns a transvestite or transgendered man, "Miss Daniel Gunn" (Jewett's original title of the story, which was evidently transmuted to the tamer "An Autumn Holiday" by her Boston editor—an example of censorial flattening out of regional eccentricity by metropole norms).

Gunn is a retired militia captain in a nearby village who "got sun-struck" and came to believe he is his dead sister (153). He began wearing her clothes, adopting feminine mannerisms, and engaging in traditionally female activities such as sewing bees. What is significant about this story is that, uneducated in modern pseudosciences like sexology, the townspeople do not classify him under some deductive category; rather they adopt a pragmatic operational approach to his situation, as is characteristic of *mētis*. Since his sister's clothes don't fit properly, the townswomen sew him larger women's clothes that fit, thus allowing him to continue his eccentric behavior while retaining his personal identity, unstigmatized by the classificatory systems of modernity.

Jewett also has various characters who repudiate the claims of modern medicine, affirming instead the virtues of the ancient feminine practice of herbology. Mrs. Todd is, of course, one example; although she has an amicable relationship with the local doctor it is likely that he—like Doctor Leslie in *A Country Doctor*—is an "irregular" physician on the order of Jewett's father who respects herbal lore and is himself skeptical of the scientific bent in modern medicine. Even more explicit in her rejection of modern disciplines—especially modern medicine—is the herbalist in "The Courting of Sister Wisby," Mrs. Goodsoe, who like many other Jewett characters laments the erasure of local eccentricity in the homogenization being effected by mass transportation and communcation systems: "[I]n old times . . . [people] stood in their lot an' place, and were n't all just alike, either, same as pine-spills" (59). Modern doctors may be "bilin' over with book-larnin'

[but they're] . . . truly ignorant of what to do for the sick. . . . Book-fools I call 'em" (57). Mrs. Goodsoe espouses in effect a theory of bio-regionalism: illness should be treated with regionally grown remedies: "[F]olks was meant to be doctored with the stuff that grew right about 'em; 't was sufficient and so ordered" (59). As in *Pointed Firs*, Mrs. Goodsoe's position is mediated through a more modern narrator who challenges and occasionally demurs from her views. But, as in *Pointed Firs*, the narrative frame by no means dominates the rural perspective. Indeed, one senses, as in *Pointed Firs*, a kind of self-irony occurring: the limitations of the narrator's "modern" view is also being ironized as circumscribed and limited; she concludes by lamenting the modern "world [which is] foolish enough to sometimes undervalue medicinal herbs."

A final aspect of Jewett's treatment of the resistance of the colonized to imperial impositions is found in her works that deal with nature. Jewett's resistance to capitalist and industrial development of the natural world is clearly stated in a number of letters. Perhaps her most poignant and moving statement of this position comes in an 1892 letter to Annie Fields: "The other day quite out of the clear sky a man came to Mary with a plan for a syndicate to cut up and sell the river bank all in lots. . . . Sometimes I get such a hunted feeling like the last wild thing that is left in the fields" (Fields 90). In a much earlier letter (1877) Jewett similarly remarks, "Berwick . . . is growing and flourishing in a way that breaks my heart" (Cary 36).

In several stories Jewett expressed intense empathy with the natural world even to the point of explicitly endorsing an animistic theory of nature; see especially "An October Ride," "A Winter Drive," and "River Driftwood" (discussed below), which were collected in *Country By-Ways* (1881). But Jewett's most powerful story of "cultural resistance" to colonization is her justly famous "A White Heron."

The story concerns a confrontation between the rural premodern world of Sylvia, a young girl who lives with her grandmother in an isolated woodland, and the world of modernity represented by an urban scientist, an ornithologist, who invades her peaceful green sanctuary looking for a rare white heron he hopes to kill and stuff for his

collection. That the ornithologist has a scientific, classificatory, "entomologizing" purpose (to use Foucault's term, *Histoire* 60, author's translation) highlights his status within the text as an avatar of modernity. His perspective is that of the quantifying, objectifying gaze of modern science. He sees the bird as an object to be scrutinized and colonized within the scientific paradigm of species and subspecies of *avis*.

The girl, on the other hand, is preliterate and uneducated in the perspectives of modernity; she has an animist view of nature. Its creatures are alive to her as presences, as "persons." "There ain't a foot o' ground she don't know her way over," her grandmother explains, "and the wild creatur's counts her one o' themselves. . . . Last winter she got the jay-birds to bangeing here" (165). That Jewett grants equal ontological status to the creatures of the natural world may be seen in several other works in which she evinces a desire to give voice, to articulate the "language" of the non-human. In "River Driftwood," for example, the narrator meditates:

> Who is going to be the linguist who learns the first word of an old crow's warning to his mate. . . ? [H]ow long we shall have to go to school when people are expected to talk to the trees, and birds, and beasts in their own language! . . . . Is it science that will give us back the gift, or shall we owe it to the successors of those friendly old saints who talked with the birds and fishes?" (4-5)

Jewett's anti-modern answer is clear: it is not science. Her resistance to its dominative colonizing claims is manifest as she continues,

> It is not necessary to tame [creatures] before they can be familiar and responsive; *we can meet them on their own ground*. . . . Taming is only forcing them to learn some of our customs; we should be wise if we let them tame us to make use of some of theirs. (5, emphasis added)

Jewett proceeds to envisage a day of "universal suffrage . . . when the meaning of every living thing is understood, and is given its rights and accorded its true value" (6).

In "A White Heron" Sylvia, though inarticulate, has a similar viewpoint; and although she is attracted initially to the ornithologist and interested in his knowledges, and he stimulates her to expand her horizons (literally: she climbs a tree looking for the bird and sees the ocean in the distance, something she had never done before); she nevertheless is distressed by his willingness to destroy the natural world in order to learn more about it. She "would have liked him vastly better without his gun; she could not understand why he killed the very birds he seemed to like so much" (166). Also disturbing is the way in which the ornithologist is willing to exploit the girl's knowledge of the birds for his own purposes. The corruptness of his instrumental treatment of Sylvia is further emphasized when he offers her money, in a sense bribing her, to reveal the location of the white heron. The unholy alliance between modern science and capitalism is tacitly acknowledged in this moment.

In the end Sylvia takes a stand and refuses to reveal the bird's location to the ornithologist, thus saving the bird's life and upholding the claims of the premodern, animist, *local* world of rural Maine as against the modernist imperative.

> No, she must keep silence. What is it that suddenly forbids her and makes her dumb? . . . .The murmur of the pine's green branches is in her ears, she remembers how the white heron came flying through the golden air and how they watched the sea and the morning together, and Sylvia cannot speak; she cannot tell the heron's secret and give its life away. (171)

Sylvia cannot speak but her author does, giving voice to the inarticulate people—human and non-human—of rural Maine, telling their story, that it not be erased, that its claim to ontological status be upheld against the colonizing, extirpating forces of modernity.

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NOTES

[1] There are, to be sure, a number of differences between literatures that are traditionally held to be "post-colonial," which manifest resistance to colonization imposed on native culture by an external state, usually of a different (white) race, and local-color literature, which manifests regional resistance to the nation-state. In the former case, race is a dominant factor in ideological colonization, whereas in the latter, class is the more important factor. In the former, native customs are denigrated in racist terms, whereas in the latter, they are looked down on as lower-class, regressive, premodern. It is also the case that in U. S. regions the white "natives" whose local, ethnic traditions were deemed inferior from the viewpoint of modernity, those same natives (or their ancestors) were themselves colonizers of the indigenous native Americans.

[2] In *Culture of Letters*, Brodhead argues that local-color literature in effect capitulated to capitalist modernity by commodifying regional difference for upper-class "tourist" readers. Lutz (2004) critiques Brodhead by noting his inconsistency: Brodhead's view of Charles "Chestnutt's resistance to the normative seriously undermines [his] general argument for the normative force of regionalism" because other regionalists, such as Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Hamlin Garland, and Sarah Orne Jewett offer a resistant perspective similar to Chestnutt's. "It is impossible," Lutz notes, "to miss . . . the validity of antipatriarchal sentiment in Freeman" (90).

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Josephine Donovan is Professor Emerita at the University of Maine. She is the author of *New England Local Color Literature: A Women's Tradition* (1983), *Sarah Orne Jewett*, rev. ed. (2001), and *Feminist Theory: The Intellectual Traditions* (2000) (available in Chinese translation). Her article "Animal Rights and Feminist Theory" (「動物權與女性主義理論」) appeared in *Chung Wai Literary Quarterly* 32.2 (July 2003).

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地方色彩文學與現代化：朱伊的例子

摘 要

在面對現代性意識形態的殖民化時，地方色彩文學肯定在地差異之價值，因而我們可將這種文學視為對現代性強制化所顯現之普遍文化抗拒。從史考特 (Walter Scott) 及艾奇渥斯 (Maria Edgeworth) 開始，地方色彩作家身處前現代之地域與現代性權力/知識關鍵點之間。他們的階級使他們嫻熟現代性權力/知識，但情感上他們眷戀他們的地域。相類似的，美國女作家朱伊 (Sarah Orne Jewett) 的作品表現出她對新英格蘭親密、情感深厚之認識，同時又反映出她對現代化形成的觀點，並在作品中再現在地，作為對現代化形成之相對立場。如此一來，地方色彩作家呈現後殖民作者之雙重視野特色，一方面著眼於霸權的讀者，另一方面著眼於本土題材。如何將後者翻譯到前者身上正是地方色彩文學之工作。

關鍵字：地方色彩文學，現代性，殖民主義，朱伊