

Sarah Orne Jewett, Nordicism and Race

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Introduction

"Sarah Orne Jewett: Nordicism and Race" resulted primarily from preparing a critical edition of Jewett's *The Story of the Normans* (1887) for the on-line archive of Jewett's work, The Sarah Orne Jewett Text Project, where it appeared in 2015. As I studied Jewett's text and developed related materials, I became increasingly convinced that much of what critics had said about this popular history was off the mark.

Jewett's early critics, such as Richard Cary, disparaged the book, applying to it critical standards that mischaracterized it, comparing it to what most agree is her more significant fiction rather than with other works in its own genre. I came to realize that popular history is a more ephemeral genre than fiction, in part because each generation writes its own popular histories, and there is little interest among literary scholars in the history of popular history.

More recent critics, in my view, often have used *The Story of the Normans* as a cherry tree, picking from it passages to support assertions about Jewett's political and social opinions. Ignoring contexts and the full range of Jewett's work, many of these readers have produced a distorted view of this book, of Jewett's body of work, and of her biography.

After working on *The Story of the Normans*, I felt myself in a good position to *begin* correcting what I see as serious misunderstandings of Jewett and her work, and I added this paper to SOJTP in 2016. I emphasize "begin," because my conclusion in this paper is that there is much work to do. I do not claim to fully understand how Jewett thought about race and the related topic of American Colonialism. It seems clear that scholars have not yet very seriously begun to engage in the sort of inquiry that would lead to a full understanding. I attempt here to point scholars on a path to improved knowledge.

I have added to this paper an appendix, "Jewett's Argument in *The Story of the Normans*," which appeared with my critical edition of that book in 2015 and is included in the 2023 print version. Because "Nordicism and Race" refers often to *The Story of the Normans*, it seems a convenience to readers to include a copy of "Jewett's Argument" here.

Both of these pieces have been revised since their original appearances.

Sarah Orne Jewett: Nordicism and Race

In his groundbreaking 1957 essay, "Sarah Orne Jewett's Ideas of Race," Ferman Bishop¹ concludes that despite Jewett's admiration for her abolitionist and egalitarian friends, John Greenleaf Whittier and Harriet Beecher Stowe -- he might also have named Annie Fields --, Jewett maintained throughout her life "an aristocratic emphasis upon the racial inequalities of mankind." He appears to be the first reader to label her kind of racial thought, saying that Jewett must be "counted as a consistent adherent to the ideas of nordicism" (249). Bishop traces her nordicism to her research for and composition of *The Story of the Normans* (1887),² a volume in the Putnam's Sons series of popular histories, *The Story of the Nations*. He says that in this work, Jewett found an account of the French Normans, from which the Jewett family claimed its ancestry, that persuaded her of the racial superiority of this Nordic people.³

Several critics have followed Bishop's lead in categorizing Jewett as a nordicist and in reading *The Story of the Normans* as presenting her racial theory. In two essays, Sandra Zagarell⁴ elaborates upon Bishop's reading, arguing that when Jewett composed *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896) she conceived of the ideal American community as racially exclusive. In "Country's Portrayal of Community and the Exclusion of Difference," she identifies "a nordicist discourse that valorized 'northern races'" (54). In "Crosscurrents," Zagarell finds in Jewett a "racialist, nordicist version of Euro-American history which shades into racism, white supremacy and nativism" (144). Patrick Gleason⁵ follows and further elaborates Zagarell, saying that *The Story of the Normans*, "celebrates the putatively Nordic qualities of adventure, intelligence, vitality, conquest, and ambition," and claims "that the infusion of these characteristics into the racially inferior Saxons made possible the formation of massive empires on both sides of the Atlantic" (26). In the view of these critics, Jewett is an avowed, if genteel, nordicist white supremacist and nativist.

In this essay, I challenge the accuracy of characterizing Jewett as a nordicist and of reading her work on Normans as developing a racial theory. I argue that the label is anachronistic and, finally, misleading, and that *The Story of the Normans* actually has little to say about race in the sense that the term is used either in the 21st century or by American nordicists, such as Madison Grant. Somewhat more relevant to Jewett's thinking is the discourse of Teutonism that emerged after the Civil War, but Jewett proves not to be a supporter of Teutonism, either. Examining these ideas leads to the broader question of how to develop a more accurate and persuasive view of Jewett on race. I move, then, to presenting a number of Jewett texts that are more directly relevant to understanding her racial thought. Taking notice of these texts and the little that has been said about them casts doubt upon the description of Jewett as a nordicist white supremacist and nativist. I conclude that Jewett scholarship has, as yet, uncovered little persuasive knowledge about Jewett's racial thought, though there is a rich set of materials scholars can examine to achieve such knowledge.

Nordicism

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the term "nordicism" enters the English language in about 1923, and it is first used to refer to the "doctrine of or belief in the

cultural and racial supremacy of the Nordic people" in 1925, sixteen years after Jewett's death in 1909. The term, *Nordic*, referring to Scandinavian peoples and languages, goes back to the early 19th century, according to *OED*, but the concepts of nordicism come into use a century later. Of course, some of the ideas that constitute nordicism could and, in fact, did precede the appearance of the term, as illustrated in this chronology:

1887	Jewett, <i>The Story of the Normans</i> .
1899	William Z. Ripley, <i>The Races of Europe</i> . Introduces the concept of a distinct Northern European race.
1902	Jewett's publishing career effectively ends after she is seriously injured in a carriage accident.
1909	Jewett dies.
1916	Madison Grant, <i>The Passing of the Great Race</i> . Popularizes the name, Nordic, for Ripley's distinct Northern European race and argues that Nordics are the superior world race.

These dates indicate that for Jewett to have been an American nordicist by 1887, she would have had to anticipate by 12 years Ripley's identification of a race of northern Europeans and by nearly 30 years Grant's arguments for the superiority of the Nordic race.

Thomas Gossett⁶ explains that ethnologist William Ripley's *The Races of Europe*⁷ was part of an attempt to complete the discrediting of Aryanism, the unscientific theory that a distinct Aryan race could be identified in modern Europe (126). John Higham⁸ further explains how Ripley synthesized recent anthropological studies to develop the thesis that Europe was populated by three distinct white races. He called the northern group Teutons, the central group Alpines, and the southern group Mediterraneans, and he worked out distinct physical and cultural traits belonging to each race. Ripley contributed to the kind of scientific race theory that new American nativists, represented by the Immigration Restriction League (founded in 1894), were anxious to develop as a rationale for cutting off immigration from southern and eastern Europe. However, Ripley's conclusions were not especially useful to these new nativists, because he saw human populations as essentially malleable, and he insisted upon the importance of environment in producing cultural and even physical differences over comparatively short times (154). Madison Grant constructed the argument that gave these nativists the "scientific" grounding they were seeking in *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916). Renaming the northern group Nordics, Grant argued that they were the superior race of Europe, the bearers of civilization, and founders and leaders of the United States. Crucially, he maintained that race was a natural and essentially unchangeable feature of each individual. Grant decried the "fatuous belief" of intellectuals in American culture's powers of assimilation, "the power of environment to alter heredity" (Higham 156).

Nordicism, as a form of nativism, receives its first full expression in Madison Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race*. Grant's argument contains these components:

Biological races are distinguished by heredity and have ancient roots in pre-history.

Race ultimately dominates over environmental influences in determining the character of groups and of individuals.

Nordics, with geographical origins in Scandinavia and northern Europe, form a distinct race.

Nordics are by far the most advanced world race, physically, intellectually, and morally. They are inherently and more or less permanently superior to all other "species" of humanity.

America's future survival depends upon Nordic dominance, for Nordics compose the true human aristocracy, those who are best fitted to govern.

The United States originally was *not* a democracy, but a republic, designed for the rule of the natural aristocracy, but a foolish and sentimental drift toward greater democracy -- the rule of the majority -- has reduced Nordic dominance and empowered the racially inferior mob.

Recent American history has produced at least two major errors that threaten national survival: making freed slaves into "equal" citizens; and importing a horde of non-Nordic immigrants for reasons of sentimental sympathy for the supposedly oppressed and as cheap labor.

The Civil War in the past and World War I in the present reduce the numbers of Nordic males, who -- as the most courageous, enterprising, and morally committed -- always are eager to sacrifice themselves for justice and liberty.

America's future is under serious threat because Nordic numbers are diminishing, while inferior races are out-breeding and overwhelming the Nordics.

Responses to this threat should include: restricting immigration, maintaining and strengthening racial segregation, encouraging native American Nordics to produce more offspring.

With *The Passing of the Great Race*, says Higham:

[T]he old Anglo-Saxon tradition had finally emerged in at least one mind as a systematic, comprehensive world view. Race-thinking was basically at odds with the values of democracy and Christianity, but earlier nativists had always tried either to ignore the conflict or to mediate between racial pride and the humanistic assumptions of America's major traditions. Grant, relying on what he thought was scientific truth, made race the supreme value and repudiated all others inconsistent with it. (157)

In *Ancestors and Immigrants*, Barbara Solomon characterizes Grant, at one time an officer in the Immigration Restriction League (IRL), as a eugenics supporter, with a particular animus toward Polish Jewish immigrants (201). His work along with that of the IRL and other nordicists led to the immigration acts in 1917, 1921 and 1924 that sought to limit, particularly, immigration from southern and eastern Europe. Higham says that, more than anyone, Grant in *The Passing of the Great Race*, which was reprinted multiple times through the early 1920s, "taught the American people to recognize within the white race a three-tiered hierarchy of Mediterraneans, Alpines, and Nordics, to identify themselves as Nordic, and to regard any mixture with the other two as a

destructive process of 'mongrelization'" (272).⁹ Higham notes Grant's beliefs in the "racial determination of culture," and that blending races led to regression of superior races toward the weaknesses of the inferior races: "the cross between any of the three European races and a Jew is a Jew" (156). For Grant, "restoring" America's declining cultural superiority depended upon reestablishing and maintaining an original Nordic racial purity. To succeed in this project, America must turn back from democracy to aristocracy (Higham 157).

In "Jewett's Argument in *The Story of the Normans*,"¹⁰ I show that Jewett's book neither forwards nor expresses agreement with any of the leading ideas of Madison Grant. She characterizes the Normans not as a superior people, but as thieves and fighters, foolish, brutal and murderous, who, nevertheless, have somehow given modern Anglo-American culture its courage and steadfastness and its great cultural and technological achievements. How is this possible? Her final answer to this question is in the progressive will of Divine Providence: "the slow processes by which God in nature and humanity evolves the best that is possible for the present" (363). The Normans were an aggressive militaristic people, but they also possessed a genius for finding out the best ways of doing things and the most valuable cultural products of the peoples they encountered and for transforming themselves by adopting newer and better ways. My analysis of Jewett's argument draws out these further observations:

Jewett's context for thinking about intercultural conflict and cooperation was religious rather than scientific, contrasting with Grant, so that her historical narrative traces the progressive actions of Divine Providence to bring about moral improvement in world civilizations.

Hence, Jewett's understanding of race, like that of most of her contemporaries, was *not* scientific, as Grant and Stoddard believed their racial concepts were.

Her conflation of race, nation and ethnicity, using the ideas interchangeably, allowed for considerable fluidity in the formations of peoples, such as the Normans.

She, like her historical sources, understood Normans to be a highly mixed amalgam of European peoples in the period of the Norman conquests; Grant would characterize Jewett's Normans as mongrels, distinct from true Nordics with "pure" Scandinavian ancestry.

Also in common with her sources, she saw Normans and Saxons in England as opposed in cultural traditions rather than in their genetic origins, which were virtually identical.

She concluded that Normans *and* Saxons brought to Anglo-American culture complementary strengths and weaknesses, such that their mixing after 1066 produced the particularly energetic and innovative culture that, for both good and bad, she saw in ascendancy at the end of the 19th century.

Though Jewett uses the term "race" often to refer to Normans and Saxons, in fact, she does not understand them as races at all, at least not as Madison Grant used the term. She believed, along with her sources, that at the time of the Norman conquest of England, the Normans were culturally as well as militarily superior to the Saxons, but this was a recent development, during which different groups of essentially the same peoples experienced quite different environments and cultural circumstances, a main difference being relative domination by the Roman Empire and then by Roman Catholicism. The Norman Conquest brought about the reunion of different branches of the European family and, thanks to Norman dominance, resulted in a union in which the

best qualities of both groups were preserved and developed, while at least some of the worst qualities were shed or reduced. What survives of the Normans after they blend with the Saxons to become the English, is a spirit, a set of attitudes and beliefs, which she calls a "rich inheritance," bequeathed in particular to England and America. In her view, *anyone* who embraces this inheritance becomes a Norman in spirit, regardless of ancestry. In a letter to Annie Fields, written as she was researching *The Story of the Normans*, Jewett speaks of the survival of Norman and Saxon viewpoints as like political parties, claiming that she can categorize at least some of her friends and neighbors in South Berwick as belonging to one group or the other.¹¹

Jewett's thinking seems far distant from 20th-century nordicists; rather, she appears somewhat old-fashioned, as one might expect in an artist who comes of age a generation or more before the inventors of nordicism. In her research for and composition of *The Story of the Normans*, Jewett, probably without knowing this, participated in another historical debate regarding the relative importance of Teutons and Normans in the development of modern Anglo-American culture. To place her thinking about race more precisely within the race discourse of her generation, it is necessary, therefore, to review a line of development that begins with Teutonic Origins Theory, tracing it up to the beginnings of nordicism.

It seems helpful to begin following race thinking from Teutonic Origins Theory to nordicism by introducing concepts from David Theo Goldberg's *Racist Culture*.¹² Goldberg is concerned in part to sort out racist expression and exclusion from the background of racialized discourse that he sees characterizing Western civilization since the 16th Century. Westerners virtually unavoidably communicate within a system of thought in which race assumes persistent reality, even though the term is empty of inherent meaning and, therefore, protean. Individuals affiliate with groups in both positive and negative ways by claiming and conferring racial identity. Westerners routinely deploy racial stereotypes, both benignly and invidiously. While in the long run, we might hope to do away with racialized thinking altogether, Goldberg wants to help readers understand when, at this point in history, resistance and opposition are called for. He sees little practical value in demanding that race disappear as a means of claiming and conferring identity, but justice requires a moral person to oppose what Goldberg defines as racist expression and action: communications, acts and policies that set members of groups apart as Others for purposes of exclusion from privilege and power (See for example, 41-3, 79, 90-7). Goldberg thus marks a permeable barrier between taking race seriously in the ways ethnologists and historians do when they categorize and study populations according to how they have claimed and conferred racial identities, on one hand, and, on the other, using these racial identities to cause harm by enabling, recommending, and carrying out exclusions (see 211). In the historical developments of Teutonism and nordicism, this barrier is crossed with the move from studying categories of people to creating and rationalizing hierarchies that enable racist exclusion.

Teutonic Origins Theory begins with historical examination of European populations to advance and test an hypothesis about the development of the modern nation state, but in the hands of some historians and their popularizers, the historical examination devolves into Teutonism, a racist and nativist doctrine current in Jewett's generation.

According to Edward Saveth¹³ in his first chapter, Teutonic Origins Theory posited that Teutonic tribes, Germanic populations of Northern Europe, rather than the Romans, originated certain key institutions of the modern democratic nation state, such as parliaments, the rule of law, and trial by jury (See also Gossett, Chapter 5). In the latter

half of the 19th Century, discussion of Teutonic origins took a racist turn toward Teutonism: the argument that Teutonic peoples, more than originating key aspects of modern national government, must also dominate in those contemporary nations, England and the United States, that wish to continue and improve these institutions. In the work of British historian Edward A. Freeman, Teutonism became a rationale for racial nativism, for excluding from Britain and North America all inferior, non-Teutonic peoples and limiting the power of those already present. These inferiors are not able to assimilate to a republic and, in fact, threaten the continuance of representative government. Freeman was in frequent contact with prominent American historians, and he offered public lecture tours in the United States, one of which led to his notorious book, *Some Impressions of the United States* (1883),¹⁴ in which he argued that African Americans and the Irish could not be assimilated to American democratic institutions. Freeman, thus, crosses a line between the historical study of differing populations on one side and, on the other, proposing a hierarchy of "races" and recommending some groups for exclusion from power.

Freeman's Teutonism came to include and foment anxiety about immigration. Barbara Solomon describes New England Brahmins' growing anxiety in the 1880s about the ability of the United States to continue the process of assimilation by which immigrants from many nations and peoples had been transformed into Americans up to that point in history. The "new immigration," which included increasing numbers of southern and central Europeans, seemed to be bringing into the nation hordes who appeared not so amenable to assimilation. Solomon specifies prominent figures known to Jewett who expressed anxiety about this, including Thomas Bailey Aldrich,¹⁵ Phillips Brooks and George Woodberry (See Chapter 4, especially 61-8). In the early 1880s, some British historians, such as Freeman, warned America of the increasing difficulty of assimilating immigrants. Saveth describes Freeman's position:

He postulated an original pre-historic home land of the Aryan peoples where they evolved a unique institutional pattern. The dispersal of the Aryans from this early cradle of civilization led to institutional recapitulation wherever they or their descendants settled in Greece, Rome, Germany, England and, finally, in America. The Teutons, chronologically the last of the Aryan peoples and like their predecessors, the Greeks and the Romans, destined to be rulers and teachers of the world, were recipients of the finest fruits of the racial heritage. Just as among the Greeks and Romans the Aryan institutional heritage culminated in the city-state and empire, so the entrance of the mighty Teuton upon the historic scene marked the dawn of a new era in political organization, that of the nation state.

In Freeman's view the Teutonic character was most highly developed not on the European continent, where the blood of the Germans had suffered a Romanic infusion, but in England where, despite Roman and Norman invaders, the institutions of the Anglo-Saxon prevailed. Widely as the contemporary British constitution differed from the practices of the followers of Cedric, who had carried the Teutonic heritage from the mainland to the island forests, there was no break between them. It was the distinctive trait of British nationality that, alone among the greater states of Europe, Great Britain possessed a Parliament whose descent could be traced from the Teutonic institutions of earliest times.

Freeman also believed that the ties of race transcended national boundaries. The English people had not one, but three homes: originally on the European mainland, then in England and, finally, in the United States. Those who came to Britain with Hengest in the fifth century and those whom the Mayflower brought to a New World

centuries later were alike carriers of the original Teutonic heritage. The institutions of the early Massachusetts towns were part of the inheritance of the Teutonic race, and their establishment in New England was part of the history of the Aryan people. (18-9)

According to Saveth, Freeman came into conflict with a number of historians over Teutonic Origins Theory, the position, summarized above, that democratic institutions have their origin in the Aryan race, and particularly in the Teutons, and that those Teutonic peoples who were influenced by the Romans, such as the Normans, were culturally inferior to the Anglo-Saxons.

American historians, in particular, were skeptical of Teutonic Origins Theory and offered a counter hypothesis in favor of Normans, Scandinavian peoples, which developed into a local and transatlantic debate. American historians, such as Henry Cabot Lodge and Henry Adams, became persuaded of the importance of Norman influence upon the development of democratic institutions as well as upon other significant features of Anglo-American culture (see especially Saveth, Chapter 3). Contention between Teutonic Origins Theory and the Norman hypothesis played out mainly in academic journals during the 1880s and 1890s. This discussion also devolved into a racist position embraced by Lodge and, especially, by the group of 1889 Harvard graduates who founded IRL in 1894 (See Solomon, Chapter 5). The IRL, with Lodge's encouragement and support, went on to help transform the Norman hypothesis into a foundation for nordicism, embracing Ripley's 1899 scientific, ethnological study that differentiated European races, giving authority to the idea that there was a distinct northern European race, and moving toward the final step, provided by Madison Grant, of constructing these European "races" into a larger hierarchy of all world races.

Twentieth-century historical studies by Solomon, Higham and Saveth present two parallel developments in which nativists hijack historical studies of European populations to use them as rationales for racist nativism. These two appropriations illustrate a process in which racialized thinking crosses a border into asserting and exploiting racial hierarchies as described by Goldberg:

Anthropological work categorizes peoples according to cultural and other markers, including language, location, religions, customs, physical appearance and other characteristics.

Historians describe and study categorized peoples' migrations, interactions, cultural and political development over time.

Some historians and others enable racial oppression by rationalizing hierarchies, making cases that one category is "by nature," essentially and permanently superior to another.

These steps lead to establishing racial oppression and exploitation by recommending and/or carrying out actions that separate categories of people and exclude some categories from power.

Jewett's work on *The Story of the Normans* takes place when American proponents of the Norman hypothesis were challenging Teutonic Origins Theory and when Freeman was arguing his Teutonist nativism. So far as I can determine, Jewett was not aware of the academic discussions of the origins of democratic institutions, but in her research for *The Story of the Normans*, she read massive histories of the Normans by Francis Palgrave, Augustin Thierry, and Freeman, among others. Freeman's monumental *The History of the Norman Conquest of England, Its Causes and Its Results* (6 volumes;

1867-1876) confirms his view of the primacy of the Teuton Saxons in the creation of modern democracies, and Palgrave concurs on this point, though, according to Gossett, Palgrave resists the notion that other races are incapable of assimilating these values (Gossett 87). Jewett's reading -- and probably also ethnic pride in her own Norman ancestry -- led her, apparently independent of contemporary professional historians, to oppose Freeman's Teutonic Origins Theory in her book:

Mr. Freeman believes that the Saxon element was the permanent one in English history, and that the Norman conquest simply modified it somewhat and was a temporary influence brought to bear for its improvement. It is useless to argue the question with such odds of learning and thought as his against one, but the second invasion of Northmen by the roundabout way of Normandy, seems as marked a change as the succession of the Celts to the Britons, or the Saxons to the Danes. The Normans had so distinctly made a great gain in ideas and civilization, that they were as much foreigners as any Europeans could have been to the Anglo-Saxons of that eleventh century, and their coming had a permanent effect, besides a most compelling power. It seems to me that England would have disintegrated without them, not solidified, and a warring handful of petty states have been the result. (*Story of the Normans*, 355)

In this passage, Jewett is quite aware that she is *not* a professional historian, and she knows she cannot argue against Freeman, only state her contrary opinion. She speaks of Normans and Saxons as closely related, malleable peoples who have temporarily undergone separate developments, so that Normans became able to bring special cultural gifts to the Saxons. And she affirms that both benefited from their reunion. That she does not call to her aid those American historians, who were in the process of developing their pro-Norman arguments, indicates that she probably was not aware of their work. Her book is a popular history based upon the work of a few professional experts. She authored it, presumably, because Putnam's had reason to believe that she could successfully present this material to their target readers. The book's commercial success as measured by multiple reprintings and its generally positive reviews suggests that her publisher was right.¹⁶

This example shows Jewett resisting Freeman's *historical* theory; on his nativism, she apparently makes no comment in *The Story of the Normans*. Does her work provide any clues to how she would have responded to his Teutonism had she been aware of it? When Jewett opposes Freeman's Teutonic Origins thesis that "the Saxon element was the permanent one in English history," she sketches and lends support to the view that mixing nations and peoples -- rather than always causing degeneration and cultural loss -- often contributes to the progressive improvement of civilization. Her basic argument is that adding a "permanent" Norman element to the Saxon element of British culture produced a new and better English culture. In doing this, she strikes at one of the main features of Freeman's nativism, his notion that maintaining at some level the racial purity of the Teutonic founders of English and American democracy was essential to its survival. To return to her thesis in *The Story of the Normans*, part of what made it possible for the brutal and often foolish Vikings to become the more gentle and civilized Normans and to give gifts of imagination and tolerance to Anglo-American culture was their willingness to combine with the peoples they encountered, such as the French, the Italians, and the English/Saxons, and to lead in the creation of new amalgams of peoples. This idea would have been anathema to nearly all forms of nativism, and especially to those developing during her professional lifetime, which aspired to identifying and maintaining a pure master race.

The above examination of *The Story of the Normans* shows that Jewett does not develop a racial theory there. She does not present the Normans as a race in the modern sense of the term, and she does not even argue that they were a superior people, though they temporarily dominated in France and England and left behind, when they disappeared, a legacy of positive attitudes and values that she considers a gift to modern civilization. She takes no position on either Teutonism or nordicism. Indeed, by following her sources in presenting the Normans as an amalgam of northern European tribes improved by interaction with French and Italian cultures and by conversion to Roman Catholic Christianity, she unknowingly opposes Teutonism and fails to support any of the key aspects of racial superiority prized by the proponents of nordicism who appeared after her death.

Jewett was not a nordicist, and her book on the Normans fails to express her racial thought, except for her belief that by mixing peoples over the centuries, Divine Providence works to bring good out of human folly and, so, to improve civilization. It is unfortunate that Bishop opened the discussion of Jewett's racial thought with such an extreme and apparently inaccurate characterization. In fairness, it should be noted that, in using the term "nordicism," Bishop seems unaware of Madison Grant's ideas. He draws instead upon Jacques Barzun's analysis of the development of German nordicism, which he traces from the Nazis back to Tacitus. Barzun applies the term "nordicist" to all writers who speak favorably of Germanic peoples.¹⁷ Still, this is problematic, for thinking highly of Germanic peoples does not inevitably entail white supremacy and nativism. Among the effects of Bishop's label has been the assumption among influential critics of Jewett that Bishop has established Jewett's nordicism and a subsequent slippage of his terminology to include the anachronistic association of Jewett with the beliefs of Grant and Stoddard. As a result, for at least some readers, she is presumed to share the white supremacist and nativist beliefs of those nordicists.

Bishop supports his thesis with a survey of Jewett's presentation of Normans in her fiction, but because he has missed Jewett's condemnation of Norman traits of violence, cruelty, arrogance, tyranny, self-destructiveness, ruthlessness, materialism, and folly, he fails to see how her depictions are double-edged. For example, Bishop argues that George Quint, the king of Folly Island, goes against his Norman ancestral qualities when through pride and anger, he dooms his wife and daughter to isolation and early death (246-7). But Quint embodies the negative traits of Jewett's Normans almost exactly, just as Mrs. Blackett of *The Country of the Pointed Firs* embodies their prime virtues. Similarly, Bishop registers Tom Burton's pity for the "Norman" Mr. Bellamy in "A War Debt," but misses Jewett's presentation of Bellamy as having sacrificed a rich social life, a prosperous plantation, his wife's health, his sons, and much more in the folly of a war to preserve slavery (247-8). This sort of distorted reading has characterized a good deal of critical writing since Bishop, as readers come to Jewett texts assuming her nordicism and nativism to be well-established.

Knowing that Jewett was not one kind of white supremacist or nativist reveals too little about her racial thought. As Gossett's *Race: The History of an Idea in America* makes clear, the variety of positions one could occupy in post-Reconstruction discourse on race was as various then as in the 21st century. She could have accepted or opposed any of several versions of racial or ethnic hierarchy. She could have supported or opposed the segregation or immigration of any number of ethnic, religious or racial groups. It should be possible to locate Jewett within the race discourse of her time. If her racial beliefs are not clearly present in *The Story of the Normans*, then one can look

for them elsewhere. Unfortunately, Bishop's argument has combined with the fact that the Dunnet Landing stories, especially, *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, are Jewett's most acclaimed and, therefore, best-known works. As a result, much of the scholarship on Jewett's racial thought draws primarily upon these stories, which are set in a small, down-east Maine coastal village.¹⁸ As Zagarell suggests in "Old Women and Old Houses," perhaps Jewett's critics have participated in creating a distortion by positing Dunnet Landing as Jewett's one idealized community and exploring the ways in which she seems to recommend it as a model for the region and for the nation.¹⁹ Given its location in time and space, it should be no surprise that Dunnet Landing lacks diversity, virtually its entire population having northern European ancestry. The only ethnic outsider fully presented in the stories is Mrs. Tolland of "The Foreigner," who comes to the area from Martinique via Jamaica. Gleason, for one, has argued that Mrs. Todd, who tells the story of Mrs. Tolland, suppresses her racial difference, forgetting or ignoring the probability that she is a mixed-race former slave (31-35). Mrs. Todd seems quite sure, however, that Mrs. Tolland was born in France and spent her childhood there, and Todd presents more evidence of her French customs than of African or Creole influence. Though it still is possible that Tolland was of mixed-race, no one in the story betrays even a suspicion of this. Instead locals focus on her outsider status as Catholic and foreign.

The main problem with using Dunnet Landing to get at Jewett's racial thought, then, is that the community lacks racial diversity, making it difficult to infer anything definitive about her ideas. The main inferences readers have made are that because Jewett prizes this community, she must be thinking of it as representing an ideal America, and, since the village lacks racial and ethnic diversity, she must long for an America without such diversity, a version of the racially pure, Nordic America of which Madison Grant dreamed.

Racialized Language and Stereotypes in Jewett Texts

If one wishes to get at Jewett's ideas about race, it would seem sensible to focus on texts in which she deals with the topic directly. Some work has been published on relevant texts, but more will be necessary before readers can begin to feel confident that a clear and consistent picture has emerged. The next part of this essay introduces texts in which Jewett deals directly with racial materials and in which she depicts more diverse communities than Dunnet Landing.

Readers seeking insight into Jewett's racial thought have naturally turned to pieces in her own voice, especially her letters.²⁰ Examining these materials, readers have shown that Jewett employs the racialized language of her time and makes use of racial and ethnic stereotypes. Some readers consider these examples as evidence that she "others" certain racial and ethnic groups, betraying her white supremacist beliefs, but other interpreters emphasize the difficulty of moving from such examples to reliable inferences about Jewett's opinions. A main problem in making such inferences is grasping the context of any particular utterance.

For example, Gleason calls attention to examples of racialized thinking in a Jewett letter reporting on her winter 1896 Caribbean cruise with Annie Fields and the T. B. Aldriches on Henry Lillie Pierce's steam yacht, the *Hermione*:

Writing home to Louisa Dresel, Jewett expressed her fascination with the islands of Haiti and Jamaica, articulating her touristic view of the local population in racialized

terms that echo the nostalgic plantation literature of the 1850s: "Then we went to Hayti, which was oh, so funny with its pomp of darkeys. Port au Prince was quite an awful scene of thriftlessness and silly pretense -- but one or two little Haytian harbours and the high green coast were most lovely. And then Jamaica, with all its new trees and flowers, and its coolies, Loulie! with their bangles and turbans and strange eyes. You would like Jamaica immensely" (Fields, *Letters* 163). (24)

Gleason characterizes Jewett as exoticizing and eroticizing these islands and their peoples. He believes Jewett's habitual "othering" of non-whites in her language originated during her first trip to Europe in 1882: "After this trip, she increasingly associated natural superiority with the Nordic races, racial inferiority and submission with the Anglo-Saxons, and servile dependence with people of African descent" (25). He notes condescension to Blacks in another letter about her cruise, this to Sarah Wyman Whitman, arguing that Elizabeth Silverthorne in her biography of Jewett attempts to obscure Jewett's racist language:

The original letter reads, "It is a charming little town along the waterside, with its little square houses with four-sided thatched roofs; and down the side lanes come women carrying things on their heads, firewood and large baskets of grapes, and an idle man-person on a small donkey, and little black darkeys, oh, very black, with outgrown white garments" (Fields, *Letters* 161). Silverthorne's presentation of the letter is for the most part accurate until she substitutes "small black children wearing garments handed down to them by whites" for "little black darkeys, oh, very black, with outgrown white garments." The alteration elides both Jewett's pejorative and her emphatic repetition of their visible blackness and injects a philanthropic tone absent from Jewett's original letter, which does not speculate that the children's clothing was beneficently "handed down" by whites. (28)

Another well-known similar example of racialized language is the incident at the Bowden reunion in *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, when one character says of another "I always did think Mari' Harris resembled a Chinee."²¹ Zagarell reads this as an ethnic slur that illustrates Jewett's exclusionary view of American identity ("*Country's* Portrayal of Community" 39).

Josephine Donovan calls attention to the context of the "Chinee" comment, noting, among a number of problems, that Jewett puts this remark into the mouth of a less than reliable character and allows Mrs. Blackett, the most ethically admirable person in the book, to contradict the comment.²² Similarly, elements of the context of the two letters Gleason studies make his inferences problematic. How does one know that Jewett's racial terminology was pejorative within her cultural context? Did she intend or even acquiesce in conferring characteristics of inferiority upon Black people by using "darkeys" or upon immigrant laborers by using "coolies" and by calling attention to their different appearance? What is the likelihood that future readers will read my use of the terms "Blacks" and "Black people" as pejorative epithets? Further, the recipients of both Jewett letters were painters -- as was Jewett at a more amateur level -- for whom the emphasis on color and visual contrast in the descriptions would have meanings perhaps more significant than denoting racial distinctions.²³

In a diary entry of Sunday 15 August 1869, when Jewett was nearly 20, she wrote: "Very rainy. Went to Church all day. Miss Lizzie Parks & Mr Barker of California sat with me in the morning. A nigger preached in the afternoon --"²⁴ This would seem to be clear proof that at the very beginning of her writing career, Jewett's use of racialized language proved her white-supremacist beliefs. And yet, this is the only use of "nigger" so far

noted in Jewett's writing. What did this word mean in Jewett's family, community, and church four years after the Civil War? Without much fuller knowledge of the context within which Jewett wrote this word, it seems impossible to know her intentions.

Racialized language often is part of employing stereotypes used to assert invidious racial and ethnic distinctions and maintain a racial hierarchy. Gleason identifies some stereotypes he sees Jewett using when she associates "submission with the Anglo-Saxons, and servile dependence with people of African descent." He draws upon Zagarell's "Crosscurrents," where she argues that Jewett's 1895 story, "A War Debt," produces a version of post-Civil War reconciliation narrative in which a pair of Nordic families will restore their friendship across the North / South divide, reestablish a feudal order with Freedmen as the new peasants, and so unify the broken nation on a foundation of institutionalized racism (145-6). This story, according to Zagarell, stereotypes freed slaves as incapable of functioning in democracy and Saxons as less able than Nordics to unify the nation and restore a proper racial order. She also characterizes Jewett's final novel *The Tory Lover* (1901), set in 1777-8 during the American Revolution, as presenting the view that the War of 1812 was a decisive victory of a Nordic United States over an Anglo-Saxon England, attesting to "America's destiny to supersede England as the primary sea-power of the Atlantic" (146).

In these arguments, Jewett is shown to accept as obvious and to depend upon her readers being willing to accept certain stereotypes about Nordics, Saxons, and African Americans. I have argued, in "To Each Body a Spirit," that Jewett's depiction of African Americans in her fiction is generally sympathetic.²⁵ For example, two important Black slave characters appear in *The Tory Lover*. Though their depiction may not be free of stereotypes, narrative sympathy for their oppression and recognition for their dignity as equals to their white owners seems clear. Further, I argue that the depiction of newly freed Blacks in "A War Debt" is complicated by being filtered through the consciousness of Tom Burton, the politically naive point-of-view character. It is clear that *he* stereotypes the former slaves he observes in the story, but it is less than clear that *Jewett or her narrator* affirms or intends for readers to accept his point of view. Whether Jewett accepts the typical post-war stereotypes of Freedmen as dependent and incapable of self-rule is further complicated by her use of a Black point-of-view character and her depiction of other Black characters in "The Mistress of Sydenham Plantation" (1888), seven years before "A War Debt."

Barbara Solomon shows Jewett deploying a negative stereotype of German immigrants as materialistic (157-8, 253). She also describes a letter to Louisa Dresel of 14 June, probably in 1892, as objectifying an elderly Polish pianist and, thereby, displaying the xenophobia common among New Englanders after the Civil War (175, 257). In that letter, Jewett playfully sketches an accomplished musician who is staying at her hotel in Aix-les-Bains, France. Age has diminished her ability. She is pathetic and amusing, with her cross looks, funny wig, bad table manners, and kitten-like demeanor. But Jewett confesses that this uncharitable portrait is "wicked," and tells Dresel that she has become friendly with the woman and feels sincere gratitude for "her good music." Jewett then reflects upon the dangers of simply accepting appearances and discounting such an eccentric: "but the minute you get beyond a certain point of interest and acquaintance, how this all changes!" This is like laughing at everyone at the circus, and Jewett reminds her correspondent that it is neither kind nor just to do so (Fields, *Letters*, #87).

Jewett apparently underwent a similar change of view-point with regard to Jews. In a letter to Anna Laurens Dawes of 25 November 1876, Jewett says of antisemitism:

I wonder if it is not a very shabby thing to have this contempt for that race? With me it is not a prejudice against their belief and history -- It is the looks of the Jews!! which is not a high-minded view of things at all...

This honestly confessed mixture of prejudice and recognition of her lack of high-mindedness in harboring it shifts a dozen years later, as seen in her 5 February 1888 letter to Dawes. She reports having read Dawes's *The Modern Jew* (1884), and goes on:

... I was tempted to ask you to give me some titles of books so that I could go on growing wise as to this great subject. Indeed it is far too great for one to be bound by ignorant prejudice as I have been; it is such a good hit at me when you ask whether I am willing to have America represented by the typical Yankee! I have heard Mr. [James Russell] Lowell say the most interesting things about the growing political power of the Jewish race and I believe that he has an uncommon liking for tracing unsuspected lines of Jewish heredity!

Jewett seems to imply here that antisemitism is the norm in her culture and to recognize that this results at least in part from the perpetuation of stereotypes that she would like to overcome in her own thinking. That antisemitism based partly on stereotypes was common in Jewett's circle is suggested by Annie Fields's travel diary entry of 15 February 1896, during her Caribbean cruise with Jewett and Thomas Bailey Aldrich. Further, Jewett, during her difficult and never completed recovery from her September 1902 carriage accident, wrote a March 1903 letter to Annie Fields in which she suggests that Fields has been in some way victimized by a "grabbing old Jew." While it is difficult to know exactly what she refers to, it is clear that she has resort to a hoary stereotype, perhaps connected with Shakespeare's Shylock.

As with racialized language, the examples of Jewett's use of stereotypes can become problematic upon closer examination. Attending to clues about context can complicate one's understanding of Jewett's intentions. If she calls herself wicked for allowing the ridiculous aspects of the pianist to interfere with her obligation to empathize, is she displaying xenophobia and nativism or something nearly the opposite? In "To Each Body a Spirit," I examine a difficult example of Jewett stereotyping African Americans when she describes a Virginia garden in "The White Rose Road." Jewett speaks in her own voice, recounting the personal experience of admiring the garden and learning about its owner:

Alas, she had grown too old and feeble to care for her dear blossoms any longer, and had been forced to go to live with a married son. I dare say that she was thinking of her garden that very day, and wondering if this plant or that were not in bloom, and perhaps had a heartache at the thought that her tenants, the careless colored children, might tread the young shoots of peony and rose, and make havoc in the herb-bed. It was an uncommon collection, made by years of patient toil and self-sacrifice.

One difficulty with interpreting racialized language is that any acknowledgement of racial difference may be read as betraying an intention to assert racial hierarchy and to "other" its already marginalized subject. How can one know whether Jewett intended such a distinction here? Is there any way she could have signaled to the reader that the tenants were African Americans without implying that carelessness is to be seen as a unique

defect of "colored children?" Is this a trap of language of the kind Goldberg and Toni Morrison in *Playing in the Dark* and others have described as seemingly inescapable?²⁶ Discussing a similar reading problem, whether -- in *The Country of the Pointed Firs* -- the family's military-like march from the Bowden house to dinner in the nearby grove should evoke images of Nazi marches in 1930s Germany, Laurie Shannon says: "But it cannot be the case that all marches or gatherings must echo and reflect forms of political violence. What is most helpful here is to specify as particularly as possible the discursive milieu in which these passages arise" (250).²⁷ However, as in the cases of the children in the garden, her diary reference to the Black preacher, and her reference to the "grabbing old Jew," there likely will be times when context is lacking or insufficient. Often, though, published texts that present marginalized characters provide more context and are more revealing.

Survey of Jewett Texts that Represent Racial and Ethnic Minorities

Next, I will survey in chronological order the texts I am aware of in which Jewett represents marginalized racial and ethnic groups. I will summarize what, if anything, readers have said about race and ethnicity in these pieces and will add other commentary as that seems helpful. A main purpose of this survey is to suggest directions for further study that may lead eventually to a full and persuasive understanding of how Jewett thought about race.

This may be a good point at which to be explicit about why I include both race and ethnicity in this discussion. One reason is that for Jewett and her readers, race and ethnicity were not as distinct as they seem to be for 21st-century readers. Another is that followers of Bishop have characterized Jewett as *both* a white supremacist and a nativist. Nativism at the turn of the twentieth century was fairly intent upon racializing ethnicity -- e.g. dividing white Europeans into distinct races -- but Jewett and her associates were more familiar with forms of nativism that focused on national origin and on religious and cultural differences to distinguish "true Americans" from undesirable potential immigrants.

"The Orchard's Grandmother" (1871)

A central incident in this children's story of refugees from England's Puritan revolution is a hostile encounter with Native Americans. The natives are seen through the eyes of a refugee child as hostile and "wicked-looking," but their wild nature is complicated by their foregoing an opportunity to kill or capture her. The narrator says of this: "I am glad I know one kind thing the Indians of those days did." While Jewett gives play to English colonists' fears and stereotypes of the natives, she also at least hints that the Native Americans are more complicatedly human than those stereotypes would suggest.

"Tame Indians" (1875)

This short story is based upon Jewett's visit to the Oneida reservation near Green Bay, WI, during a stay with family. The narrator at different points undertakes, with some success, undoing anti-Indian sentiments in the friends who visit the reservation with her, and in the children to whom she narrates the story of that visit. Charles

Johanningsmeier argues that Jewett sets out to challenge stereotypes in her one extended piece dealing with Native Americans.²⁸

"York Garrison: 1640" (1886)

This narrative poem for children re-uses the encounter between New England colonists and natives in "The Orchard's Grandmother," in which a little girl is spared capture or death at the hands of merciless and animalistic "Indians." However in this version, battle is avoided, perhaps because Polly touches their "savage hearts":

What blessed mercy sudden shone
And covered many a sin!
The Indians shouted merrily
And Polly safe went in.
No tomahawks were thrown at her
And no one gave her chase;
Perhaps it touched their savage hearts --
That frightened little face!
The story seems for those dark times
A gleam of sunshine bright;
I hope they called the Indians friends
And gave them food that night.

Karen Oakes (Kilcup) sees Jewett manipulating stereotypes of Native Americans: "Although the poem was ostensibly written for children, it speaks vividly to the dominant culture's exploration -- and confirmation -- of power relations between Indians and whites, while it points toward the transformative power of the feminine" (172).²⁹

"My School Days" (1887)

This memoir of Jewett's time at the Berwick Academy recalls considerable diversity among her fellow students. Among her favorite schoolmates were sailors' daughters who had traveled the world, a pair of charming Cuban boys "with handsome dark faces," and a pair of Danes. She valued these people, in particular, because they brought her close to distant places with their stories, customs and artifacts.

"Mère Pochette" (1888)

Set in Canada, this story provides a close look at French Canadian village life, and it takes note of a notorious feature of French Canadian migrant labor, showing young locals seeking work in the United States when economic conditions are poor at home. A significant portion of Canadian immigrant workers considered themselves temporary migrant labor, taking advantage of plentiful jobs in mill towns, such as South Berwick and nearby Rollinsford, NH, but planning to accumulate capital to return to Canada rather than to become Americans. Though Jewett does not comment directly upon this issue, her story may imply that, despite the title character's disapproval of her daughter's marriage to an American foreigner, the mixing of the two peoples in that marriage has valuable consequences.

"The Mistress of Sydenham Plantation" (1888)

Jewett sets this story in Beaufort, SC and the adjacent Sea Islands, following her travel in the area during an extended trip to Florida and South Carolina, undertaken for the health of Annie Fields in the spring of 1888. The central event of their stay in Beaufort was a visit with Laura Towne, the noted abolitionist and friend of Fields. Out of her observations, Jewett created Mrs. Sydenham, an elderly and mentally broken former plantation owner, who commands Peter, her aged black servant, formerly her slave, to accompany her on a trip to the Sydenham Plantation. However, that plantation is no longer hers, having been confiscated after the Union captured the area more than 30 years earlier, near the beginning of the Civil War, and the plantation house is a ruin. A main feature of the story is repeated comparisons between the pre-war world Sydenham believes still exists and the actual world of the present. Peter, as a main point of view character, observes many of these differences, but he wishes to protect his mistress from the potentially devastating awakening from her dream. The narrator frames the expedition within the larger community's celebration of Easter, adding yet another perspective on the events. Though quite short, this story presents a complex view of an unusual corner of the post-Reconstruction South.

This tale has a history of being read as a kind of reconciliation story.³⁰ Gleason summarizes these readings:

As both Mitzi Schrag and Sandra A. Zagarell have argued, in her published short stories following *The Story of the Normans*, Jewett attempted to use her theory of Norman superiority to reconcile the national rupture of the Civil War and the era of Reconstruction. In two stories, "The Mistress of Sydenham Plantation" and "A War Debt," Jewett draws on both her European trips and her increasingly frequent convalescent stays at resorts in the American South to advance a thesis that an infusion of New England Norman blood into the crumbling southern aristocracy would result in a resurgence of national unity and international prominence as well as provide an antidote for Reconstruction-era racial violence. In these stories, Jewett laments the loss of the order and discipline she saw slavery imposing upon African Americans, whom she represents as "lawless, and unequal to holding their liberty with steady hands . . . poor and less respectable than in the old plantation days -- it was as if the long discipline of their former state had counted for nothing" ("A War Debt"). (27)

Recent readings have questioned this interpretation. In "To Each Body a Spirit," I argue that "in the persons of Mrs. Sydenham and her white supremacist townfolk, Jewett condemns the South's recourse to victimhood, which requires forgetting history and leads to repeating the nation's original sin, exploiting and oppressing African Americans. And the only hope for expiation and genuine reconciliation lies in fully liberating and empowering those who have been truly victimized" (142). In "'Fit to be Free': From Race to Capacity in Jewett's 'Mistress of Sydenham Plantation,'" Vesna Kuiken explains the values of placing the story's treatment of race against the background of the failure of the Port Royal Experiment to fully affirm the humanity of freed slaves.³¹

The Irish Stories (1889-1901)

Jewett published eight stories about the Irish and Irish immigrants:

"The Luck of the Bogans" 1889

"A Little Captive Maid" 1891

"Between Mass and Vespers" 1893
"The Gray Mills of Farley" 1898
"Where's Nora?" 1898
"Bold Words at the Bridge" 1899
"A Landlocked Sailor" 1899
"Elleneen" 1901

Jack Morgan and Louis A. Renza have collected these into a single volume.³² In their introduction, they contend that Jewett was successful on the whole at conveying affection for the Irish as a people and in the cultural work she undertook of subverting the "Paddy stereotype" so apparent in much contemporary writing and popular culture. Though they see her sentimentalizing and romanticizing the Irish peasants, they also show her exploring the complexity of the immigrant / emigrant situation, recognizing that America for most Irish was a kind of exile. She presents her readers with evidence of how hard it was to adapt to a culture that was highly individualistic and materialistic, coming from a culture that was more communal and cooperative. They conclude: "Her Irish narratives reflect ... a warm and humorous interest in and concern for a people who had recently undergone a cultural devastation of major proportions ... The Great Hunger" (xlili). Further, these stories reject the typical "one-dimensional saga" of immigrants shedding their previous culture and transforming into Americans. Instead, Jewett envisions a mutual cultural enrichment as Irish immigrants change and are changed by their adopted culture" (xliv).

"Jim's Little Woman" (1890)

Set mainly in the multi-racial and multi-ethnic city of St. Augustine, Florida, this story hints at tensions between racial and ethnic groups, but it also presents a community of mutual caring not unlike Dunnet Landing. At the center of the plot is what earlier generations would have called a "mixed marriage." Marty, a Protestant from New England, seems to be of Scots-Irish ancestry. Her Catholic husband, Jim, from Florida, had a Minorcan grandmother and a "Yankee" grandfather. Madison Grant would have characterized him and their children as mongrels reverting to the lesser of the mixed races (17-18), but this does not seem of concern to anyone in the story. Studying this text next to *The Country of the Pointed Firs* and "The Foreigner" as a contrasting alternative image of an idealized community would likely add useful dimensions to understanding Jewett's racial thought.³³

"The Old Town of Berwick" (1894)

In this essay on her home town, Jewett reports local history stories told to her by old residents. These include their memories of African slaves owned by 18th-century residents: "... one may still hear delightful stories of their strange traits of inheritance and their loyal affection to the families which they adopted as their own, and were always ready to champion.... Cato was a native Guineaman, and the last generation loved to recall the tradition of his droll ways and speeches." Jewett does not question these accounts, which seems a problematic deference to her sources. Likewise, though she provides a good deal of local history about relations with Native Americans, she offers little commentary on these stories. The best-known of these is the story of the 1690 captivity of Mrs. Mehetable (Hetty) Goodwin, which Jewett retells in several of her

publications, such as *Betty Leicester* (1890) and *The Tory Lover*. As a captivity narrative, it is fairly typical, including an incident illustrating human sympathy in the midst of much savagery, when a native woman helps Hetty conceal tears that would have brought violence upon her from her male captors: "'This squaw had a mother's heart,' the old people used to say, in telling me the story."

Marion Rust has studied this essay alongside a holograph text she has edited, and she argues that Jewett's revisions indicate that she aimed toward emphasizing greater diversity in the formation of her community:³⁴

In this age-old dance of in- and exclusivity, Jewett attempts to strike a balance. The substantive emendations she made to the manuscript indicate that on reflection she chose to broaden her conception of history to include a wider spectrum of the region's inhabitants. Thus she replaces the damning term "savages" with the more neutral "Indians," and she adds a well-placed "great" more accurately to reflect the "value" of non-English contributions to the region.

It may be worth noting as an aside, that in 1891, Jewett's old friend, William Dean Howells, published *An Imperative Duty*, a novella that Jewett almost certainly read. In that complex tale, Howells strongly challenges the notions that racial identity is biologically hereditary and stable, directly attacking the set of beliefs that rationalized "the color line." A young woman raised as an upper class white learns that she is 1/16th African, her mother having been a slave. What is her "real" identity? Must she place herself on "the right side" of the color line, taking up a new life among segregated Blacks? Does she have a duty to devote herself to helping the oppressed of "her own race?" In responding to these and related questions, Howells's male protagonist makes the case that racial identity is wholly constructed, and therefore, she may in good conscience choose freely how to identify herself and live out her life.

No evidence has yet emerged that Jewett actually knew this book, but given her friendship with Howells, it is hard to believe she did not read all of his work. Examining her later writing in the light of what this novella offers could prove useful.

"A War Debt," (1895)

Studying this story is complicated by Jewett's apparent discomfort with her text, which resulted in three fairly distinct published versions. Tom Burton of Boston, the one remaining male in his family, undertakes a journey of reconciliation, to return a symbol of old friendship to the southern Bellamy family, similarly devastated but also impoverished by the Civil War. Having grown up at some distance from the war and recently traveled in Europe, Burton enters upon his quest harboring a number of naive opinions, some of which are changed as he witnesses what the war has done to the South and to the family he seeks. At the end of his visit in what presumably was Jewett's final text, he seems ready to renew and deepen friendship with the Bellamy family.

Like "The Mistress of Sydenham Plantation," this story has a history, in this case beginning with Bishop (247-8), of being read as evidence of Jewett's purported nostalgia for the pre-Civil War South. As I have shown in "To Each Body a Spirit," such readings are problematic (143-54). A main difficulty, indicated above, is that Jewett's opinions cannot be so easily identified with those of her character, Tom Burton. Even Burton's sympathy for an aristocratic former slave-owning family with strong pre-war ties to his own is repeatedly qualified by imagery of the devastation at multiple levels, including

material and familial, that has resulted from the folly of insisting that slavery could be compatible with American ideals.³⁵

"Little French Mary" (1895)

A charming young French Canadian girl elicits the sympathy of a New England village for her immigrant family. When opportunity calls the migrants back to Canada, the villagers feel some resentment toward these "foreigners" who have benefited from working in the States, but have not chosen to become citizens. Still, the good will little Mary has built in the community leads to regret at their departure. In this story, then, Jewett deals explicitly with one of the main American complaints about French Canadian migrants, suggesting that even though many merely are transient workers, still they can contribute to their temporary communities.

The Tory Lover (1901)

Jewett's "local history" novel follows the fortunes of John Paul Jones and of a pair of young lovers in an early year of the American Revolution, 1777-8. Jones comes to Berwick late in 1777, recruiting sailors for the *Ranger*, planning to sail to France and take command of a warship being built there. When this fails, he gains permission to use the small *Ranger* in a series of raids on the British coast. Roger Wallingford, son of Berwick Tories, under the influence of his lover, Mary Hamilton, chooses to serve with Jones and sails to Europe with him. Captured in the first raid, he is imprisoned in England. Mary and Roger's mother sail for England to find him and seek his release.

Of special interest for understanding Jewett's racial thought is her portrait of 18th-century Berwick, a slave-holding society. Focusing on a pair of house slaves, Jewett presents their condition and treatment as benign, especially in comparison to Harriet Beecher Stowe's portrait of southern slavery, which was familiar to Jewett. The two main slave characters, Caesar and Rodney, occupy positions with their owners like that of Eliza with the Shelbys in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852); they are well-treated, almost members of the family. Still Jewett leaves little doubt that the chief moral intelligences of the novel see slavery under any circumstances as an evil. In Chapter 2, Jones opposes a local apologist for slavery:

The fierce temper of the captain flamed to his face; he looked up at old Cæsar who well remembered the passage from his native land, and saw that black countenance set like an iron mask.

"I must beg your reverence's kind pardon if I contradict you," said Paul Jones, with scornful bitterness.

For reasons not perfectly clear, Jewett toned down Jones's protest between the serial and book publication. In the serial, Jones recounts incidents of his experience in the slave trade that determined him to avoid it thereafter, notably the suicide of a captured mother separated from her child. Jones concludes: "I shall never set my foot on board a hellish slaver again. I had supped too full of horrors."

Except for my analysis in "To Each Body a Spirit," there has been little discussion of race in this novel and none, that I know of, about Jewett's depiction of Berwick's early history and of the diversity of peoples involved in its founding. Bishop and others who have attended to this topic have focused on a repetition of the Norman / Saxon

opposition that also occurs in Chapter 2. Major Tilly Haggens, an elderly Berwick leader, holds forth on various topics and offers a theory of how the American civil war against the British has come about:

The world was much with the major, and he was nothing if not eager spoken. "People forget to look at the antecedents of our various colonists; 't is the only way to understand them. In these Piscataqua [River] neighborhoods we do not differ so much from those of Virginia; 't is not the same pious stock as made Connecticut and the settlements of Massachusetts Bay. We are children of the Norman blood in New England and Virginia, at any rate. 'T is the Saxons who try to rule England now; there is the cause of all our troubles. Norman and Saxon have never yet learned to agree."

Bishop attributes this view to Jewett herself, despite the narrative hint that Haggens' "eager spoken" views were somewhat eccentric. From this he infers that Jewett was offering, as particularly fitted to lead a new nation, the admirable Berwick aristocracy, along with the Virginia founding fathers, "who presumably enjoyed a less adulterated Norman inheritance than their lesser brethren" (249).

As argued above, it is doubtful that Jewett herself thought of Normans and Saxons as races still existing in 1777. That Haggens *did* think of them as distinct peoples seems clear in his speaking of "Norman blood" and of certain American colonists as directly descended from these Normans. Later in the same passage Haggens claims Huguenot *and* Norman (French gallant) ancestry, connecting himself as directly to the Normans as was possible in his century. Jewett, however, did believe that the attitudes toward change of the old Normans and Saxons continued to manifest themselves as both strengths and weaknesses in the British character. Several times in *The Story of the Normans*, Jewett presents statements like the following about Modern England:

But whether the Norman spirit leads her to be self-confident or headstrong and wilful, or the Saxon spirit holds her back into slowness and dulness, and lack of proper perception in emergencies or epochs of necessary change, still she follows the right direction and leads the way. It is the Norman graft upon the sturdy old Saxon tree that has borne best fruit among the nations.... (Chapter 38)

Less extreme than Haggens, still she sees the Saxon impulse as conservative and often unable to deal effectively with "necessary change," while the Norman spirit of self-confidence leads adventurers to found new nations, though it also includes the dangers of being "headstrong and willful."

This novel also extends Jewett's representations of Irish immigrants. One of the main characters is Master John Sullivan, the Irish intellectual who became a Berwick area schoolmaster and whose sons distinguished themselves in the Revolutionary era in the military, government, and law.

This survey shows that there is a rich and not yet thoroughly examined set of texts in which Jewett worked directly with materials that can help scholars develop a more precise and persuasive understanding of her racial thought. These texts are relevant both to her ideas about race and to her relationship with nativism. From her stories about Irish and French Canadians, one should be able to learn a good deal about her views on including and excluding groups and about how she understood the idea of American identity. Morgan and Renza, for example, suggest that Jewett's ideas about Irish assimilation did not include conformity to some fixed notion of American racial or cultural purity.

Readers surely will find other texts that are pertinent to this inquiry, though perhaps not so directly relevant. Among them would be "River Driftwood," (1881), a sketch in Jewett's own voice that includes meditations on her local river. The opening is particularly revealing of her Swedenborgian view of nature.³⁶ Speaking of the consciousness of animals, she concludes:

But the day will come for a more truly universal suffrage than we dream of now, when the meaning of every living thing is understood, and it is given its rights and accorded its true value: for its life is from God's life, and its limits were fixed by him; its material shape is the manifestation of a thought, and to each body there is given a spirit.

She closes with a metaphor of harbors:

One sees the likeness between a harborless heart and a harborless country, where no ships go and come; and since no treasure is carried away no treasure is brought in. From this inland town of mine there is no sea-faring any more, and the shipwrights' hammers are never heard now. It is only a station on the railways, and it has, after all these years, grown so little that it is hardly worth while for all the trains to stop. It is busy and it earns its living and enjoys itself, but it seems to me that its old days were its better days. It builds cheaper houses, and is more like other places than it used to be. The people of fifty years ago had some things that were better than ours, even if they did not hear from England by telegraph, or make journeys in a day or two that used to take a week.

Both of these passages would seem to bear upon Jewett's views on whether an ideal community would be more or less diverse and inclusive. Another brief but potentially pertinent piece is "Unlearned Lessons" (1889) in which Jewett addresses Berwick Academy students on what she wishes she had learned more thoroughly when she was at the academy. One among her wishes is that she had learned to apply herself to study in a more disciplined way. One of her conclusions bears upon her understanding of the term "aristocracy."

Beside the needs of our personal characters, and our duty to our neighbors we must not forget the need of trained minds and clearheadedness in this young rich country of ours. We are in great danger of degrading our national wealth and power to unworthy ends. Through the possession of culture only can we come to the real meaning and possession of aristocracy: the rule of the best. The definition of this word is as much degraded in common use as the meaning of a word can be, but we must never forget the true sense of it, and keep that high ideal always in our minds. We must not have the rule of brute force in town or state, or the rule of money, or of political trickery, but the rule of the best. Knowledge is power, not ignorance; ignorance can only delay, not advance.

Bishop finds a racial component in Jewett's sense of herself as an aristocrat. What does this passage contribute to understanding Jewett's aristocratic self-concept?

Colonialism

Another aspect of Jewett's racial thought that has proven of interest is her attitude toward colonialism. This is relevant to her racial thought because she has been characterized since Bishop as uncritically favoring British and American colonialism, which often was rationalized as superior whites beneficently ruling lesser races. Bishop points out that in an essay for children, "Cartridges" (1874), Jewett offers a pro-British

view of the Sepoy Rebellion in India (243-4). The text seems to support at least part of his assertion:

The Sepoys were native soldiers under the command of foreign officers, and they had been well drilled and were well armed and equipped; so they were formidable enemies, and much more to be feared than if they were as ignorant and undisciplined as the English found them.

Whether or not her account of the rebellion is wholly pro-British, it seems clear that, near the beginning of her career, Jewett saw the British as having improved Indian military organization. Similarly, in *The Story of the Normans*, Jewett suggests that modern Britain's greatness is shown in part by its colonial enterprise:

... let us never forget that much that has been best in English national life has come from the Norman elements of it rather than the Saxon. England the colonizer, England the country of intellectual and social progress, England the fosterer of ideas and chivalrous humanity, is Norman England, and the Saxon influence has oftener held her back in dogged satisfaction and stubbornness than urged her forward to higher levels. The power of holding back is necessary to the stability of a kingdom, but not so necessary as the "Glory of going on and still to be -- -- -- --" (Chapter 18)

It would not be especially surprising to discover that Jewett saw British colonialism as bringing potential benefits to colonized peoples, but as is clear in *The Story of the Normans*, Jewett does not succumb to the illusion that conquest and colonial rule are always (or ever?) benevolent processes. In the long perspective, William the Conqueror brought certain benefits of Norman culture to Saxon England, but at a very high cost in suffering and lives lost, which is much more important to those directly involved. This odd-seeming double perspective on colonial conquest carries through Jewett's career, including her final novel about the violent separation of a British colony in the bid for independence by the United States.

Zagarell and Gleason call attention to two examples of Jewett supporting imperialist dominance over other "races," of the Irish by the British and of the various colonies the United States obtained in the Spanish-American War. In both cases, wide-spread popular opinion held that supposedly inferior peoples were unable to govern themselves and, therefore, in need of the benevolent rule of colonial powers.

Zagarell says that in an 1886 letter to Annie Fields, Jewett approved of British colonial rule over Ireland ("*Country's Portrayal of Community*," 58). Jewett writes:

This morning I read Mr. Arnold's "Nineteenth Century" paper with great joy. What a great man he is! That holds the truth of the matter if anything does. It is all very well to say, as Mr. Blaine does, "What business has England?" The association of different peoples is after all beyond human control: we are "mixed and sorted" by a higher power. And looked at from the human side, what business has one nation to keep another under her authority, but the business of the stronger keeping the weaker in check when the weaker is an enemy? It had to be settled between England and Ireland certainly -- for the two races were antagonistic, and England could not have said "no matter, she may plague me and fight me as she pleases." Law and order come in, and Ireland has a right to complain of being badly governed, -- so has a child or any irresponsible person, but we can't question the fact that they must be governed. Ireland is backward, and when she is equal to being independent, and free to make her own laws, I suppose the way will be opened, and she will be under grace of herself, instead of tutors and governors in England. Everybody who studies the

case, as Mr. Arnold has, believes that she must still be governed. I don't grow very sentimental about Ireland's past wrongs and miseries. If we look into the history of any subject country, or indeed of any country at all, the suffering is more likely to be extreme that length of time ago, and I think as Mr. Arnold does, and as Mr. Lowell did, that the mistake of our time is in being governed by the ignorant mass of opinion, instead of by thinkers and men who know something. (Fields, *Letters*, #10)

Zagarell understands Jewett to be arguing that the British and the Irish are different races, the Irish inferior to the British. Thereby, Jewett justifies colonial rule on the basis of a racial hierarchy. It would seem clear from the text, however, that these are not Jewett's opinions.

Persuaded by Matthew Arnold's argument about the question of Irish home-rule in "The Nadir of Liberalism," Jewett rejects James G. Blaine's views in a June 1, 1886 speech in Portland, ME. in which he advocated passage of William Gladstone's home-rule bill, then being debated in the English parliament.³⁷ Jewett believes that, in the current situation, British rule will benefit the Irish, because they seem unable to rule themselves successfully. However she does not see the two peoples as different races arranged by nature or God into a permanent hierarchy. Instead, she expresses here an argument to which she returns in *The Story of the Normans*, upon which she was working at the time of this letter. She points out that "from the human side," British rule really is "the stronger keeping the weaker in check when the weaker is an enemy." British rule is naked dominance carried out primarily in the British self-interest, as was the case at the time of the American Revolution as depicted in *The Tory Lover*. But she also believes that Divine Providence "mixes and sorts" peoples for its own purposes, and she has faith that the Divine Purpose for humanity as a whole ultimately is being "under grace" of oneself, liberty and self-rule. For this reason, she is confident that in God's chosen time, the Irish will rule themselves. Though Zagarell rightly suspects any rationalization of colonialism, this text does not support the notion that Jewett's white supremacist beliefs led her to view colonial rule as justified by a permanent racial hierarchy.

In passing, it may be interesting to compare this opinion to Robert E. Lee's infamous defense of slavery in his 27 December 1856 letter to his wife. While he acknowledges that slavery in itself is an evil, he avers that American slavery is a greater evil for whites than for Blacks: "The blacks are immeasurably better off here than in Africa, morally, socially & physically. The painful discipline they are undergoing, is necessary for their instruction as a race, & I hope will prepare & lead them to better things. How long their subjugation may be necessary is known & ordered by a wise God." The two arguments have superficial similarities, including Lee's apparent belief that God will eventually free Blacks from slavery. However, Lee's argument depends upon a premise of white racial superiority, while Jewett's concerns a nation's cultural readiness for self-governance. While both arguments deserve a skeptical response, it would seem clear that Jewett's view of the time when the Irish nation will be ready for independence is nearer than Lee's notion of the day when Blacks will be his equal.

Gleason points to another Jewett letter to argue that she was a supporter of the Spanish-American War, believing that the United States would be a better colonial ruler than Spain (29). In a 10 June 1898 letter written from France to Sara Norton, Jewett says:

I feel quite as you do, but I think I can see better and better every day that it was a war which could not be hindered, after all. Spain has shown herself perfectly

incompetent to maintain any sort of civilization in Cuba, and things are like some sultry summer days, when there is nothing for it but to let a thunder-shower do its best and worst, and drown the new hay, and put everything out of gear while it lasts. The condition is larger than petty politics or mercenary hopes, or naval desires for promotion, or any of those things to which at one time or another I have indignantly "laid it." I feel more than ever that such a war is to be laid at the door of progress, and not at any backward steps toward what we had begun to feel was out of date, the liking for a fight. I think that it is all nonsense to talk about bad feeling here in France, as it is certainly in England; for however people deplore the war in general and pity Spain, they generally end by saying that it was the only way out -- that we had to make war, and then we all say that it must be short! If we could drown a few newspapers from time to time, it would keep up our drooping hearts and make us willing to bear the hearing of foolish details, and even painful details. It seems like a question of surgery, this cure of Cuba -- we must not mind the things that disgust and frighten us, if only the surgery is in good hands. You know how much I saw of those islands two years ago? I cannot feel that the natural conditions of life are hard in the way they can be hard to poor Russians, for instance: a West Indian cannot freeze -- he is impatient of clothes -- he can pick a good dinner at almost any time of year off the next bush. But he can suffer in other ways, and Spain has made Cuba suffer in those ways far too long. (Fields, *Letters*, #86)

Of this Gleason says:

In this remarkable passage, Jewett exhibits tension between her desire for a benevolent US imperialism and her anxiety over military excess and the brutal realities of empire building. The process of wresting Cuba from the "incompetent" Spanish is naturalized through its metaphorical transformation to a thunderstorm, a violent, immutable force that must run its course (and in the process, "drown" a few newspapers for excessively reporting the horrors of war). Much like the storm that figures prominently in "The Foreigner," the storm of war, for Jewett, is an irresistible process. (29)

It may be true that Jewett hoped the United States would follow up the war with a benevolent attitude toward Cuba. As recounted in Annie Fields's "Diary of a West Indian Island Tour" (1896), two years earlier, during her Caribbean cruise with Fields, the Aldriches, and Pierce, Jewett was present at a dinner aboard Pierce's steam yacht in Santo Domingo harbor, given for Ulises Hilarión Heureaux Leibert (1845-1899), president of the Dominican Republic.³⁸ Fields was impressed with this apparently strong leader of a Black Caribbean democracy, though, after his assassination, his corruption and thuggery became generally known. Fields reports in detail his hopeful opinions about the Cuban revolution against Spain, then in progress (February 13-15, 1896). Its leader, José Martí, had died in battle in 1895, but by early 1896, the rebellion had gained a number of successes. The vicious Spanish response, causing the deaths of hundreds of thousands of civilians, eventually drew the American battleship *Maine* into Havana harbor to protect American interests, leading up to the Spanish-American War. Assuming that Jewett believed Providence intended national autonomy for the Cubans, just as for the Irish and for American colonists in 1776, and that her admiration for President Heureaux's supposed democratic ideals matched Fields's, she probably shared his optimism and was deeply disappointed by events in Cuba following her visit.

Gleason finds in Jewett a tension between her purported support for American imperialism and her view of the horrors of the war, but this is not what Jewett says in the letter. Rebecca Walsh points out that the recipient, Sara Norton, was the daughter of

Charles Eliot Norton, an opponent of the war who became a vocal member of the Anti-Imperialist League (which was just beginning to form in June 1898), and that Jewett's letter is calculated to console her and her family for this key defeat of their values (304). It is not surprising, therefore, that Jewett returns yet again to the view she took of the Norman Conquest and of Irish Home Rule in 1886. There are two ways of looking at any violent and foolish human event. From the point of view of those involved in a war or suffering under oppressive colonial rule, anger and anguish, such as Jewett and Norton have felt throughout the period of the 1898 war, are perfectly reasonable. But she can reinterpret the seeming inevitability of a war so many of her friends opposed and, thereby, console herself and Sara Norton with the faith that Providence governs the storm, that God is or guides the surgeon, and that in God's time, future good will come from present evil.

Jewett repeated this idea of providence in history in a slightly different key in an earlier letter, one of a pair from the spring of 1898 to her nephew, Theodore Jewett Eastman, in which she brings up the Spanish-American War. She writes as if aware that the 19-year-old Theodore is attracted to the prospect of a war and an admirer of things military, perhaps somewhat afraid that he might enlist. On 21 April, anticipating his joining her later in Europe, she writes:

Miss [Rose] Kingsley was full of excitement about the war, as we are: you cant think how it troubles us, and being so far away and all. I hate to think of our northern men going down into those steaming islands this summer -- I do hope that it will not have to be. But "there's a providence in it" as old Mrs. Raynes [Jewett's elementary teacher] used to say, and I try to think that a good stirring up will be good for some who might drift along comfortably -- The aimless people sometimes get an aim thrust upon them -- -- I can imagine how excited you and all the fellows must be -- What would the fellows in the Naval Academy have done if there had been no war and they had to stay & pass their exams? -- but this is a very trivial way of looking at a great affair, and I must not speak so ---- After all, it does seem as if war was the concern of older men -- You will see soldiering enough and plenty of gay uniforms in the London streets -- I think you will like to see the horse guards on sentry duty as you go down St James's.

Writing carefully to a different audience, Jewett seems concerned not to inflame her nephew's enthusiasm and not to appear opposed to his opinions about the rightness of the war. Earlier in this letter, she notes she is sending him a clipping from the London *Times* expressing support for American actions in Cuba. In the above passage, though, she confesses how troubled she is about what is to come, glances at the "small" concerns young soldiers might have, and then she asks him to take the larger view, to consider whether there may something providential in how events are unfolding. Here as in her letter to Norton, Jewett shows no positive opinion of the war or its immediate consequences, but she tries to trust -- in a way she believes her religious faith encourages -- that from the perspective of eternity, "the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice."

Secular critics tend to ignore or repress Jewett's Christian progressivism, an optimistic view of human history that, while widely accepted among Jewett's contemporaries, enjoys a good deal of contempt in later years among both Christian and secular thinkers. Yet one's skepticism, if it leads to ignoring Jewett's manifest faith, is a mistake that will continue to produce misreadings. Though it appears that Jewett was more aligned with anti-Imperialism than with white racial domination of non-white cultures, her rationalizations of British and American colonialist actions must remain

troubling, particularly in the light of subsequent experience. Though I believe that Zagarell and Gleason misread Jewett's letters, I am not able to assert that Jewett was free of sympathy for British and American colonialism. There are several Jewett texts that scholars can examine in order to develop a clearer idea of Jewett's position, among them *The Story of the Normans* and *The Tory Lover*, both of which deal with interactions between colonizers and the colonized. Additionally, there is the rich and, as yet, little studied manuscript by Annie Fields, "Diary of a West Indian Island Tour" (1896). Examining Fields's observations and reactions as she and Jewett visit British and Spanish colonies, as well as independent Haiti and the Dominican Republic, surely will reveal a good deal about how Fields thought about both race and colonialism.

However, as this whole essay has urged, caution is required. Fields's opinions in her diary are complicated in a variety of ways and need patient and careful contextualization to become clear. Further, one should not *assume* that Jewett and Fields saw the islands in exactly the same way. For one example, I have mentioned above a passage Jewett wrote about Port au Prince, in which she said: "Then we went to Hayti, which was oh, so funny with its pomp of darkeys. Port au Prince was quite an awful scene of thriftlessness and silly pretense --" The view of the port that Fields expresses is notably darker:

Here we passed Saturday morning -- a more strangely barbarian place probably does not exist on the face of the earth! Strangely barbarian -- because it is not exactly the wild and native barbarian one sees just as he may be found in the wilds of Africa, but after years of occupation by Spanish, English and French -- here it is the place at last abandoned to the colored people who have multiplied like the ant, and without government or schools or churches to influence them outside of themselves they continue to multiply with the fertility of unchecked animal creation, while drink and unthrift coupled with their love of music and color and the shows of things produces a condition of things happily not to be seen elsewhere -- (January 24, 1896)

Fields's reaction to Port au Prince is so strongly negative that she broods upon it and returns repeatedly to expressing the view that there she has seen the lowest level to which humanity can fall. At one point, she says that Haiti probably cannot be restored to a civilized order without exterminating much of the current population (February 19, 1896). While it is quite likely that Jewett and Fields discussed their impressions of Haiti, determining the extent to which they agree would be as complex as determining what either believes in the first place.

Much of what has been positively asserted about Jewett's racial thought proves upon examination to lack persuasive supporting evidence. She probably was not a nordicist, or a nativist, or even an imperialist. She probably did not think of Normans and Saxons as distinct races persisting through history. Probably she did not believe the Irish to be inherently inferior to Normans. Nor did she likely believe non-whites (e.g. Cubans, Native Americans or even African Americans) to be inferior to "white" people. There is textual evidence that she at least occasionally used language and stereotypes that implicate her in the racialized thinking that Goldberg argues has been generally shared in the West since about the turn of the 16th century. Goldberg's thought is informed by the 21st-century scientific consensus that at the biological level, race does not exist, and, therefore, race is entirely a social construct. Even though this is well-known, race remains a discursive reality in the western world. Westerners claim, acknowledge, and confer racial identity in myriad ways. Surely, then, in a period when

racial identity probably was universally believed to be grounded in bodily reality, Jewett shared in some way in that belief. Indeed, though Jewett seems to have little to say about physical differences between groups, she does at least sometimes take note of skin color and other physical features, and her narrators and characters several times indicate that they can detect bodily signs of a specific ancestry, such as French or Norman. Whether taking note of difference leads to Jewett accepting any specific structures built on observed differences remains difficult to ascertain.

There are at least 20 texts in which Jewett works with materials directly relevant to understanding her racial thought, most of them little studied. In this essay, I have presented evidence to suggest that Jewett thought of races, ethnicities and nations as varying through time in their cultural value and power. She believed that in 1066, the Normans were culturally and militarily superior to the Saxon English. She believed that in 1886, the British were politically and militarily superior to the Irish. But there also is persuasive evidence that Jewett, as a Christian progressive, believed that God's will for all peoples was self-determination. As a result, when one attempts to view the whole of human history, one may see that interactions and exchanges (violent or not) between different peoples ultimately result in the progress of all toward individual and national autonomy. Will further study of Jewett's work confirm these conclusions? That is less important than that scholarship on Jewett (and on her contemporaries) enter into the discussion of race in a more reasonable way than it often has in the last half century, by approaching the topic dispassionately, focusing on evidence that is truly relevant, and contextualizing with care.

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¹Ferman Bishop, "Sarah Orne Jewett's Ideas of Race." *New England Quarterly* 36:2 (June 1957): 243-9.

² Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Story of the Normans* (New York: Putnam's, 1887).

³ For Jewett's ancestry, see Frederick C. Jewett, *History and Genealogy of the Jewetts of America* (New York: Grafton, 1908), xv.

⁴ Sandra Zagarell, "Country's Portrayal of Community and the Exclusion of Difference," in *New Essays on The Country of the Pointed Firs*, edited by June Howard, (New York: Cambridge UP, 1994), 39-60; and "Crosscurrents: Registers of nordicism, Community, and Culture in Jewett's *Country of the Pointed Firs*," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 10.2 (Fall 1997): 355-70. Zagarell also uses these ideas in "Troubling Regionalism: Rural Life and the Cosmopolitan Eye in Jewett's *Deephaven*," *American Literary History* 10.4 (Winter 1998): 656-8.

⁵ Patrick Gleason, "Sarah Orne Jewett's 'The Foreigner' and the Transamerican Routes of New England Regionalism," *Legacy* 28:1 (2011): 25-46.

⁶ Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963).

⁷ William Z. Ripley, *The Races of Europe*. (New York: D. Appleton, 1899).

⁸ John Higham, *Strangers in the Land* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1955). See also Barbara Solomon, *Ancestors and Immigrants* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), 201-2. For a brief account of the development of scientific racism see Chapter 1 of Cathy Boeckmann, *A Question of Character: Scientific Racism and the Genres of American Fiction, 1892-1912* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2000).

⁹ Gossett concurs with Solomon and Higham, but argues that Theodore Lothrop Stoddard was more successful at reaching a mass audience with nordicist polemic in his series of popular magazine articles and books, beginning around 1920 (390-8).

¹⁰ "Jewett's Argument in *The Story of the Normans* may be found in the Terry Heller Papers at Coe College, with my edition of *The Story of the Normans*.

¹¹ Annie Fields, *Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1911), 18; letter 7.

¹² David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1993). I draw especially on Chapters 2 and 5.

¹³ Edward Saveth, *American Historians and European Immigrants, 1875-1925* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1965).

¹⁴ Edward A. Freeman, *Some Impressions of the United States* (London: Longman, Green, 1883), 137-8.

¹⁵ For a discussion of Aldrich's views on immigration, see Terry Heller, "Thomas Bailey Aldrich and the Immigration Restriction League" (2014), in the Terry Heller Papers at Coe College, Reports, Jewett and her Circle on Race.

One point of this essay is to call into question the general agreement about Aldrich's affiliation with the Immigration Restriction League. Aldrich, it is asserted, belonged to and supported the IRL and its policies, though there is no documentary evidence to support this belief. Because of their close friendship, Aldrich's supposed anti-immigration stance, it is assumed, must have been shared by Jewett.

Relevant to this point is a December 1908 letter to Annie Fields in which Jewett recounts a mutual friend's enthusiastic report after attending the 1908 International Y.M.C.A. convention in Washington, D.C. He was especially excited by the speech of an immigrant professor of religion from Iowa's Grinnell College, Edward Alfred Steiner, who argued that the problems with the rush of immigration from southern Europe -- deplored by the Immigration Restriction League -- were not with the immigrants, but with Americans: "It seems that the Association has already begun to send workers over to Italy and Hungary etc. to know the people at home before they come in order to work better among them after they get here." Jewett goes on to suggest that these ideas would interest their mutual friend, Georgina Schuyler, a New York philanthropist whose activities included donating the bronze plaque with the sonnet, "The New Colossus," by her friend Emma Lazarus, that appears at the Statue of Liberty.

¹⁶ See "Jewett's Sources for *The Story of the Normans*," which is with my edition of this book.

¹⁷ Jacques Barzun, *Race: A Study in Superstition* (New York: Harper and Row, 1937, Revised 1965), Chapter 2, "The Nordic Myth."

¹⁸ Elizabeth Ammons in "Material Culture, Empire, and Jewett's *Country of the Pointed Firs*," in *New Essays on The Country of the Pointed Firs*, edited by June Howard, (New York: Cambridge UP, 1994), 81-99, describes the Maine fishing village, as portrayed particularly in the Bowden reunion, as "proto-fascist." She concludes that *Country* seems disturbingly contradictory: the features of Dunnet Landing "articulate a vision of preindustrial matrifocal harmony, health, and happiness. But they also stand for white colonial settlement and dominance" (96-7). Ammons, like Zagarell, reads *Country* as a nostalgic evocation of a mythical, ideal community: preindustrial, matrifocal, homogeneous, and Nordic. While the story presents a village that feminist readers have found attractive, it turns out that this community rests upon a foundation of genocidal white supremacy and nativism. Zagarell contends that the purpose of the novel is to create in readers a longing to return to the simpler, more integral, ways of a pastoral village, to recognize this state as their natural origin, to give readers possession of themselves as belonging to this community ("*Country's* Portrayal of Community," 50-52). In this way, Jewett imagines an ideal America. From this utopia, Native Americans have been erased, and the current idealized occupants are Nordic. From this utopia, the different are excluded. Zagarell goes on to argue that Jewett herself seems to have recognized this problem, but only after publication, for, in "The Foreigner," Jewett "problematizes the kind of homogeneity and nativism she celebrates in *Country*... Evoking the unhappy experience of life in Dunnet Landing for French, Catholic Mrs. Tolland, she dramatizes Dunnet's repudiation of a foreigner whose class, sexual expressiveness, religion, culture, and nationality set her apart from the community" (55).

Zagarell further rethinks the arc of Jewett's racial thought in "Troubling Regionalism: Rural Life and the Cosmopolitan Eye in Jewett's *Deephaven*." *American Literary History* 10:4 (Winter 1998): 639-63, seeing her moving always further from valuing diversity after *Deephaven* (1877): "*Country* also endorses nativism and other conservative creeds with which regionalist practice was often consonant, emphasizing New England's putative nordicism and portraying rural New England as an exclusive community that preserves the origins of the nation as well as New England" (657).

For an elaboration of the view that Jewett steps back from valorizing whiteness in "The Foreigner," see Mitzi Schrag, "'Whiteness' as Loss in Sarah Orne Jewett's 'The Foreigner'." *Jewett and Her Contemporaries: Reshaping the Canon*. Eds. Karen Kilcup and Thomas Edwards. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999, 185-206.

Gleason is skeptical of Jewett's success in "The Foreigner" at problematizing the imperialist nativism of *Country*. He sees Jewett as attempting the impossible, trying "to reconcile her support of specific US imperial projects while simultaneously mourning the erasures that those very projects bring about" and trying to forget America's imperialist past (41-2).

For an interpretation of "The Foreigner" as complexly critiquing colonialist notions, see Rebecca Walsh, "Sugar, Sex, and Empire: Sarah Orne Jewett's 'The Foreigner' and the Spanish-American War," in *A Concise Companion to American Studies*, Edited by John Carlos Rowe (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 303-319.

¹⁹ Sandra A. Zagarell, "Old Women and Old Houses: New England Regionalism and the Specter of Modernity in Jewett's *Strangers and Wayfarers*," *American Literary Realism* 34.3 (Spring 2002): 251-64.

²⁰ See Mark Storey, "Sarah Orne Jewett's Foreign Correspondence," in *The Edinburgh Companion to Nineteenth-Century American Letters and Letter-Writing*. Edited by Celeste-Marie Bernier, Judie Newman, Matthew Pethers, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh

University Press, 2016), 682-96. Challenging much of the work published on Jewett's letters, Storey finds in the Fields and Cary letter collections that Jewett's international travel influenced her understanding and depiction of her region, that she came to see New England through a limited cosmopolitan lens. This is reflected, for example, in "The Life of Nancy," when Tom Aldis, after living more than a decade in Europe, returns to Boston intending to sell his property in a coastal Maine village. He changes his mind upon revisiting the village: "his own 'new eyes' end up re-enchanting him as to the value of his native ground" (686). While East Rodney is not precisely his native ground, his experience during an extended stay and becoming acquainted with Nancy, works on him as Dunnet Landing works on the narrator of *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, helping him come to feel that the village is a second home. Like the narrator -- and with some differences -- like Jewett herself, Tom is familiar with three different landscapes: his native Boston, a Maine fishing village, and somewhere in Europe. His life outside the rural region contributes to his appreciation of that region.

²¹ Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs* Chapter 18.

²² Josephine Donovan, "Jewett on Race, Class, Ethnicity, and Imperialism: A Reply to Her Critics," *Colby Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (December 2002): 403-16.

²³ The Houghton Library holds a collection of Jewett's drawings and watercolors that may be viewed on-line.

²⁴ Sarah Orne Jewett, Diary 1869, in Terry Heller Papers at Coe College, manuscripts.

²⁵ Terry Heller, "To Each Body a Spirit: Jewett and African Americans," *New England Quarterly* 84:1 (2011) 123-58.

²⁶ Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark* (New York: Vintage, 1992).

²⁷ Laurie Shannon, "'The Country of Our Friendship': Jewett's Intimist Art." *American Literature* 71:2 (June 1999) 227-262.

²⁸ Charles Johanningsmeier, "Subverting Readers' Assumptions and Expectations: Jewett's 'Tame Indians'." *American Literary Realism* 34.3 (Spring 2002): p233-50. See also: Terry Heller, "Sarah Orne Jewett's Transforming Visit: 'Tame Indians,' and One Writer's Professionalization," *New England Quarterly* 86:4 (December 2013) 655-684.

²⁹ Karen Oakes, "'Colossal in Sheet-Lead': The Native American and Piscataqua-Region Writers." Sarah L. Giffen and Kevin D. Murphy, editors, *A Noble & Dignified Stream*. (York, ME: Old York Historical Society, 1992) 165-176.

³⁰ Notable among those who have paired "The Mistress of Sydenham Plantation" and "A War Debt" as illustrating Jewett's sympathy for the defeated Confederate aristocracy and her belief that restoring their old way of life would help to reunify the nation are:

Josephine Donovan, *Sarah Orne Jewett*, Revised Edition. (Christchurch, NZ: Cybereditions, 2001; First Edition 1980), 74.

Graham Frater, "'A Brave Happiness': Rites and Celebrations in Jewett's Ordered Past." *Jewett and Her Contemporaries: Reshaping the Canon*. Ed. Karen L. Kilcup and Thomas S. Edwards. (Gainesville, FL: UP of Florida, 1999. 251-64); see 259-62.

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Sandra A. Zagarell, "Old Women and Old Houses," 262.

Judith Fetterley and Margorie Pryse. *Writing out of Place: Regionalism, Women, and American Literary Culture*. (Urbana: U of Illinois Press, 2003), 298.

³¹ Vesna Kuiken, "'Fit to be Free': From Race to Capacity in Jewett's 'Mistress of Sydenham Plantation,'" *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists* 5.2 (Fall 2017) 239-266.

³² Jack Morgan and Louis A. Renza, "Introduction," *The Irish Stories of Sarah Orne Jewett* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1996). Among the Irish stories, "The Gray Mills of Farley" is of interest for its portrayal of a community similar to Jewett's South Berwick, which was ethnically more diverse than Dunnet Landing. See Sarah Way Sherman, "Jewett and the Incorporation of New England: 'The Gray Mills of Farley'." *American Literary Realism* 34.3 (Spring 2002): 191-216.

³³ I begin this process in my edition of "Jim's Little Woman" in the Terry Heller Papers at Coe College. See my exploration of racial and ethnic diversity in Jewett's portrait of St. Augustine: "The Diverse People of 'Jim's Little Woman' by Sarah Orne Jewett."

³⁴ Marion Rust, "'The Old Town of Berwick' by Sarah Orne Jewett," *New England Quarterly* 73 (March 2000) 122-58.

³⁵ Though several critics have argued that Jewett was sympathetic to southern slave-owners and nostalgic for the social order of pre-Civil War America, there would seem to be little evidence to support this view. Perhaps the strongest direct evidence is in "A War Debt," but as I have argued, this material is not straightforward. Two other texts may shed a little more light upon Jewett's personal attitude toward slavery. The tragic plot of "[In Dark New England Days](#)" (1890) is set in motion by the theft of "devil's gold," money earned in part from the slave trade. Walsh notes that the captains who rescue Mrs. Tolland from Jamaica in "The Foreigner" are engaged in a leg of the slave trade as they transport timber to Jamaica and return with slave-produced sugar. The wealth that Captain Tolland supposedly accumulates from this trade disappears, as does the "devil's gold" of "In Dark New England Days," and the attempt to recover it, after Mrs. Todd becomes the most recent Tolland heir, results in more loss when Todd's uncle burns down her inherited house while searching for the lost treasure. These two stories tend to confirm Jones's opinion in *The Tory Lover* that the slave trade is cursed. Joseph Church, in "Fathers, Daughters, Slaves: The Haunted Scene of Writing in Jewett's 'In Dark New England Days,'" *American Transcendental Quarterly* 5.3 (Sept. 1991): 205-24, has noted that race is a significant aspect in that story.

³⁶ For fuller explanation of Swedenborg's influence upon Jewett, see Josephine Donovan, "Jewett and Swedenborg," *American Literature* 65.4 (Dec. 1993): 731-50.

³⁷ Matthew Arnold, "The Nadir of Liberalism," *Nineteenth Century* 19:111 (May 1886), 645-663. See the notes for Jewett's June 1886 letter for more information about the documents to which Jewett refers.

³⁸ Fields's 1896 diary is in the Terry Heller Papers at Coe College, Manuscripts.

Appendix

Jewett's Argument in *The Story of the Normans*

In *The Story of the Normans*, Sarah Orne Jewett makes a case that the union of Normans and Saxons, beginning in the eleventh century, has "made the England of history, the England of great scholars and soldiers and sailors, the England of great men and women, of books and ships and gardens and pictures and songs!" (365). In her thesis statement, she notes that this England has been a main source of what she believes is best in her own America:

As we go on with this story of the Normans, you will watch these followers of the sea-kings keeping always some trace of their old habits and customs.... The Northmen were vikings, always restless and on the move, stealing and fighting their way as best they might, daring, adventurous.... [I]n all the ages since one excuse after another has set the same wild blood leaping and made the Northern blue eyes shine.... [O]ne thing I ask you to remember first in all this long story of the Normans: that however much it seems to you a long chapter of bloody wars and miseries and treacheries that get to be almost tiresome in their folly and brutality; ... yet everywhere you will catch a gleam of the glorious courage and steadfastness that have won not only the petty principalities and dukedoms of those early days, but the great English and American discoveries and inventions and noble advancement of all the centuries since. (27-8)

Jewett's thesis is that the transformations of Northmen into Normans and then into the English and Americans is a major thread in the weaving of civilized life in Europe and North America. She suggests that certain Norman traits have persisted through centuries of development and remain visible from the time when the Northmen were barbaric pirates into Jewett's present, when a Norman spirit infuses leadership in the technologically and politically advanced democracies of England and the United States. The direction of this development has been progressive. The Northmen were savage and murderous, but also daring and adventurous. The latter qualities have persisted, and though Norman history may seem tiresome in its recurrent warfare, the end result has been human improvement, the shifting of energies from frequent bloody conflict to making "discoveries and inventions and noble advancement."

Another Norman quality has been especially important to progress:

There is something refreshing in the stories of old Norse life; of its simplicity and freedom and childish zest. An old writer says that they had "a hankering after pomp and pageantry," and by means of this they came at last to doing things decently and in order, and to setting the fashions for the rest of Europe. (6)

As she elaborates on this hankering, it becomes the origin of a Norman talent for judging among the ideas and practices they encounter in interacting with other peoples and of an openness to cultural transformation by means of adapting the best of these. In this way, Normans help to carry forward in time not only their own best qualities, but those that they find in the peoples they encounter (361-2). This centuries-long refinement has led to the vibrancy she finds in contemporary America.

Jewett organizes her narrative, in part, to show transformations: of Northmen into Normans and, then, of Normans and Saxons into the modern English and Americans.

Northmen into Normans

The Northmen of Scandinavia had two qualities that Jewett thought especially significant. That they were courageously adventurous she attributes to the environment within which they developed their culture, a geography that required them to master seafaring and drew them into raiding and warfare as well as exploring and trading. Their appreciation of ceremonious order remains mysterious in origin, but she identifies this trait as the foundation for their development of domestic and fine arts and of their drive to find the best ways of doing things. This characteristic also is behind their early development of a sophisticated literary and historical tradition that gave unity to their culture. These qualities led to their founding colonies, such as in North America, Normandy and Sicily. Their military prowess enabled them to take and keep Normandy, and their cultural confidence and flexibility enabled them to merge with the cultures into which they inserted themselves, for example, when over two generations, the Danish-speaking Northmen became French-speaking Normans. Though the Northmen merge with the French enough to adopt their language, still they bring into Normandy what Jewett believes must have been a superior culture that values and fosters intelligence, learning, energy, and the willingness to govern.

As Jewett presents these ideas in her opening chapter, she notes that the peoples the Normans came to dominate and transform in France and England were of the same background with the Normans themselves, but that their recent historical experience had made them different:

The countries to the southward were tamed and spiritless, and bound down by church influence and superstition until they had lost the energy and even the intellectual power of their ancestors five centuries back. The Roman Empire had helped to change the Englishmen and many of the Frenchmen of that time into a population of slaves and laborers, with no property in the soil, nothing to fight for but their own lives. (10)

At the time of the Norman conquest of England, the tribal backgrounds of both the English and the Normans were Germanic, and yet, Jewett says,

... the second invasion of Northmen by the roundabout way of Normandy, seems as marked a change as the succession of the Celts to the Britons, or the Saxons to the Danes. The Normans had so distinctly made a great gain in ideas and civilization, that they were as much foreigners as any Europeans could have been to the Anglo-Saxons of that eleventh century, and their coming had a permanent effect, besides a most compelling power. (355)

While Jewett emphasizes the positive qualities that Northmen brought to Normandy, she makes a point of keeping before the reader their darker side. For example, she speculates that their failure to establish a permanent presence in North America resulted from their preference for raiding and warfare over agriculture (18-9).

To become Normans, Northmen needed to settle in a landscape that would allow the development of agriculture, one that provided access to resources beyond

subsistence. Jewett suggests that Viking women may have been responsible in part for the choice to establish a colony in Normandy, that they wanted a more secure and comfortable material life, to reduce the risks of loss of their men in raiding and to improve domestic life (22-3). In Normandy, the Northmen became Normans:

... they gradually changed into Frenchmen themselves, different from other Frenchmen only in being more spirited, vigorous, and alert. They inspired every new growth of the religion, language, or manners, with their own splendid vitality. They were like plants that have grown in dry, thin soil, transplanted to a richer spot of ground, and sending out fresh shoots in the doubled moisture and sunshine. And presently we shall find the Northman becoming the Norman of history. As the Northman, almost the first thing we admire about him is his character, his glorious energy; as the Norman, we see that energy turned into better channels, and bringing a new element into the progress of civilization. (23-4)

The first major step in the transformation of Northmen into Normans was moving to Normandy, where geography worked upon them, reducing the pressure to deploy violence to provide necessities and gain comforts and allowing for the growth of domestic arts, learning, technology, and the fine arts. The next major step in this transformation was adopting Christianity, beginning with the conversion of Rolf the Ganger:

It was all a great step upward, and Rolf's clear eyes saw that. If he were not a Christian he could not be the equal of the lords of France. He was not a mere adventurer any longer, the leader of a band of pirates; other ambitions had come to him since he had been governor of his territory. The pagan fanaticism and superstition of his companions were more than half extinguished already; the old myths of the Northern gods had not flourished in this new soil. At last, after much discussion and bargaining about the land that should be given, Rolf gave his promise once for all, and now we may begin to call him fairly the Duke of Normandy and his people the Normans; the old days of the Northmen in France had come to an end. For a good many years the neighboring provinces called the new dukedom "the pirate's land" and "the Northman's land," but the great Norman race was in actual existence now, and from this beginning under Rolf, the tall Norwegian sea-king, has come one of the greatest forces and powers of the civilized world. (43-4)

Rolf's conversion seems opportunistic in the main, and yet its effect ultimately is transformative. Once he becomes a Christian ruler, he determines the course of his descendants and his subjects toward an increasingly Christian and, in Jewett's eyes, more civilized future.

After the Northmen were firmly established in Normandy and had made Christianity their official religion, the gradual merging of Danes and the French could proceed. She sees in Duke William Longsword a will to merge the two cultures rather than to assert Danish superiority and dominance (63). This illustrates her view of the Norman "character" as self-confidently flexible. The Normans exhibited an understanding that asserting Norman historical identity could be achieved by advancing civilized living more than by maintaining a distinct Danish identity. They could willingly surrender key components of identity, such as religion and language, in exchange for a more peaceful politics and a richer culture. Jewett also makes clear that Normans easily intermarried with their non-Norman neighbors, showing little interest in maintaining what we would call a separate gene pool.

Jewett's account of the two centuries of development between Rolf and William the Conqueror repeatedly takes note of failures and weaknesses of the Normans, but she focuses on strengths and successes, on what she sees as their contributions to the progress of civilization. Both weakness and strength appear in Norman expansion, particularly into Sicily, as recounted in Chapter 7. On one hand, venturing out of Normandy and establishing new colonies seems a natural development of an energetic and dynamic people. Jewett sees a similar inevitability in contemporary English colonialism. Though she clearly admires the Norman and British qualities that drive them to seek the new and to dominate, she also sees that this process is oppressive to those invaded. Still, though Italians resisted and suffered in the Norman conquest of Sicily, in the long run, they benefited, and by the time of the third Norman duke, Italians and Normans had formed a unity (131-3). What largely redeems the depredations of the Normans is their gradual refinement as a people. She says of their merging with the Italians of Sicily:

The spirit of adventure, of conquest, of government, of chivalry, and personal ambition shines in every page of it, and as time goes on we watch with joy a partial fading out of the worse characteristics of cruelty and avarice and trickery, of vanity and jealous revenge. ... The south of Italy and the Sicilian kingdom of [Duke] Roger were under a wiser and more tolerant rule than any government of their day, and Greeks, Normans, and Italians lived together in harmony and peace that was elsewhere unknown. (143-4)

A key to Norman success was "tolerant rule," which enabled differing peoples to live and work side by side.

Normans and Saxons become the English

Jewett devotes roughly half of her book to the life of William the Conqueror. Her account closely follows her main sources, but she continues to develop her thesis that the Normans have bequeathed to England and America a spirit that should be embraced. Her account of William emphasizes both his weaknesses and his strengths. She finds him far less than perfectly moral:

That he did not do some bad things must not make us call him good, for a good man is one who does do good things. But his strict fashion of life kept his head clearer and his hands stronger, and made him wide-awake when other men were stupid, and so again and again he was able to seize an advantage and possess himself of the key to success. (151)

William's successes led eventually to his conquest of England, which Jewett judges as clearly immoral and as devastating for many in the violence and destructiveness of the process (287). As she tells this story, she gives particular attention to the merging of the Normans with the Saxons, the process that formed the character of the contemporary English and Americans:

There were certain hindrances to civilization, and lacks of a fitting progress and true growth. Let us see what these things were, and how the greater refinement of the Normans, their superior gifts and graces, must come into play a little later. There was some deep meaning in the fusion of the two peoples, and more than one reason why

they could form a greater nation together than either Normans or Englishmen could alone. (185)

Once the conquest is complete, Jewett notes, the Normans as Normans begin to disappear from history:

William was about forty years old when the battle of Hastings was fought and won; Normandy, too, was in her best vigor and full development of strength. The years of decadence must soon begin for both; the time was not far distant when the story of Normandy ends, and it is only in the history of France and of England that the familiar Norman characteristics can be traced. Foremost in vitalizing force and power of centralization and individuality, while so much of Europe was unsettled and misdirected toward petty ends, this duchy of Rolf the Ganger seems, in later years, like a wild-flower that has scattered its seed to every wind, and plants for unceasing harvests, but must die itself in the first frost of outward assailment and inward weakness. (312-3)

William was not especially successful as king of England, and his reign often was brutal and destructive, but still, he did much to prepare the ground for the flowering of England. She describes this process of merging Saxon and Norman as like refining metal:

Yet, as had often happened before in this growing nation's lifetime, a sure process of amalgamation was going on, and though the fire of discontent was burning hot, the gold that was England's and the gold that was Normandy's were being melted together and growing into a greater treasure than either had been alone. We can best understand the individuality and vital force of the Norman people by seeing the difference their coming to England has made in the English character. We cannot remind ourselves of this too often. The Norman of the Conqueror's day was already a man of the world. The hindering conditions of English life were localism and lack of unity. We can see almost a tribal aspect in the jealousies of the earldoms, the lack of sympathy or brotherhood between the different quarters of the island. William's earls were only set over single shires, and the growth of independence was rendered impossible; and his greatest benefaction to his new domain was a thoroughly organized system of law. As we linger over the accounts of his reign, harsh and cruel and unlovable as he appears, it is rather the cruelty of the surgeon than of a torturer or of a cut-throat. The presence of the Normans among the nations of the earth must have seemed particularly irritating and inflammatory, but we can understand, now that so many centuries have smoothed away the scars they left, that the stimulus of their energy and their hot ambition helped the rest of the world to take many steps forward. (318-9)

When Jewett considers the progress William and his wife gained during their rule, she emphasizes both the gains and the losses of this process:

There is nothing more striking than the traditional slander and prejudice which history preserves from age to age. Seen by clearer light, many reported injustices are explained away. If there was in England then, any thing like the present difficulty of influencing public opinion to quick foresight and new decisions, the Conqueror and Baldwin of Flanders' daughter had any thing but an easy path to tread. Selfish they both may have been, and bigoted and even cruel, but they represented a better degree of social refinement and education and enlightenment. 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. They were not conscious reformers; they were not infallibly wise missionaries of new truth, who tried actually to give these belated souls a wider outlook upon life, but let us stop to recognize the fact that no task is more thankless than his who is trying to go in advance of his time.

... Nothing has been so resented and assailed as the thorough survey of England, and the record of its lands and resources in the Domesday Book. Yet nothing was so necessary for any sort of good government and steady oversight of the nation's affairs. We only wonder now that it was not made sooner. The machinery of government was of necessity much ruder then. No doubt William's tyranny swept its course to and fro like some Juggernaut car regardless of its victims, yet for England a unified and concentrated force of government was the one thing to be insisted upon....

Yet the future right direction and prosperity of England was poor consolation to the aching hearts of the women of that time, or the landless lords who had to stand by and see new masters of the soil take their places. (327-8)

The merging of Normans and Saxons after the conquest is slow and painful, especially for the Saxons. While the Norman urges toward effective government and cultural improvement win out in the long run, the process entails much suffering, and depends for its success, in part, upon William's ruthless willingness to use force to gain his ends.

The modern English qualities that Jewett admires arise from the merging of Norman and Saxon. This aspect of her book has proven to be controversial in Jewett criticism,* as shown in "The Reception of *The Story of the Normans*." Jewett's critics early formed a consensus that this book reveals her theory of race. Her theory is said to be based upon the idea that Normans and Saxons are different races, in the sense that 21st century readers understand the term "race." That is, critics assert that Jewett understands Normans and Saxons to be distinguished not only by nationality and culture, but also by "blood," by what we would call their genetic heritage. Critics further assert that Jewett sees Normans as racially superior to Saxons and that she advocates for Nordicism, the continuing dominance of Normans in modern Europe and America. Nordicism actually enters American discourse after Jewett's death; it is a 20th-century form of Nativism that argues for the racial purification of the United States by excluding non-Nordic immigrants. The purpose of this exclusion is to maintain the political and cultural dominance in America of a Northern European race and, thereby, to insure the continuation of the democratic institutions that only these peoples can foster. I elaborate in "Jewett and Nordicism" how this is an anachronistic reading of *The Story of the Normans*.

Though Jewett refers to Normans and Saxons as races, it would require a highly selective reading to show that she thinks of them as divided by more than their recent histories. She says that Anglo-Saxons and Normans became foreigners to each other over a mere 500 years of their history. She points out that even during that period of separate development, they were in continuous contact, including intermarriage. She notes that in the Eleventh Century both the British and the Normans were highly mixed peoples, and she reports the strong influence of Danes on both peoples. While it is true that Jewett finds more to admire in the Normans than in the Saxons at the time of their violent merging in 1066, she insists that the Saxons brought much of value to this union, and, therefore, that "There was some deep meaning in the fusion of the two peoples, and more than one reason why they could form a greater nation together than either

Normans or Englishmen could alone" (185).

As illustrated above, Jewett saw the Normans as *culturally superior in some ways* to the peoples they conquered and with which they then merged:

It has also been the fashion to ignore the influence of five hundred years' contact between Roman civilization and the Saxon inhabitants of Great Britain. Surely great influences have been brought to bear upon the Anglo-Saxon race. That the making of England was more significant to the world and more valuable than any manifestation of Norman ability, is in one way true, but let us never forget that much that has been best in English national life has come from the Norman elements of it rather than the Saxon. England the colonizer, England the country of intellectual and social progress, England the fosterer of ideas and chivalrous humanity, is Norman England, and the Saxon influence has oftener held her back in dogged satisfaction and stubbornness than urged her forward to higher levels. The power of holding back is necessary to the stability of a kingdom, but not so necessary as the
"Glory of going on and still to be -- -- -- -- " (356-7)

The Normans' historical experience, energy and intelligence enabled them to achieve military superiority. Their self-confident cultural flexibility enabled them to transform themselves and those they merged with in positive ways. Jewett also emphasized Norman weaknesses that, to some extent, were remedied as they merged with the French and then the Saxons. Like the Normans, the Saxons, too, had both strengths and weaknesses. In her discussion of the period after the death of William, she says of Saxon England:

As a nation, they surely responded readily to the Norman stimulus, but the Normans had never found so good a chance to work out their own ideas of life and achievement as on English soil in the first hundred years after the Conquest. In many respects the Saxon race possesses greater and more reliable qualities than any other race; stability, perseverance, self-government, industry are all theirs. Yet the Normans excelled them in their genius for great enterprises and their love of fitness and elegance in social life and in the arts. Indeed we cannot do better than to repeat here what has been quoted once already. "Without them England would have been mechanical, not artistic; brave, not chivalrous; the home of learning, not of thought."
(356)

Here Jewett elevates Saxons above all other peoples in their time, including the Normans, in the positive traits she names: stability, perseverance, self-government, industry. This made them an ideal people for responding "readily to the Norman stimulus," presumably because their strengths were at least partial remedies for Norman weaknesses. In this passage Jewett again emphasizes that England becomes not so much a Norman nation as a merging of two heritages into a new entity that contains these two identities in creative tension. She commends to her readers a similar merging of attitudes and values, a combination of traits that foster democracy and social order, an energetic openness to change and appreciation of the best, tempered by industry, steadiness and self-restraint.

Jewett presents a number of different metaphors to describe the merging process, and these introduce some confusion into how she thinks about this blending. When she reflects upon the immediate consequences of the Conquest, she describes the Normans as "a tributary stream that came to swell the mighty channel of the English race and history" (245). This metaphor envisions the unifying process as natural and inevitable,

but it implies an idea Jewett opposes later. This comparison interprets the Conquest as do the professional historians she consulted, notably Palgrave and Freeman, who conclude that the Normans were a decisive influence that altered England for the better without converting its peoples into Normans. This metaphor resonates with an earlier comparison of Normans to a hare and Saxons to a tortoise. She says that the hare would win some races against the tortoise, but in the longer run of history, "the tortoise was going to be somehow made over new, and keep a steady course in the right path, and learn speed, and get to be better than the old tortoise" (243-4).

Not surprisingly, Jewett develops other metaphors that resist her sources and more adequately express her view of Norman importance. For example, when speaking of the benefits of William's conquest, Jewett says:

Yet, as had often happened before in this growing nation's lifetime, a sure process of amalgamation was going on, and though the fire of discontent was burning hot, the gold that was England's and the gold that was Normandy's were being melted together and growing into a greater treasure than either had been alone. We can best understand the individuality and vital force of the Norman people by seeing the difference their coming to England has made in the English character. (318-9)

In this comparison, the two peoples seem to contribute equally to the formation of a modern English character. Human technology and labor extract the most valued traits of a new, unified English character from the raw ore of two different, preceding ethnicities. Near the end, Jewett presents another metaphor that favors the Normans even more. Speaking of modern England, she says:

But whether the Norman spirit leads her to be self-confident or headstrong and wilful, or the Saxon spirit holds her back into slowness and dulness, and lack of proper perception in emergencies or epochs of necessary change, still she follows the right direction and leads the way. It is the Norman graft upon the sturdy old Saxon tree that has borne best fruit among the nations.... (365)

Saxon virtues become the root stock, crucial and life-giving, but the branches and fruits of the nation are Norman. The metaphor of the graft emphasizes, more than the metallurgic comparison, the organic merging of the two peoples, but recognizes the role of human art in the grafting process. Jewett suggests that the fruits of greatness come from the Norman branch on the Saxon root. But she also implies, again, a national unity, an organic whole. Both spirits are present, and in this case, she emphasizes the weaknesses each brings to the composite of modern England. The Norman spirit pushes the nation toward being headstrong, wilful, and, presumably, over-confident, while the Saxon spirit restrains, leading to failures to understand when action is necessary and to act decisively. The strengths that both have contributed to the English character, however, lead England over all in the right direction.

What is meant by "the right direction" may be problematic. Jewett's critics have tended to read such passages as an unqualified endorsement of British civilization, not merely of Shakespeare and modern inventions, but also of the abuses and crimes of Britain, such as in Ireland and in colonies such as India. It would seem clear in the passage above that Jewett recognizes British tendencies to be headstrong, wilful, slow, dull, and unwilling to change when doing so is clearly an advantage. Her endorsement of British behavior is not unqualified. Whether she endorses any particular policy or action of the Victorian government is not really apparent in *The Story of the Normans*. One would have to look elsewhere for relevant evidence.

Also problematic in Jewett's view of the merging of Normans and Saxons into a new English people is the nature of the Norman presence after 1066. In the final sentence of the book, Jewett says: "To-day the Northman, the Norman, and the Englishman, and a young nation on this western shore of the Atlantic are all kindred who, possessing a rich inheritance, should own the closest of kindred ties" (366). What is the nature of that kinship, of the "rich inheritance" these peoples share? Does Jewett imply that the essence of young America is its genetic descent from Northmen? Must one literally be of Norman descent in order to be a true American? Is this statement definitive evidence that Jewett was, if not actually a Nordacist, at least a precursor? These questions are pointed by the fact that Jewett clearly believes that the Normans as a physically existing people *are no more*. While there still are Scandinavians, of course, the people who were the Normans of Normandy, who colonized Sicily and invaded England, no longer have a national existence. She uses the metaphor of a wild flower that dies itself, but scatters its seeds abroad, to describe the fate of the Normans as a people (313). While she clearly understands that the Normans gradually disappear from history after 1066, their story becoming the history of England and France, she also repeats the idea that Normans maintain some sort of presence even in the 19th Century. Perhaps this idea is most clearly expressed in her penultimate paragraph, much of which has been quoted above:

Here, at the beginning of the Norman absorption into England, I shall end my story of the founding and growth of the Norman people. The mingling of their brighter, fiercer, more enthusiastic, and visionary nature with the stolid, dogged, prudent, and resolute Anglo-Saxons belongs more properly to the history of England. Indeed, the difficulty would lie in not knowing where to stop, for one may tell the two races apart even now, after centuries of association and affiliation. There are Saxon landholders, and farmers, and statesmen in England yet -- unconquered, unpersuaded, and un-Normanized. But the effect on civilization of the welding of the two great natures cannot be told fairly in this or any other book -- we are too close to it and we ourselves make too intimate a part of it to judge impartially. If we are of English descent we are pretty sure to be members of one party or the other. Saxon yet or Norman yet, and even the confusion of the two forces renders us not more able to judge of either, but less so. We must sometimes look at England as a later Normandy; and yet, none the less, as the great leader and personified power that she is and has been these many hundred years, drawing her strength from the best of the Northern races, and presenting the world with great men and women as typical of these races and as grandly endowed to stand for the representatives of their time in days to come, as the men and women of Greece were typical, and live yet in our literature and song. (364-5)

Here as in several of the other passages quoted above, Jewett speaks of two "races" that have not fully merged by the 19th Century. However, she also uses terms such as "party" and "force" to describe their persistence into her time, as she has often used "spirit" in previously quoted passages. In a letter to Annie Fields when she was researching, Jewett speaks of observing contemporary Normans and Saxons among her friends and acquaintances in South Berwick as if they were political parties (See Jewett's Comments on *The Story of the Normans*). Here, she recognizes English citizens who are "un-Normanized," who have resisted the Norman inheritance down to the present day. It would seem clear, therefore, that she understands "Normanism" as a set of transferable attitudes and ideas, such that a Saxon or anyone else can become a

Norman in spirit. These attitudes and ideas constitute the "seed that has flourished in a richer soil," a "rich inheritance," that can be shared by everyone, whether they are of Norman descent, or of British descent, or of *any* descent in England or North America. The fortunate citizens of these nations, Jewett believes, *all* are Normans in sharing the gifts Norman culture has bequeathed to the present, and they should embrace these gifts, accept their Norman inheritance.

Jewett's Theory of History

The Story of the Normans has been for some of her critics a touchstone for understanding her theory of history. As is apparent in "The Reception of *The Story of the Normans*," those who draw upon this book to understand her world view tend to conclude that she accepted contemporary Darwinist ideas of progress. She is said to believe that human history consists of a struggle between races in which the fittest survive and dominate, with the result that humanity improves over time. For example, Patrick Gleason says: "War, for Jewett, refines the stock and strengthens the most advantageous of racial characteristics." While it is true that Jewett is optimistic about human progress, the grounds of that optimism are in her liberal Christianity rather than in a materialistic or scientific theory of progress.

Jewett does describe history as a "natural war of races." In the opening chapter she summarizes the received, though disputed, late Victorian view of the human prehistory of Europe, characterizing the people displaced by the Celts and Teutons:

There is very little known of these earlier dwellers in the east and north of Europe, except that they were short of stature and dark-skinned, that they were cave dwellers, and, in successive stages of development, used stone and bronze and iron tools and weapons. Many relics of their home-life and of their warfare have been discovered and preserved in museums, and there are evidences of the descent of a small proportion of modern Europeans from that remote ancestry. The Basques of the north of Spain speak a different language and wear a different look from any of the surrounding people, and even in Great Britain there are some survivors of an older race of humanity, which the fairer-haired Celts of Southern Europe and Teutons of Northern Europe have never been able in the great natural war of races to wholly exterminate and supplant. (2-3)

Notable in this passage is her observation that shifts in dominance do not necessarily eventuate in extermination of the dominated. In noting this idea, she follows one of her main sources, Augustin Thierry, who argues that conquered "races" typically do not disappear, but continue over long periods of time to persist and resist the dominant forces in their culture. He sees modern European nations as consisting of greater diversity than may appear superficially as a result of the mixture of cultures and peoples they have absorbed in the course of reaching their modern formations (xvii-xxiii).

Jewett's concept of a war of races is not Darwinist, however, but Christian. She says of the Conqueror's reign: "In criticising and resenting such a reign as William the Norman's over England, we must avoid a danger of not seeing the hand of God in it, and the evidences of an overruling Providence, which works in and through the works of men and sees the end of things from the beginning as men cannot" (331). Repeatedly, Jewett reminds readers of "the slow processes by which God in nature and humanity

evolves the best that is possible for the present" (364). She emphasizes a dual perspective, how events appear to those who experience them and how they appear from centuries later, the latter *approximating* a divine perspective from "the end of things." Norman aspirations along with their folly and brutality contribute finally to the progress of England toward greatness. By greatness, she does not mean that either moral or social perfection is achieved in the nineteenth century; "the best that is possible for the present" is not a utopia, but rather what humanity as a whole has been able to manage so far. To her mind, contemporary England and America are morally better societies than most that have come before, and "this whole world is nearer every year to the highest level any fortunate part of it has ever gained" (256). Jewett's liberal Christian view of the divinely directed moral progress of all humanity contrasts with turn-of-the-century scientific racists, who present evolution as pointed toward the development of a superior race, with characteristics unattainable by the inferior races.

Given Jewett's belief in divinely directed historical progress, she would naturally favor agents of positive change such as the Normans over resisters such as the Saxons. Her belief also makes understandable her seemingly callous view of war, expressed in a passage that has drawn ridicule and scorn from reviewers and critics:

War is the conflict between ideas that are going to live and ideas that have passed their maturity and are going to die. Men possess themselves of a new truth, a clearer perception of the affairs of humanity; progress itself is made possible with its larger share of freedom for the individual or for nations only by a relentless overthrowing of outgrown opinions. It is only by new combinations of races, new assertions of the old unconquerable forces, that the spiritual kingdom gains or rather shows its power. When men claim that humanity can only move round in a circle, ... it is well to take a closer look, to see how by combination, by stimulus of example, and power of spiritual forces and God's great purposes, this whole world is nearer every year to the highest level any fortunate part of it has ever gained. Wars may appear to delay, but in due time they surely raise whole nations of men to higher levels, whether by preparing for new growths or by mixing the new and old.... And no war was ever fought that was not an evidence that one element in it had outgrown the other and was bound to get itself manifested and better understood. The first effect of war is incidental and temporary; the secondary effect makes a link in the grand chain of the spiritual education and development of the world. (255-6)

Jewett spoke with pride of her ideas about war in a letter to Annie Fields, presumably, in part, because she believed she had achieved a Christian historian's perspective (see Jewett's Comments on *The Story of the Normans*). Though some have seen this passage as glorifying war, that would seem far from Jewett's meaning. As she says a few chapters later, "the future right direction and prosperity of England was poor consolation to the aching hearts of the women of that time, or the landless lords who had to stand by and see new masters of the soil take their places" (328). A close analysis of the passage is revealing.

Defining war as a conflict between ideas, she begins by shifting perspective away from the usual definitions involving contests for political power, territory and resources. She does not deny these motives, but asserts that behind these is another level, a transcendental struggle in which "the spiritual kingdom ... shows its power." A divine purpose at this level is to achieve clarity, to make possible the full possession of a new truth. The value of that truth is that it makes possible a "larger share of freedom for

the individual or for nations." Jewett believes that God wants humanity to achieve greater individual and communal freedom and that, through His Providence, He makes use even of war for this purpose. She sees God as far from desiring to create a pure race, but rather to mix races and their ideas. She believes that studying history confirms this view rather than the notion that there is no progress, that history is essentially cyclical. God's purpose is to advance human possibility and to move all of humanity toward the achievements attained by those who, at any one time, seem in advance of the others. While it is true that in the time of war, it appears that humanity has regressed, this perspective is limited, and what one sees is "incidental and temporary." From the Divine perspective, which gradually becomes at least partially available to humanity over long stretches of time, even wars make "links in a grand chain." Humanity gradually becomes able to see how God has brought goodness out of the depths of human folly and suffering.

Jewett believes that God insures that the overall results of human aspiration -- within the context of freedom to choose foolishly, selfishly, arrogantly, etc. -- will be progress toward "the best that is possible." The war of races may -- in any particular time and place -- express one group's sense of racial superiority and entitlement, and it too often entails brutality and suffering, but what is really important, from God's point of view, is that a better way is determined "to get itself manifested and better understood," and through this painful process humanity struggles to realize God's will.

A decade after *The Story of the Normans*, Jewett continued to hold to her confidence in divinely directed progress. Reflecting on the 1898 war in Cuba, she writes from France to her friend Sara Norton:

I hope now, more than ever, for some better news of the war.... I think I can see better and better every day that it was a war which could not be hindered, after all. Spain has shown herself perfectly incompetent to maintain any sort of civilization in Cuba, and things are like some sultry summer days, when there is nothing for it but to let a thunder-shower do its best and worst, and drown the new hay, and put everything out of gear while it lasts. The condition is larger than petty politics or mercenary hopes, or naval desires for promotion, or any of those things to which at one time or another I have indignantly "laid it." I feel more than ever that such a war is to be laid at the door of progress, and not at any backward steps toward what we had begun to feel was out of date, the liking for a fight. I think that it is all nonsense to talk about bad feeling here in France, as it is certainly in England; for however people deplore the war in general and pity Spain, they generally end by saying that it was the only way out -- that we had to make war, and then we all say that it must be short! If we could drown a few newspapers from time to time, it would keep up our drooping hearts and make us willing to bear the hearing of foolish details, and even painful details. It seems like a question of surgery, this cure of Cuba -- we must not mind the things that disgust and frighten us, if only the surgery is in good hands. (10 June 1898, letter 86)

What seems inevitable in the present, however foolish it appears and however much suffering results, must, she believes, reveal the hand of God "at the door of progress." In that sense, returning to the metaphor of the surgeon she applied to William the Conqueror, the operation surely is in good hands. However, when she says "if only," she more likely refers to her uncertainty that the perpetrators of such apparent folly could constitute "good hands."

Jewett's understanding of war as providential clarifies what she means by characterizing human history as "the great natural war of races." Among her sources, Thierry, in particular, shares her view that the mixing and sorting of peoples within emerging nations, though progressive, often is ugly: Progressive recombination of nations, ethnicities, and races may be achieved by armed conflict or by more peaceful interactions, but it always will be costly. Sir Francis Palgrave shares Jewett's view of the role of Providence in fostering progress: "All mutations, all developments, all cor[r]elations, all operations of forces, all result from the Creator's enduring ordinances" (*The History of Normandy and of England, Volume 2: The three first dukes of Normandy*, London: J. W. Parker, 1857, 775-7. See also 497. See "Jewett's Sources").

In *The Story of the Normans*, Jewett presents an argument that, on the whole, coincides with the contemporary historians who were her sources, though at one point, she dares to disagree with Edward A. Freeman about the relative importance of the Normans to the formation of the modern British character (355). Wild and savage, but energetic and uniquely flexible Northmen settled in Normandy and were transformed into the French-speaking Normans who developed one of the richest and most vibrant cultures in the western world in the 11th Century. The Normans conquered England and transformed themselves again, by merging with the Saxons, into the English, leading in the 19th Century to the richest and most vibrant cultures Jewett sees in her western world, including England, North America, and, though she says little of this here, France also. Jewett varies from some of her sources in her view that the story of the Normans reveals the activity of Divine Providence in drawing humanity toward greater freedom, but these ideas do appear in some of her sources, notably in Thierry and in Sir Francis Palgrave.