



Countryside, Domestic Picturesque, and Scenic Sublimes: The Triad of Eco-feminism in Sarah Orne Jewett's "A White Heron"

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Abstract

This paper examines countryside, domestic picturesque, and scenic sublimes in Sarah Orne Jewett's "A White Heron." It conducts an interdisciplinary eco-feminist approach to explore the coalescence of women and nature depicted in the story. The study approaches women's exploitation and its remedial antithesis through living in nature. It applies three eco-critical concepts. The first concept is the countryside which comprises marshes, swamps, and woods. The second concept is domestic picturesque that encompass fauna and paths; and the third concept is scenic sublimes including birds, forest, and wilderness. The study demonstrates how Jewett adopts these eco-critical insights as indicatory features symbolizing the exploitation of women by male mainstream to dramatize the subtle relation between women and nature. It highlights an aspect seldom remarked on by scholars of Jewett's story, and it discovers Jewett's self-conscious exposition of women's exploitation inflicted on the protagonist, Sylvia. It also identifies Jewett's depiction of the protagonist's settlement in the countryside to evade masculine exploitation by living close to natural elements, like animals, birds, and wilderness. The study ultimately unravels Jewett's reinforcement of the protagonist's feminist subjectivity via finding spiritual serenity in nature.

Keywords: Countryside, domestic picturesque, eco-criticism, feminism, Jewett, masculine mainstream, scenic sublimes.

الريف، المكان المثالي، والمناظر الخلابة: ثلاثية النسوية البيئية في قصة "البلشون الابيض" لسارة اورني جويت

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ملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة مواضيع الريف، المكان المثالي، المناظر الخلابة في قصة "البلشون الابيض" لسارة اورني جويت. تعتمد الدراسة على تطبيق ثنائية نقدية تشتمل على المذهب النسوي والبيئة معاً لإمطة اللثام عن التلاحم بين النساء والطبيعة في سياق القصة. كما تتعرض الدراسة لقضية استغلال النساء وامكانية محوه بفضل العيش في البيئة. تستخدم الدراسة ثلاثة مفاهيم نقدية بيئية. الاول هو الريف الذي يحوي على برك ومستنقعات واحراج. أما المفهوم الثاني فهو المكان المثالي الذي يدل على عنصر الحيوان والطرق الطبيعية. يشير المفهوم الثالث الى المناظر الخلابة التي تجسد صورة الطيور والغابة والبراري. توضح الدراسة كيفية تبني جويت لهذه المضامين البيئة النقدية كدليل رمزي على استغلال النساء على يد التيار الذكوري السائد وابرار العلاقة الوطيدة بين النساء والطبيعة. كما تسلط الدراسة الضوء على تشهير جويت الواعي للاستغلال الواقع على بطلة القصة، سيلفيا، التي نادراً ما تم الكشف عنها على يد الباحثين. تميز الدراسة ايضاً تصوير جويت لنزوع البطلة الى الاستقرار في الريف هروباً من الاستغلال الذكوري عن طريق العيش بالقرب من مكونات الطبيعة مثل الحيوانات والطيور والبراري. وفي الختام، تكشف الدراسة عن تعزيز جويت للاستقلالية النسوية للبطلة من خلال اكتشاف الصفاء الروحاني في الطبيعة.

الكلمات الدالة: الريف، المكان المثالي، النقد البيئي، الحركة النسوية، جويت، الهيمنة الذكورية، المناظر الخلابة.



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1. Introduction

Eco-feminism designates the connection between the deterioration of the environmental world and the exploitation of women. There are a number of cogent postulations concerning eco-feminist's argument of women subordination and the degradation of the natural world. One of the most conspicuous peculiarities of eco-feminism is the view of nature as a place of gender bias created by an oppressive patriarchal society that exerts persecutory restrictions upon females' demeanors. In this sense, eco-feminism puts forth the lurking impetuses of women's oppression at stake due to the fact that women confront devastating challenges created by the surrounding environmental milieus. Literature, therefore, offers quasi-real fictional experiences representing these challenges. Notwithstanding, such challenges intensify women's plights as subjects of masculine oppression. Consequently, women become subordinate to the social male mainstream as they undergo a harsh experience in a depressive natural environment. In other words, women's oppression and subordination are immensely affected by the masculine practices that make environmental nature harsh and an "inferno" for women in several ways.

As a critical discipline, eco-feminism emerges out of the second wave feminism since it relates to the green movement i.e., it posits that women's holistic spiritual connection to nature is very essential for mitigating women's suffering in male-dominated societies. In this case, it is a combination of feminism and the green movement which are profoundly concerned with the subordination of women and the possibility of making women equal to their masculine counterparts. The green movement looks into the human excessive negative harness of the non-human world. That is, human beings impose exploitive utilization of the natural world for several expedient purposes. By analogy, eco-feminism posits the oppression and exploitation of women in a literary style; whereby the literariness of eco-feminism comprises the depiction of women in critical social status as they are marginalized and exploited. Therefore, the affinity between the green movement and eco-feminism encompasses two inextricable terms i.e., exploitation and subordination in which women and the physical nature are exploited, and they are subordinate since they play a marginal role. However, exploitation and subordination are paradoxical in nature. On the one hand, human beings could not survive without a perfect environment. Men, on the other hand, could not survive without women because humanity provides a dual gender proliferation prolonged by the relationship between males and females depicted in literary works. In essence, this is the concomitant connective point between the green movement and eco-feminism. Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore countryside, domestic picturesque and scenic sublimas as a remedial antithesis of feminist exploitation portrayed in Sarah Orne Jewett's "A White Heron."

2. Literature Review

Archana Parashar and Mukesh Kumar (2019) apply the concept of trauma to explore subjective memory in Jewett's "A White Heron." They also apply the concept of submissiveness to analyze the relationship between trauma and memory. Therefore, they explore trauma as a psychologically detrimental mental condition. The direct impression of the memory that suffers from traumatic experience transforms into becoming depressive behavioral reactions because the story "demonstrates regional sustainability through clearly defined repressive gender roles, feminizing the concept of submissiveness while masculinizing attitudes of dominance over nature and competence in dealing with the challenges that nature presents" (p.101). Here, submissiveness is a significant factor intensifying Sylvia's trauma. Parashar and Kumar (2019) tackle submissiveness in two fictional contexts. The first one is Sylvia's traumatic experience; and the other one is the surrounding family circumference. The former corresponds to the fact that she suffers from a pernicious illusion about her health that she is going to have troubles in her life due to previous male harassment. The latter relates to her city life's negligence and strict patriarchal family life. Thus, both conditions lead to the culmination of her submissiveness created by the male mainstream.

S. Selina Jamil (2017) tackles the theme of loneliness in Jewett's "A White Heron." Jamil (2017) argues the thematic notions of loneliness expose ethical problems and their crises emerging out of their complications. The story is characterized by moral and spiritual crises. The literary circumference of Jewett's story, according to Jamil (2017), is the environmental milieus. The theme of the ethical crisis strongly relates to the alienation that has been dominant in Jewett's diverse county atmosphere. This loneliness appears to be linked to the relationship between the civil society and Sylvia's attempt to be able to assimilate with other people. Jamil (2017), consequently, approaches the ethical crisis by approaching the literary and figurative appropriation of loneliness incarnated in the protagonist's character in the course of the plot. The lurking essence

of the study is to make an analogy between the protagonist and society on the ground of civil interactive dimensions. To put it simply, the idea of loneliness emerges in some civil societies, and Sylvia lacks this fact. Thus, the archetypal construction of such an idea is that she does not dissolve in societies which are abundant with the civil affairs that mitigate her loneliness.

Martin Groff (2015) pursues the realistic implications of Jewett's "A White Heron." Groff (2015) studies the story's organic unity as a "chronotope" of literary realism treated in the plot. Groff (2015) applies Bakhtin's concept of chronotope which inherently indicates the plot's organic unity. In this unity, the fictional protagonist – Sylvia – dwells in the fictional narrative space. Chronotopic space is revealed by designating the interrelation between Sylvia and space depicted in the story. The organic unity merges place with time in the plot's sequence of events. But it is unorganized in the gradual development of narrative incidents. The story has dialogic, or multi-voicedness, interactive integrity between time and place; and they are uttered by the story's characters. Time temporality is connected with readers that deduce the latent nuances of the story. The story also appeals to readers of eras of different historical periods by virtue of its employment of narrative chronotope and its significance to the organic unity. Groff (2015) interprets the initial fragments of the story where there is a precise depiction of time temporality when Sylvia leaves the city. Jewett's accurate descriptions of the city abandonment carries out the story's chronotope intended to be delivered to the reader's perception via the organic unity. Groff (2015) analyzes such organic unity and its temporal implications by the use of Bakhtin's concept of chronotope.

3. Analysis and Discussion

Sarah Orne Jewett's "A White Heron" hinges on the story of a female protagonist, Sylvia. At the onset of the plot, she decides to leave her city life and settle among the countryside of Maine with Mrs. Tilley; who is her delicate grandmother. The story's exposition recounts her living in the woods a year after her arrival as well as her gradual adaption to the ways of life of the countryside. As time passes, she gets accustomed to country life by helping her grandmother to take care of the farms' cattle. She could do domestic affairs, like getting milk from Mistress Moolly, their cow. Being so, Sylvia adores country life more than ever, especially when she wanders in the near forest. She immerses herself in the countryside and the fortes as she goes grazing the cow and returns home happily. The story presents meticulous descriptions of her enthusiastic obsession with the forest and its paths and lanes through which she passes by. As she passes them one evening, she runs into a hunter who searches for birds and collects them. He is deeply moved by a scarce species of a white heron, and he looks for it in the vicinity of the thick woods. The hunter ends up spending the night at her grandmother's home, which makes him feel at ease with them as one family. They have a warm meal together at home. Then, the hunter offers a sum of money for anybody who could tell him about the whereabouts of the white heron's nest.

The next day, the hunter embarks on searching for the heron in the forest accompanied by Sylvia. She gets up early to look for the heron alone in the forest hoping that she would find it and tell the hunter about its specific place. Being in the forest, she climbs the tallest tree to have a complete panoramic view of the countryside. At this moment, she sees the heron. This situation is the turning point in the story. This is because she feels free from the world around her and she could soar as high as the white heron. In other words, she feels that she is the heron herself as she shares with it the forest and wildlife life experience. Because she is overwhelmed by this feeling, she decides not to tell the hunter about the heron's nest. Though she knows well that she will be awarded a great sum of money by the hunter, she will not participate in killing an innocent and beautiful bird. After that, the hunter hopelessly leaves them when he recognizes that he will not see the heron again. Sylvia does not regret not telling the hunter because she believes that the secret of the heron and its life are more valuable than the prize. Thus, Sylvia's fascination with the heron and the countryside's wildlife are the splendors of the world, and they are the true treasures that nature offers her.

3.1 Feminism and Exploitation

Jewett projects feminist insights of women's struggle with a patriarchal society through Sylvia's personality. Women inferiority is the core subject of the initial incidents of the story. The protagonist, Sylvia, wants to leave city for the countryside because she is harassed by males. She is not treated as being equal to her male counterparts. As a rule of thumb, women feel their social inferiority in patriarchal exploitation when they "lost sight of the vision of equality" (Stevenson-Moessner, 2020, p.1). Accordingly, equality in an integral issue in perceiving women in terms of masculine prejudice exerted

upon them. In "A White Heron," Jewett deals with such inferiority through Sylvia who struggles in the city. She decides to leave the city to escape a boy who used to harass her:

She was just thinking how long it seemed since she first came to the farm a year ago, and wondering if everything went on in the noisy town just the same as when she was there, the thought of the great red-faced boy who used to chase and frighten her made her hurry along the path to escape from the shadow of the trees. (p.2)

In the countryside, Sylvia could avoid such frightening incidents. As such, she does not feel comfortable in the city life as the city was dominated by patriarchal exploitive males and their discriminatory view of women. Sylvia, in this case, incarnates women's inferiority complex. She undergoes harsh social experiences as she is restricted by surveillance "male gaze" that deprives her of stability. That is, male gaze is the most crucial social demeanor practiced by males to make women feel subordinate as well as powerless (Abu Jweid, 2016, p.530). It is an indication of women's inability to reinforce their feminist subjectivity since she does not feel a social outlet for her ordeals. In other words, her feminist subjectivity could not escape the surrounding misogyny bias. Aleksandra Gasztold (2020) argues this feeling "indicates an unequal power relationship and the objectification of females;" and women try to make a radical change in their lives in order to get rid of such objectification that is the process of "empowerment" per se (p.72). Change is, here, the primary method used by women to be self-autonomous. In "A White Heron," similarly, Sylvia makes a change when she leaves for the countryside to live with her grandmother. In a striking way, when she arrives in the countryside, she states that she could feel her true living. She does not consider her life as genuine and pleasant before she came to the countryside: "everybody said that it was a good change for a little maid who had tried to grow for eight years in a crowded manufacturing town, but, as for Sylvia herself, it seemed as if she never had been alive at all before she came to live at the farm" (p.1). Change is the turning point in Sylvia's life because could experience her human individuality when she escapes masculine social atrocities. Furthermore, she could regain her lost equality devastated by the boy – and other men – who made her life devoid of any humanistic dignity. Change is the vital key to her feminist subjectivity.

Sylvia's feminist experience emanates from masculine misogyny that engulfed her life in the city. When she settles in Mrs. Tilley's farm, she is still afraid of people. Her grandmother notices her fear since she keeps her distance of any person who approaches her grandmother's vicinity. As such, she is deeply moved by her grandmother's country lifestyle and will never return to her home in the city. The grandmother describes Sylvia's fear of folks and how she loves the place due to its safety and serenity: "'Afraid of folks,' they said! I [Mrs. Tilley] guess she won't be troubled no great with 'em up to the old place!' ...", Sylvia whispered that this was a beautiful place to live in, and she never should wish to go home" (p.2). Sylvia is overwhelmed by masculine reminiscences cast upon her in the city in contrast with the peace and serenity offered to her by nature. Sylvia, therefore, represents a feminist exit from masculine persecutory society; or as Sue Kennedy and Jane Thomas (2020) put it simply "masculine action" that degrades women's "stability and certainty" (p.119).

Jewett's depiction of feminist ordeals is highly apparent in Sylvia's subjectivity. Yet, such subjectivity lacks stability and gender equality due to the dominant masculine surveillance in the city. To her disappointment, however, she finds a male hunter in the woods while she grazes the cow. She is profoundly frightened at the first sight of the hunter. This is because she does not imagine that she may meet any male in the countryside. She immediately returns to her grandmother's house. She is shocked and surprised by the hunter; and her grandmother thinks that he is one of the farmers' boys in the surrounding vicinities: "Sylvia kept an awed silence; she knew by instinct that her grandmother did not comprehend the gravity of the situation. She must be mistaking the stranger for one of the farmer-lads of the region" (p.2). Sylvia's response, here, is an incarnation of her inhibited fear of the city's males. She does not expect to find any male in the wild countryside as she has chosen it as a safe place to empower her feminist subjectivity as a human being. On that account, she describes the hunter as an "enemy" just because he is a male. She calls him an enemy as he asks her about the road's direction: "the enemy had discovered her, and called out in a very cheerful and persuasive tone, 'Halloa, little girl, how far is it to the road?'" and trembling Sylvia answered almost inaudibly, 'A good ways'" (p.2). Sylvia's answer is even vague and unclear. She only speaks in a faint voice out of excessive fear; and she embodies the very precise and obtrusive feminist notion of "women in ordained positions" (Wessinger, 2020, p.91).

Jewett – as a local color writer – adheres to the realistic contemporary life of women. She unravels their position in patriarchal social exploitation. The story is an optimal recount of their plights on the verge of gender disintegration. She employs Sylvia's character as a gender stereotype of this issue to a great extent. The narrative description of Sylvia's aloof response and its pertinent fear to the hunter's sudden appearance is a blatant token of feminist need for individuality and stability. Sylvia hears a whistle among the nearby trees, and she thinks that is a bird's or an animal's sound. However, it comes to be known that it is the hunter's whistle trying to catch the attention of the white heron that he is looking for. Accordingly, she describes the hunter as "aggressive" even though she does not recognize his identity or name: "suddenly this little woods-girl is horror-stricken to hear a clear whistle not very far away. Not a bird's-whistle, which would have a sort of friendliness, but a boy's [hunter's] whistle, determined, and somewhat aggressive" (p.2).

Sylvia's accusation the hunter of aggression reveals her repressed fear of males whose masculine ghost still haunts her in the countryside. She is profoundly obsessed with the remains of the city's patriarchal exploitive harassment that frighten her wherever she goes. Being so, she is not able to look at the hunter out of her paranoid suspicion of any imminent harm that would be brought by him. She follows the cow and she stealthily leaves the bush to escape the terrifying hunter: "she did not dare to look boldly at the tall young man, who carried a gun over his shoulder, but she came out of her bush and again followed the cow, while he walked alongside" (p.2). Sylvia's escape from the hunter indicates the accumulation of her previous experience in a masculine-dominated society where she did not live peacefully. She was a subject to discrimination and inequality by all measures. She resorted to the countryside for more peace and self-recognition. Notwithstanding, she is disappointed when she does not find such peace in the countryside due to the abrupt appearance of the hunter in the woods, which makes her retreat back to her grandmother to be safe from his harassment of any kind of gender exploitation. In the long run, Sylvia's feminist ordeals represent women's collective experience, "especially their fears that feminist discourses encourage women to identify with vulnerability, suffering, and subordination" (Cooke, 2020, p.96). Jewett, in this way, offers us a vivid picture of women's difficult experiences at the hands of their masculine counterparts in meticulous and purposeful narrative descriptive details.

3.2 The Countryside: Marshes, Swamps, and Woods

The countryside is one of the basic environmental components of the story's natural milieu (Abu Jweid, 2020, p. 207). Jewett depicts the countryside's scenes through three interrelated natural elements, namely, marshes, swamps, and woods. As for marshes, they function as the equilibrium of the ecological integrity tackled in literary works. Steven Woodley *et al.* (2020) argue that marshes are vital for natural biodiversity; its literary function lies in offering implied textual insights on biodiversity: "There is a huge ecological literature on diversity, including quantitative measures for it and the implications of different levels of diversity for ecosystem function" (p.41). Countryside incorporates marshes as a crucial component of natural places dwelt by the fictional characters. Jewett, similarly, depicts countryside marshes as stereotypical manifestation of the ideal environment desired by the protagonist, Sylvia. As she goes through the thick woods, she comes across marshes that strike her wonder. She feels that the marshes are the optimal places that she used to dream about when she was in the city: "not far beyond were the salt marshes just this side the sea itself, which Sylvia wondered and dreamed much about, but never had seen, whose great voice could sometimes be heard above the noise of the woods on stormy nights" (p.4). In this case, the countryside marshes exemplify her deep need for spiritual serenity via the ecological equilibrium embodied in the attractive marshes.

Jewett offers several textual clues regarding perfect marsh patches. Moreover, she reinforces the narrative descriptions of such marshes by polarizing other natural elements, like trees and birds. Fred Pearce and Jane Madgwick (2020) claim that countryside marshes construct the decisive improvement of the literary characters' lives. These characters resort to natural places to elevate their peace of mind by spending time in tranquility among environmental circumferences since countryside helps them to "restore natural capital and improve the lives of the wetlands" (p.92). Pearce's and Madgwick's (2020) discussion of wetlands essentially relates to the environmental capacity to make the characters contended as well as affiliated with nature. Sylvia, in "A White Heron," undergoes this experience in the wetland marshes. She spends much time in contemplating the marshes' wetlands. She is profoundly moved by the vernal freshness of the wetland marshes where she could enjoy seeing hemlocks and the white heron: "now look down again, Sylvia, where the green marsh is set among the

shining birches and dark hemlocks; there where you saw the white heron once you will see him again" (p.5).

Sylvia finds such mesmerizing environmental experience in nature where she feels free of masculine harassment or bias. Like marshes, swamps are components of a compelling environmental countryside due to the fact that "marshes and swamps would remain unchangeable in size and distribution" (Goldstein and DellaSala, p.231). Again, Sylvia does experience the environmental significance of the swamps as she takes their cow, Mistress Moolly, and sits nearby trees while the cow grazes: "though this chase had been so long that the wary animal herself had given an unusual signal of her whereabouts, Sylvia had only laughed when she came upon Mistress Moolly at the swamp-side, and urged her affectionately homeward with a twig of birch leaves" (p.1). Sylvia's obsession with the environmental swamps is an indication of her discovery of the peace and solace of mind th she has lacked in the city. She finds in nature an immaculate path to self-discipline and social perfection though she only lives with her grandmother. Jewett further portrays swamps when Sylvia's heart leaps up in a sudden state of euphoria. The swamps enable her to see the beautiful white heron. That is, the white heron intermittently visits the swamps for some respite. Therefore, she tends to be near the swamps to closely see the white heron standing in water: "Sylvia's heart gave a wild beat; she knew that strange white bird, and had once stolen softly near where it stood in some bright green swamp grass, away over at the other side of the woods" (p.3). The swamps exalt Sylvia's predilection to spend her time in environmental places because she discovers her elation by dint of the jocund company with the white heron.

Together with the marshes and swamps, woods are elements of environmental countryside observed by Sylvia. In literature, countryside's woods are meaningful for the fictional characters. Each character perceives the woods in a certain way; and he or she understand woods according to the degree of inclination to a woody environment. Andrew Kalaidjian (2020) maintains that woods determine the fictional persons' infatuation with nature as they experience specific unique passages: "the woods mean something different to each person who passes through" (p.17). Sylvia, equivalently, is preoccupied with woods because they have a deep meaning to her. In the first place, they are the environmental background of the natural consecutive phenomena, such as the sunset which makes her feel more comfortable and satisfied with nature: "the woods were already filled with shadows one June evening, just before eight o'clock, though a bright sunset still glimmered faintly among the trunks of the trees" (p.1). Woods, in this case, are the primary source of her comfort. She is used to going to the woods to envisage the splendor of nature. She even stealthily goes out at night to spend some time in the woods, and she adores the twitter of a drowsy bird that accompanies her while passing through the thick woods: "she stole out of the house and followed the pasture path through the woods, hastening toward the open ground beyond, listening with a sense of comfort and companionship to the drowsy twitter of a half-awakened bird, whose perch she had jarred in passing" (p.5). To use Kalaidjian's (2020) words, the woods means something unique to Sylvia to the extent she could not resist staying away from them even at night. In a striking way, Jewett gives us a vivid picture of how the woods left their apparent impact on her personality. This is undoubtedly ascribed to her true appreciation of nature as a solitary place providing comfort and self-autonomy instead of the rife male mainstream in the city. She finds nature devoid of masculine dominance and she gets accustomed to immerse herself in woods whenever she likes. For this reason, the countryside's marshes, swamps, and woods are concomitant environmental elements that are important to understand the function of domestic picturesques, like fauna and paths depicted in the plot.

Feryal Cubukcu and Sabine Planka (2020) contend that faun is a contiguous term linked to flora. While faun refers to the animals of a place, flora also refers to the plants of a certain place. They (2020) say that faun represents the animalistic construction of that place; and the environmental nature become "as controllable" of "the construction of flora (and fauna in the case of corals) and the composition of the animals (parentheses original)" (p.57). As a result, the gorgeous scenery of fauna "brings visitors closer to nature" (p.106). In this regard, the exemplary presence of fauna of a place attracts the admiration and reverence of the fictional characters. Hence, they get close and attracted to the wonder of nature in order to experience the vitality of its fauna. In "A White Heron," the cow, Mistress Moolly, embodies the paradigmatic description of the fictional fauna. This is because the story's spatial setting is the countryside dwelt by Sylvia and her grandmother. Though there are other wild animals in the story, yet, the cow is the only obvious animal that incarnates the sense of domestic

picturesque because it is harnessed by the grandmother. The cow is domesticated by Sylvia and her grandmother for different expedient purposes because it is their sole consolation. It is the source of milk and income for the grandmother as well as a source of entertainment for Sylvia when she takes it out for grazing: “sometimes in pleasant weather it was a consolation to look upon the cow’s pranks as an intelligent attempt to play hide and seek, and as the child had no playmates she lent herself to this amusement with a good deal of zest” (p.1).

The cow, consequently, is the basic fictional manifestation of the countryside’s fauna. The story abounds with narrative descriptions of environmental paths passed by Sylvia. Osvaldo Gervasi (2020) discusses the relationship between the environmental paths and literature. Gervasi (2020) ascribes the fictional peculiarities of paths to the environment where the characters, or pedestrians, figure out the “intrinsic” relevance of paths as they pass through them: “the existing literature correlates walkability to attributes of both the social and physical environment. ... and intrinsic factors, such as width and slope of pedestrian paths” (p.424). In this manner, literary works, according to Gervasi (2020), present the fictional characters with adjacent affinity with paths in their natural surroundings. Authors juxtapose the presence of the characters that abruptly deduce the intrinsic connotation of environmental paths to their placid experience. In the long run, the intrinsic connotation renders it a distinctive meaning as a domestic picturesque. Sylvia does not recognize its effect to elevate her pleasure and love of nature. However, she becomes more aware of such affect when she recognizes their relieving impact upon her peace of mind. She gets familiar with the path as time passes on. This path is a domestic picturesque due to its representation of the countryside’s normal activities, such as grazing the animals and collecting wood from the forest. The following section will demonstrate how such scenic sublimines are positive alternatives and crucial remedy for her patriarchal exploitive experience in her city life; and they play an influential role in the empowerment of her feminist subjectivity.

3.3 Scenic Sublimines: Birds, Forest, and Wilderness

Scenic sublimines are the culmination of Sylvia’s self-autonomy and feminist subjectivity. They function as remedial empowerment of her feminist identity. Jewett unravels Sylvia’s discovery of her true identity through her awareness that the forest is a great part of her life in the countryside. The woods play an integral role in elevating her of environmental awareness: “she was not often in the woods so late as this, and it made her feel as if she were a part of the gray shadows and the moving leaves” (p.2). Consequently, the woods, which are the basic components of Sylvia’s environmental nature, bolsters her feminist identity in a conspicuous way. They are the stereotypical scenic sublimines depicted in the plot. Birds are thus blatant rudiments of scenic sublimines. Samantha Walton (2021) approaches the congruity link between the fictional characters and birds in literary works. The characters become more powerful and get their rights when they experience the grandeurs of environmental nature. Birds are indispensable elements of sublimines; and authors tackle the significance of birds by means of “essentially egalitarian tone in their description of birds” as coeval “categories of the sublime, picturesque and beautiful, also definitively shaped the aesthetics of nature writing” (p.14). As a deduction, birds – as interrelated facets of sublimines – convey author’s aesthetic description of environmental scenes. Such scenes serve as therapeutic invigoration of the fictional characters’ sense of belonging to these scenes.

Jewett, by the same token, uses aesthetic narrative descriptions to accentuate the necessity of the environmental nature to Sylvia’s recently developed intimate sense of belonging to the birds. Jewett projects erudite portrayal of Sylvia’s subjective experience in the woods in the company of birds. This is due to the fact that birds are representative fictional tokens of scenic sublimines. With the aid of birds, Sylvia becomes stronger than ever, and she dares to take initiative in the woods by climbing trees and enjoying her time with the birds:

There was the huge tree asleep yet in the paling moonlight, and small and silly Sylvia began with utmost bravery to mount to the top of it, with tingling, eager blood coursing the channels of her whole frame, with her bare feet and fingers, that pinched and held like bird’s claws to the monstrous ladder reaching up, up, almost to the sky itself. (p.5)

It is important, here, to compare Sylvia’s personal experience before and after coming to the countryside. There are drastic differences between the city life where she had been confined with harassment and social prejudice norms. Sylvia’s rural life, however, empowers her feminist identity and offers her an opportunity to be brave. Jewett’s meticulous depiction of Sylvia’s radical change is attributed to her strenuous effort to exalt her sense of belonging to the woods in a perfect

environmental milieus. She persistently fortifies her sense of belonging by virtue of birds that create blithe emotions connected with the whole natural surroundings. As substantial scenic sublimes, birds gradually increase her awareness of nature's vitality to her powerful feminist subjectivity as she stays away from masculine-dominated social atmosphere. Mitchell Thomashow (2020) makes discernible and straightforward correspondence between birds as scenic sublimes and their potential amplitude to levitate the characters' environmental awareness: "a way to practice environmental awareness, explore perceptual possibilities experience the moment, express the sublime" (p.188). Sylvia, similarly, becomes more aware of the importance of birds to her life. She considers birds as her true friends. They make her more plunged into in the environmental nature's blessing: "were the birds better friends Whatever treasures were lost to her, woodlands and summer-time, remember! Bring your gifts and graces and tell your secrets to this lonely country child!" (p.6). Sylvia values birds in woodlands as more precious than the substantial ten dollars offered by the hunter. By using an apostrophic tone, Jewett shows how Sylvia eagerly asks the woods to present her the birds as cherished gifts because she is the adoring "child" of the countryside.

Forest is another element of scenic sublimes (Abu Jweid, 2020, p. 101). Like birds, the forest ramps Sylvia's feminist subjectivity. As time passes, she gets familiar with the magnificence of nature although she leads a solitary life. This is because the forest allows her to see the white heron with enthralling excitement. She could feel that she is hypnotized by the allure of forest as an exquisite dwelling for the white heron: "now she thought of the tree with a new excitement, for why, if one climbed it at break of day, could not one see all the world, and easily discover from whence the white heron flew, and mark the place, and find the hidden nest? (p.4). Sylvia's overwhelming excitement is the pinnacle of her fascination with the forest as an optimal scenic sublime. Sarah Murray (2020) relates the narrative depiction of fictional forest to scenic sublimes that might necessitate the importance of forest in a literary work. In this case, the perfect natural picturesque scenes are but patterns of "rich picturesque and sublime scenery" that finds its way through "noble forest" (p.52). As a result, forest is a crucial scenic sublime in developing the characters peace of mind to better conditions.

In "A White Heron," Jewett adheres to the same notion. Jewett presents Sylvia in great state of happiness which strengthens her closeness to the environmental nature. Moreover, she underscores the value of nature to Sylvia's life by means of appropriating the sense of belonging which she adopted since her arrival in the countryside. For this reason, she prefers spending most of her time in the forest to sitting at her grandmother's house. The reason behind such environmental inclination is that she finds her feminist self-autonomy and power in nature. When she goes to the forest, she discovers new formidable places in the far edges of the countryside as an "awesome world" to live in: "Sylvia felt as if she too could go flying away among the clouds. Westward, the woodlands and farms reached miles and miles into the distance; here and there were church steeples, and white villages, truly it was a vast and awesome world" (p.5). As the excerpt implies, Jewett portrays the forest as a compelling a natural place that allows Sylvia to discover the necessity of nature to her subjectivity. In other words, the vast edges of the forest are mere incarnation of her relentless pursuit for elation, satisfaction, and feminist value because she had been formerly deprived of her subjectivity in the city life.

In addition to birds and forest, wilderness is another essential component of scenic sublimes. The concept of wilderness is widely used in the context of the eco-critical nights of the environmental nature. There is a common consensus on the proliferous meaning of the wilderness in literary works. The core conceptual nuances of scenic sublimes encompass pertinent postulations about "wilderness as a state of nature" (Harvey, 2020, p.35). Sylvia finds that New England's countryside as a supreme state of natural wilderness. To elaborate, she finds in wilderness surprising comfort, which makes her presence more adjacent to nature. In essence, she recognizes wilderness as for her spectacular dwelling: "it was a surprise to find so clean and comfortable a little dwelling in this New England wilderness" (p.4). In fact, wilderness exemplifies her aspiration to be free of social and masculine restrictions and confines that had been imposed upon her in the city. Consequently, she finds wilderness an outlet for her negative feminist experience, and the natural vast wilderness enables her to be independent. It stands for her contentment and living equanimity due to the fact that wilderness is a paradigmatic scenic sublime that embodies her spiritual maturity towards self-recognition. Wilderness makes her delve deep into the countryside's refinement of her feminist subjectivity. In the long run, she figures out the attractive solitary wildness as a great secret that enhances her

life by living close to the white heron: “she knows his secret now, the wild, light, slender bird that floats and wavers, and goes back like an arrow presently to his home in the green world beneath. Then Sylvia, well satisfied, makes her perilous way down again” (p.6).

The great secret of wilderness endows Sylvia with unprecedented power to face dangers in the wide domain of the countryside. This is undoubted because she is “satisfied” with her new life in near wilderness despite its perilous dwelling. This satisfaction and state of felicity are the gradual phases to obtain her ultimate feminist self-autonomy. As she gets familiar with the blessing of nature, she adamantly insists on not telling the hunter about the white heron’s nest since the heron is a gorgeous component of wilderness together with other ravishing scenes, like air, the sea, and the pine tree that represent her authentic consecration of nature’s miraculous secrets: “the murmur of the pine’s green branches is in her ears, she remembers how the white heron came flying through the golden air and how they watched the sea and the morning together, and Sylvia cannot speak; she cannot tell the heron’s secret and give its life away” (p.6). Sylvia becomes more powerful than before as she could make her decision without any restrictions since the countryside is empty of masculine bias that marginalizes and curbs her decisions. To put it another way, she challenges the hunter’s will to catch the heron, and this in itself is a conspicuous narrative augury of her subjective transformation into being defiant and self-autonomous. She is adamant on not telling the hunter, and she would be pleased with his departure from the countryside leaving the white heron, as well as herself, safe and peaceful i.e., the white Heron empowers Sylvia.

The ultimate culmination of wilderness as remedial scenic sublime lies in Sylvia’s feeling of triumph. Now she is moved by the discovery of the secret of wilderness and its impressive effect upon her love of the countryside. Wilderness, therefore, stimulates her comfort and subjective gratification of nature. In this regard, Vasudha Narayanan (2020) approaches the relationship between fictional characters and wilderness. She (2020) describes the fictional characters as “visitors” who develop excited reaction as they visit nature and its wild scenery depicted the course of the whole literary works: the “notion of the sublime provided both a justification for visitors’ reactions to wild scenery” (p.194). By the same token, Jewett portrays Sylvia’s fascination with nature when she pays daily visits to the surrounding wilderness. The scenery of wilderness mitigates her dissatisfaction accumulated in the city. She can now maintain her childish innocence in the countryside far from masculine discrimination. As a result, she becomes triumphant as she finds her delight in living with the secret of nature amidst wild environmental ambiances: “What fancied triumph and delight and glory for the later morning when she could make known the secret! It was almost too real and too great for the childish heart to bear” (p.4). Sylvia’s victory, here, comes into being as the acme of her identity empowerment. As a superb scenic sublime, wilderness exemplifies the environmental nature’s decisive remedy for her previous negative feminist experience in the city at the hands of masculine bigotry. Thus, she entirely empowers her feminist subjectivity among the countryside’s striking wild scenic sublimines in the vicinity of the dazzling white heron.

4. Conclusion

This paper examined countryside, domestic picturesque and scenic sublimines as a remedial antithesis of feminist exploitation in Jewett’s “A White Heron.” The significance of the study lies in its incorporation of eco-criticism and feminism at the same time. That is, the study offered an interdisciplinary study of the environmental nature and women in the course of the story. In so doing, the study appropriates feminism to the wide scope of eco-criticism and its view of women in the light of environmental issues. It is also significant in the way it tackles feminist issues and the role of nature in mitigating women’s problems to a great extent. In this sense, the study explored Jewett’s eco-critical concern with nature as a source for women’s social dilemmas. For this reason, the study might pave the way for further discussion of women’s psychotic disorders and how they could be minimized via perceiving nature as a remedial spatial milieu for women. It looks into feminist issues through an eco-critical perspective, which might polarize serious interest in the story’s obsession with revealing the intricate and inherent impetus of women’s ordeals due to the author’s erudite mastery local colorist themes.

The study’s contribution, therefore, comprises Jewett’s narrative depictions of the domestic picturesque, countryside, and scenic sublimines and their vital influence on the life of the protagonist, Sylvia. In the first place, the story highlights the subjective experience of Sylvia in her natural surroundings. As such, she seeks peace and solace of mind in nature. She, simultaneously, defends nature and defends her own feminine nature against any obsessive practice, like hunting as an excessive and dangerous

demeanor. In a striking way, Jewett's utilizes her narrative descriptions of domestic picturesque, countryside, and scenic sublims in the feminist context of the story. To clarify, domestic picturesque – and its pertinent elements, like the countryside and scenic sublims – exemplify the female protagonist's perfect environment, as she strenuously tries to preserve it since nature is an outlet for her spiritual serenity. When she preserves nature, she keeps it ideal and suitable for her maturity. Moreover, it is the vast place for her safety where she could find a social exit in nature far from masculine exploitation. Hence, the study contributes to both eco-criticism and feminism a new perspective concerning women and their attempts to make nature a great place for their stability and equality. The story was explored as an obtrusive stereotype of narrative features of domestic picturesque, countryside, and scenic sublims. Thus, these features serve as an embodiment of the story's appropriation of eco-criticism and feminism as environmental paradigms and their crucial role in solving feminist social plights.

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