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Sarah Orne Jewett: Her World And Her Work (Radcliffe Biography Series)

Paula Blanchard

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Paula Blanchard : Sarah Orne Jewett: Her World And Her Work (Radcliffe Biography Series) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sarah Orne Jewett: Her World And Her Work (Radcliffe Biography Series):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. a fine communicator, and a sensitively humanist criticBy John Paul VincentSuperb, fair biography. Blanchard is a careful scholar, a fine communicator, and a sensitively humanist critic. Her explications of sketches, stories, and novels is insightful. Her analysis of Jewett's religious crises is superb. This is the kind of treatment found in literary biography at its best.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy pen namewonderful writer - all good1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating readBy SusanI really enjoyed this book about a literary woman that I previously knew nothing about. It's a great biography and also gave me a feel for what early New England life was like.

Paula Blanchard plunges us into the New England literary life of that time, into the circles of Henry James, Lowell, Howells, Whittier, and Oliver Wendell Holmes. In chapters of interest to contemporary feminists, she also delves into Jewett's close relationship with women - from the young Willa Cather on whom she had a lasting influence, to the gifted artist and book designer Sarah Wyman Whitman and the flamboyant "Mrs. Jack" Gardner, and especially to Annie Fields, her partner in a sustaining "Boston marriage."

From Publishers Weekly
Blanchard (*The Life of Emily Carr*) views Jewett (1849-1909) from within a feminist framework in this well-written and objective study. A native of South Berwick, Maine, Jewett drew on the people she grew up with to create the characters for her stories and novels, which were set in the rural landscape she always called home. Blanchard argues that although Jewett became renowned as a "regional" writer, her skillful portrayals of women's lives and the important case she made in her fiction (e.g., *A Country Doctor*) for their careers has been overlooked by male literary critics, who tend to patronize her. Jewett herself developed strong attachments to women, and spent much of the time she was not in Maine living in Boston with her close friend Annie Fields, a celebrated hostess to brilliant writers of the day--Dickens, Emerson, Hawthorne. This absorbing biography details Jewett and Fields's travels together and their circle of friends (writers John Greenleaf Whittier, Celia Thaxter, Henry James, Willa Cather). Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From Library Journal
Blanchard (Margaret Fuller, Addison-Wesley, 1987) has given us a distinguished biography of American novelist Jewett, best known for *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896). She gives ample reasons for the recent resurgence of interest in Jewett, especially among modern feminist critics, spurred by the strength of Jewett's female characters, her inimitable portraits of 19th-century New England, and her confident reassertion of traditional values and optimism in the face of hardships and defeat. Blanchard tells a story rather than simply recounting the facts. Her research into the diaries and letters of Jewett and her associates, her knowledge of the literary criticism of Jewett's works, and her own insightful critical comments on Jewett's novels, sketches, and short stories make this an eminently informative work, especially for readers attracted to 19th-century American cultural history and the formation of its women writers.
Marie L. Lally, Alabama Sch. of Mathematics Science, Mobile
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From Booklist
Scrupulously researched, this definitive biography of Sarah Orne Jewett clarifies the accomplishment of a writer whose most famous work, *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, continues to enchant readers with its finely etched portraits of nineteenth-century New England. Blanchard traces Jewett's life from a childhood spent hiding among the lilac bushes in her grandparents' garden, skating on the mill pond, and pulling taffy at friends' parties to declining years in which Jewett received an honorary doctorate from Bowdoin College (an all-male institution) and shared tea and conversation with Henry James. Blanchard focuses her narrative on those influences that most shaped Jewett's literary art. Deeply rooted in the stern, rocky soil of Maine, Jewett nonetheless knew and responded to the work of European masters, including Flaubert and Turgenev. By probing the social significance of such works as *A Country Doctor* and *A Marsh Island*, Blanchard enriches an already large body of feminist scholarship on Jewett. In her conclusion, Blanchard illuminates the ways in which Jewett's fiction and mentorship helped cultivate the genius of a young woman who would become an even greater writer: Willa Cather. Bryce Christensen