

The presentation focuses on the oceanic historicity proposed as an alternative model of temporality in Sarah Orne Jewett's *Country of the Pointed Firs*. Here the notion of time as a chronological or progressive unfolding is replaced by temporality conceived of as simultaneous, chaotic, spatial. These alternative chronotopics emerge in Jewett's employment of the Whaleback shell heap—a large man-made deposit of oyster and clam shells in Maine, created by many generations of Native American peoples—as the habitat of one of her most memorable regionalist characters. The Whaleback's peculiar biochemical properties, which allow it to preserve virtually intact the matter lodged within it (including vestiges of natural, prehistoric, and Native American life accumulated over a millennium), render the heap a unique archival mechanism—an idiosyncratic assemblage of seemingly incongruous temporalities and forms of life whose simultaneous coexistence disrupts evolutionary distinction, ontological priority, and historical linearity.