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9. Regionalism and the Realities of Naming

STEPHEN C. BEHRENDT

Complications seem inevitably to arise whenever one tries to define either *regionalism* in general or any specific region like the South or the Great Plains or to categorize the art and artifacts that come from or relate to that area by means of such language. Commentators occasionally try to take the easy way out of these taxonomic difficulties by simply declaring that “writing is writing,” by which reductive expression they apparently mean that all writing is “universal” in nature (the local manifestation of some “universal language”) and that, therefore, all that varies from “region” to “region” is the *inflection*. *Inflection* is a convenient word because it seems to delimit linguistic variation (or other variations) less strictly than words like *dialect* or *idiom*. A less immediately diagnostic term, *inflection* appears to permit a far greater range of localisms within the discourse in question. Even so, it is not convincing that what we usually think of as “regionalisms” (whether in literature, the arts, culture, society, class, or economics) actually amount to little more than differing inflections upon some universal or general language or discourse that is itself associated with a larger and more heterogeneous geographical or cultural entity like a nation, continent, or socioeconomic class. Consequently, this essay represents an attempt to articulate a slightly different perspective upon the matter of regionalism and its slippery

definitions. This attempt comes with a significant disclaimer: it does not so much *resolve* the difficulties as suggest a different and perhaps more constructive way of regarding them.

The cultural geographer Yi-Fu Tuan—native of Tientsin, China, graduate of Oxford, longtime resident of Madison, Wisconsin, and author of ten books and dozens of remarkable articles on geography and human perception and cognition—has often expressed his belief that all of us carry with us throughout our adult life the landscape in which we lived our early lives. Wherever we find ourselves, our real “home” lies in this internal landscape that informs our sense of who we are and that makes us “whole” in ways that can scarcely be imagined by those persons whose fragmented view of the world (and themselves) reflects the rootlessness inseparable from the peripatetic nature of modern life.¹ People tend to identify with their earliest experiences and the places in which those experiences transpired, perhaps because those residual places and experiences provide a security that rootless adulthood usually denies us. Indeed, it is often the particularly and peculiarly local aspects of those early experiences that most clearly associate them with notions of “home.” This idea of being intuitively rooted in a particular place—a geographical and cultural origin—is of course one distinguishing characteristic of what academic discourse usually identifies as *regional*. The more apparent the evidence of this rooting is in the local and the particular in any artifact of culture, the reasoning seems to go, the more powerfully regional are those artifacts.

One consequence of such thinking is an inevitable privileging of natives. If one is born in a particular place and then stays there, what that person produces is especially likely to be defined as directly reflective of that person’s region. This formulation assumes an intensive and longstanding personal interaction between the individual self and the external (and to some extent the internal) environment. It also assumes that a native person is able to know more—and better—the cultural minutiae of a region than the immigrant, the late-arriving artist or observer, who is assumed to be less capable of producing a genuine regionalism in the locale precisely because she or he is

a late-comer, an “outsider,” a “foreigner.” Faced with this prospect, the individual (or social unit) characterized by mobility rather than rootedness must compensate by privileging some other quality. Expanding one’s locational and cultural horizons in this fashion is therefore typically regarded as “bettering” oneself or one’s society. More than two centuries ago, Immanuel Kant advocated at the close of the European Enlightenment what he called a “universal cosmopolitan existence,” which would help humanity overcome its seemingly instinctive parochialism.² Recent social theory in the modern age of the global community has increasingly preached the desirability of this sort of cosmopolitanism, precisely because it seems at once to transcend “the seemingly exhausted nation-state model” and “to mediate actions and ideals oriented both to the universal and the particular, the global and the local.”³ In fact, and especially when we are talking about regionalism, the reality is that the usual outcome is not really transcendence but avoidance—a glossing-over of real irreconcilabilities by rhetorical contrivances; the “mediations” typically prove, upon closer inspection, to be remarkably shaky unions held together by semantic Band-Aids. Ivan Turgenev’s mid-nineteenth-century rejoinder to the European call for cosmopolitanism was right on target: “The cosmopolitan is a nonentity—worse than a nonentity; without nationality is no art, nor truth, nor life, nor anything.”⁴

Turgenev’s objection is an important one for the present discussion of regionalism. For every push in cultural debate, something pushes back, whether we are talking about regions, which we typically think of as relatively local in nature, or whether we have in mind larger entities, perhaps national or even international. Much of the critical and cultural theory that drove scholarship in all fields at the beginning of the twenty-first century arises from the impulse to embrace and endorse cosmopolitanism as a somehow more-inclusive way of representing the world. But that representation brings with it a very real danger of leveling and erasure that one early modern Irish nationalist—William Butler Yeats—particularly feared. Like Turgenev in Russia, Yeats pushed back. He worried that in becoming British, his country’s literature risked losing that which made it most vital: its

thoroughgoing *Irishness*. To sacrifice that which is distinctively *national*, Yeats argued, to cede it to a larger and more cosmopolitan entity bearing the label “British,” is to abandon the Irish altogether and become complicitous in the cultural colonization that would subsume that historical nationhood within a larger but nevertheless foreign and indeed alien entity.

Moreover, some scholars see in the fashionable embrace of the cosmopolitan a disturbing elitism that situates the standard of cosmopolitanism directly within the limited cultural circumstances and attitudes of the very individual or group that claims to espouse a more global perspective. Seen in this way, as a gesture that makes one’s own limited perspective the measure of a so-called universalist one, such cosmopolitanism may be seen, paradoxically, as even more parochial than the perspective that it claims to be transcending. As Timothy Brennan puts it, this sort of self-centered cosmopolitanism “is a discourse of the universal that is inherently local—a locality that’s always surreptitiously imperial.”⁵

The current debate over the advantages and disadvantages of a cosmopolitan perspective is therefore directly related to a longstanding one about the nature and function of regionalism within characterizations of national cultural phenomena. In many respects, therefore, the issue of regionalism with which I am concerned here proceeds from the conflicting impulses inherent in cultural and critical nomenclature alike toward generalization and cultural consensus on one hand and the particularization and local variants on the other. Let me approach these broad issues first by way of personal experience, framing them “from the inside out,” as it were, to highlight some of the key difficulties that are integral to conceptualizing regionalism. My own experiences are by no means unique; indeed, they may suggest comparable experiences and perceptions that many of us share. I am a writer and scholar who has spent twenty-plus years in Nebraska, which is routinely identified as part of the Great Plains; as a matter of fact, the University of Nebraska is home to an interdisciplinary academic program called Great Plains Studies, featuring the Center for Great Plains Studies. Nevertheless, I definitely do not think of myself

as a Great Plains writer. My scholarly work is grounded in British literature, but I also teach and publish on southern writers like Flannery O'Connor. Furthermore, though I am a publishing poet whose subject matter may sometimes reflect the Great Plains, there is no question that my roots (and my vision) are still firmly tied to my northern Wisconsin origin. Even so, I hesitate to define myself according to any region, for various reasons. According to the formal definitions of regions adopted, published, and promulgated by the National Endowment for the Humanities, I ought to call myself an "Upper Mississippi Valley" writer. But that term sounds so patently phony that I cannot imagine myself (or any other earlier or contemporary writers from that part of the country—August Derleth, Edna Meudt, Michael Dennis Brown) actually subscribing to such a moniker. Indeed, the term itself is symptomatic of the problem that lies at the heart of all discussions of regionalism: it is a neologism coined because it was bureaucratically necessary to label various parts of the country in order to paint the entire map, leaving no gaps.

Academic discussions of regionalism (and regional writing) are typically hampered both by the absence of workable definitions—or by artificially imposed ones that do not in fact work—and by the further complications inherent in academic structures and curricula. Colleges and universities routinely offer courses in southern American literature, for instance; and the University of Nebraska (where I teach) offers a course on Great Plains literature. But it also offers a course on Canadian literature, which both is and is *not* literature of the Great Plains (think of a writer from Nova Scotia or Quebec), just as Great Plains literature may or may not be literature of Canada (both Louis Real and John Neihardt were Great Plains writers though only Real was Canadian). Since southern literature is a more familiar curricular category, I illustrate some of the difficulties of nomenclature by asking what we do with a writer like Flannery O'Connor. Where—in terms of curricular categories—do we put her? Does she go into "Literature of the South" or "Women's Literature"? What about Alice Walker: "Southern"? "Woman"? "African American"? Note that nowhere here have I even addressed religion, economic class, political

party, or other possible delimiters. Paradoxically, in a national and institutional culture now preoccupied with issues of diversity and inclusiveness, the taxonomy that governs the varieties of human experience (especially as reflected in academic curricula) seems ever more insistently bound up in distinctions and discriminations, not in unifiers and levelers. The more we claim to be inclusive, the more we end up reinforcing labels and stereotypes by naming and categorizing features of difference (or otherness) that we profess to be ignoring or repudiating.

Nor is the problem unique to literary studies. The curricular plans and course catalogues of history departments, for example, are replete with courses in American history bearing geographical delimiters like “Southern” or “Western,” while their offerings in world history routinely divide along comparable lines of region. This geographical pie-slicing is, of course, not unlike the chronological divisions that partition the vast continuum of historical time in terms of periods defined by sociopolitical phenomena (e.g., Reconstruction or the Depression in American history and the Napoleonic Age or the Age of Industrialism and Imperialism in world history) or—perhaps worse—by dates that are often as arbitrary as they are misleading (e.g., nineteenth-century American history or eighteenth-century Europe). When we look again into literary studies, we inevitably encounter the never-ending dispute about what constitutes just about any literary-historical period. The absurdity of the situation is aptly illustrated by longstanding debates about the appropriate dating of “the eighteenth century,” which has usually been understood among traditional British literature scholars to include 1660–1789 and which dating patently confutes any rational conception of what constitutes a century. The very fact that discussions and definitions of regionalism are rooted in the academy and its reductive intellectual and curricular structures may offer the most telling evidence of how discussion of the subject has come to be characterized by its frequently blinkered, impractical, and piecemeal nature.

One approach to defining regionalism in literary and cultural studies is sometimes to focus upon characteristic themes and subjects that

are identifiably tied to the particular region in question. Indeed, this is probably the most familiar paradigm. But what if the artist is not *from* that region? Is it still regional art? I have often fancied, for example, writing a detective novel centered on the British Romantic artist and poet William Blake and set in Blake's London of 1800. I have studied the period, the culture, and the author for most of my adult life; and yet if I were to write my novel, it would never occur to me to call myself a British writer, my subject matter notwithstanding. America is a big country, both geographically and culturally; and so one can reasonably think about identifiable geographical, linguistic, and cultural regions. But even a small nation like Britain still subdivides; one still thinks, for instance, of Lake District poets or of Liverpoolian writers or of Scots philosophers. Perhaps the really key issue here is not that of nativity—of whether one is native-born to the region in which her or his art is grounded—so much as it is a matter of the presence (or absence) in that art of some particularly intense transaction that occurs between artists and their particular locales. This would mean that regionalists might reasonably be defined as artists and thinkers who simply include an unusual—and unusually *central*—specificity of place (and time) in their efforts to understand and interpret life, self, and reality. I shall return to this point shortly, but I want to get there by considering first the matter of definitions in greater detail.

In wrestling with my subject in the first place, I tried going for help to that most regional of projects: the *Dictionary of American Regional English*. The Web site for the *Dictionary of American Regional English* tells me that the project is neither prescriptive nor even precisely descriptive but that its task is “to document the varieties of English that are not found everywhere in the United States” and that “are part of our oral rather than our written culture.”⁶ The first print volume of this remarkable work tells us that the editors regard as *regional* “any word or phrase whose form is not used generally throughout the United States but only in part (or parts) of it, or by a particular social group,” or “any word or phrase whose form or meaning is distinctively a folk usage (regardless of region).”⁷ The editors point out that one of the difficulties they encountered from the start in their own

work on the *Dictionary of American Regional English* lay in the fact that geographical regionality and linguistic regionality often conflict and that there are peculiar artificial examples of seeming universality. The language of seamen, to take an obvious example, often reflects the individual regions from which the sailors come, as in the case of New England commercial fishermen. But crews in the United States Navy, on the other hand, are drawn from all regions of the nation and therefore represent a linguistic melting pot. Even so, that heterodox language inevitably also includes variations that are grounded in the particular vernaculars of the individual sailors' own diverse cultural heritages. Moreover, that mixed language gradually acquires additional elements that reflect language practices local to the sailors' worldwide ports of call. The same might be said of the language of soldiers—or, for that matter, of that of student (and faculty) communities at relatively cosmopolitan colleges and universities.

Standard dictionary definitions are not especially helpful either when it comes to addressing the taxonomy of regionalism. My research there revealed some predictable references to political or ideological divisions of geographical areas, as well as to more modern geopolitical inflections that involve *loyalty* to the interests of a region (or a nation) in relation to those of other regions or to policies that define a nation's interests in terms of particular countries or regions—NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), for instance, or NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). Such usages turn out to be especially common in *oppositional* rhetoric, as becomes evident in public discourse when a particular regional entity sees its interests and identity threatened by some leveling and homogenizing larger structure or entity.

Especially intriguing, however, is the way in which *regionalism* is used as a term among literary critics and art historians, for its usage in these contexts points to a larger issue concerning the culturally ambiguous relationship of regions to national or global wholes. In art history, for example, *regionalism* usually refers to the work of “a number of rural artists, mostly from the Midwest,” working in the 1930s: Thomas Hart Benton, John Steuart Curry, and Grant Wood in particular. One academic Web site describes these regionalists as

“idiosyncratic” artists who shared “a humble, antimodernist style and a fondness for depicting everyday life.”⁸ Another Internet source informs us that the regionalists “wanted to paint the American scene—away from the New York area—in a clear, simple way that could be understood and enjoyed by everyone.”⁹ These definitions subtly advertise both the fundamental anti-intellectualism and the distrust of urban life that has always figured prominently in the “country” half of city-country dualisms in the cultural life of the Western world.

Moreover, when we add into the equation what literary scholars have to say about regionalism in literature, this split gets inflected still further. One academic Web site unquestioningly equates “regional literature” with “local color” in its focus on features “particular to a specific region.” This same Web site reports that prominent among what it calls weaknesses of regional literature are “nostalgia or sentimentality.”¹⁰ Like the art historical descriptions noted above, this one reflects an inherently condescending treatment of that which is defined as regional and which seems typically to be presented in such formulations as a defensive, protectionist retreat from that which is supposedly complex, sophisticated, and modern. Indeed, equating *regional* art with *local* color involves an implicit semantic gesture that renders the regional even smaller, even more localized and cloistered.

This is, of course, precisely the attitude one discovers in a great deal of cultural discussion about that which is regional. While it is often regarded by professional critics and connoisseurs as “interesting,” “quaint,” or “eclectic,” the regional artifact (or artistic feature) is nevertheless often relegated to the status of a “merely” (I use the word deliberately) interesting—even engaging—*curiosity*, rather than being regarded as something that belongs to, participates in, and contributes meaningfully to the cultural mainstream. It is an us-against-them mentality on both sides. And from such polarized thinking there is little to be gained—on *either* side.

When *The Hudson Valley Regional Review* was begun in 1999, it featured a fascinating lead article by David Pierce and Richard Wiles that attempted to come to grips with people’s seemingly endless fascination with trying to resolve the distinctions between regionalism and what we might now call globalism, or what earlier in this essay I

referred to as cosmopolitanism.¹¹ Pierce and Wiles trace at least some of the interest in regionalism back to our own contemporary resistance—in an increasingly globalized, postindustrial world—to the sort of socioeconomic leveling that produced the European Economic Community and then the European Union and its dubious euro, for example. For any such process also implies a leveling of national and cultural distinctions: the elimination of national *political* boundaries implied by the EU passport suggests a comparable blurring of national *cultural* boundaries and the consequent erasure of longstanding *cultural* features that often transcend the artificial boundaries set up by political entities. Further propelling this leveling process is the growth in communication technologies that has yielded phenomena like the Internet and the real-time cable television coverage of the start of the war in Iraq, led by the United States in March 2003.

Pierce and Wiles suggest that the widespread modern view that the world is shrinking is only partly correct. They cite the paradox of the Western world on the eve of the French Revolution: a world at once almost incalculably vast and yet small and localized for most of its inhabitants. Against this paradox, they posit the paradox of the modern world. Our world is unquestionably larger still, in population, in inhabited spaces, in knowledge. At the same time, it is smaller because of the miracles of transport and technology that seem to place it all literally at our fingertips. Two years ago, for example, I coedited a complex electronic collection of texts and scholarship on Scottish women poets, which included more than sixty volumes of poetry along with critical essays on the individual poets written expressly for the project by several dozen scholars scattered around the world.¹² We did our work entirely in electronic fashion, submitting, revising, editing, and assembling our various contributions via e-mail and then publishing them electronically in a CD-ROM format that can be accessed virtually anywhere in the world. Undertaking an ambitious project of that sort—which we completed in less than two years from start to finish—would have been unthinkable twenty years ago when every aspect of it would have required depending upon the regular postal system and employing conventional print technologies.

My point is simply that with all this instantaneous communication

and the seamless, borderless, global community that exists, at least in some hypothetical (or “virtual”) form comes a very real sense that we are being stripped of all that distinguishes us, one from another. Our unique, individual characteristics vanish just as surely as our idiosyncratic handwriting vanishes into the fonts of our e-mail programs. Oddly, this often results in our having a clearer picture of that which is distant—even remote—from us than we have of that which actually surrounds us and, more importantly, of that which has shaped us and made us what we are, each and individually. What is eroded is our sense of place, our sense of our lives as both a function and a reflection of specifically and irresistibly local phenomena. Shakespeare understood this fully when he had Duke Theseus say in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*,

the poet’s pen
... gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.¹³

Even in the technologically advanced twenty-first century, we do not live in an abstract world of “airy nothing” but rather in a world of tactile realities. The tension between the abstract and the tactile—between “airy nothings” and “local habitations”—is analogous to that which exists between the global and the regional. Nearly two centuries ago, writing about the fundamental nature of life and being, Percy Shelley said this of the individual intellect: “Each is at once the centre and the circumference; the point to which all things are referred, and the line in which all things are contained.”¹⁴ Center and circumference, in culture as in physics, are each absolutely necessary to the integrity—indeed to the very existence—of the other. The trick is to be able to do what Shelley’s great, Romantic visionary predecessor William Blake urged us to do:

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower[;]
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour[.]¹⁵

If it is possible to envision a seamless global community, it is nevertheless the lived reality of the paradigm, which is provided by the local, that makes that vision possible. At the same time, it is the existence of the global whole (Blake's "World" or Shelley's "circumference") that assures us of the existence also of the local and particular (Blake's "Grain of Sand" or Shelley's "center").

Ironically, in writing about what they mean by regionalism in the context of the Hudson Valley, Pierce and Wiles cited as a perfect example of regionalism—of all things—Mari Sandoz's writings about her native Sand Hills and her *Love Song to the Plains* in particular. In that work, they argue, Sandoz creates a sense of place that transcends mere "local color" by virtue of its wholly "non-self-conscious treatment of and feeling for a region."¹⁶ And yet they are careful to observe that one does not need to be a native to possess—or at least to experience—just such a sense of place. "Effective regional writing," Pierce and Wiles point out, "often is an intensely personal response to a physical place—but not so personal that a reader or viewer cannot identify with [it] at least to a small extent."¹⁷ This is intriguing and may help account for what I believe as a writer to be a number of identifiable verbal and stylistic features in my own poetry that I consider to have evolved in response to the natural features and environment of Nebraska, where I have now lived for more than two decades. And it may mean, too, that I may yet get around to my London novel.

More to the point, what Pierce and Wiles are talking about is a sense of place—of *region*—that inheres not just in a physical locale but rather in the creative interaction that transpires between the consciousness of an observer, participant, or artist and that particular place. It is neither exclusively one nor the other—internal consciousness nor external locale—nor is it precisely the sum of both. Rather, regionalism manifests itself as a *transaction* that is rooted in a most complex fashion in a very particular time and place and that involves both the observing and recording artist and her or his audience. For a sense of region to be manifested for the reader or viewer, she or he must already have some personal point of reference against which to measure and assess what the artist records. In short, even in the most

seemingly globalized world—whether it be literary, artistic, or geopolitical—it is the active and envisageable presence of the particular that gives fullest meaning to the general. The logical, intellectual movement toward abstract principles is activated and propelled by the active existence of the particulars, which are themselves preserved by a comparable logical pursuit of the discrete data upon which the generalization rests. These tensions cannot be resolved. Their proper relationship is suggested by William Blake’s shrewd observation that “Opposition is True Friendship,” and that “Without Contraries is no progression.”¹⁸ In a sense, the regional and the national (or global) constitute such contraries, and it is the friendly and creative opposition that inheres between them that energizes both.

Moreover, every age—and every region—likes to puff itself up by deflating that to which it compares itself: witness both the longstanding and the more recent rivalries between any university’s football team (and its fans) and the teams (and the fans) of its traditional opponents. On the Great Plains, for example, it is no coincidence that rivalries—and hot ones, at that—exist between Nebraska (by which Nebraskans mean both a football team and a region or state) and traditional opponents like Oklahoma or Colorado (which likewise designate both football teams and state or cultural identities). It is also no coincidence that rivalries of this sort do *not* exist between Nebraska and, say, McNeese State or Middle Tennessee State, teams of demonstrably inferior talent and status that appear once to fill out a football schedule and provide what is essentially a paid-admission scrimmage and then are seen no more. Furthermore, it is only logical that disparaging comments about such athletic teams spill over to—or, more properly, reflect—an attitude toward the teams’ institutions and their geographical and cultural status that is equally disparaging, if not simply condescending. Rather than simply representing an analogy that may strike some as both excessively local and relatively inconsequential, I would argue that this analogy of football and culture speaks directly to the issues I have been examining here. That is, it emphasizes the fiercely partisan nature of local or regional cultural phenomena and reminds us that for the majority of citizens it is precisely

these local or regional contests for “bragging rights” that define and reinforce local or regional identities in the face of broader and culturally leveling forces involved in any national or global perspective. This is where regional identities are forged and preserved; and if ours is a culture that seems to value sporting events out of all proportion, then we will do well to recognize the fierce pride and loyalty that are involved in such local and regional identities. For this is also where we all encounter within a localized group culture the identities that we claim without hesitation to be, literally, our own.

Why is this? For the sort of opposition that Blake calls “true friendship” to evolve, the opposing parties must be more or less evenly paired and must have comparably compelling cases for their claim to supremacy—and therefore to dignity (or “respect,” as athletes increasingly like to style it). And yet I would argue that all regional identities are themselves both shaped and informed by “larger” identities and histories, whether at the level of competing athletic teams (and traditions, regional identities, and bowl games) or at the level of competing nations (and traditions, identities, and wars). Competing with strong opponents makes us appear strong; it may even *make* us strong.

Certainly it enables us to wrap ourselves in a blanket of dignity—even of heroism—that everyday experience seldom affords. Regions are inherently smaller than nations; in a culture (like America’s) that regards underdogs with affection, this is no small matter, whether the issue is engaged on the athletic field or in the discourse of a cosmopolitan culture that aspires to apply (its own) “global” criteria to the assessment of cultural phenomena.

My conclusion necessarily returns to the issue with which I started: the difficulty of defining regionalism in an increasingly globalized world. There are separate and perhaps contradictory—and certainly contesting—impulses implicit in the National Endowment for the Humanities’s own language about the nature and mission of the Regional Humanities Centers that were established under that organization’s auspices in the final decade of the twentieth century. That language reminds us that the various regions defined by the National Endowment for the Humanities are grounded in their own discrete “regional

culture, regional memory and regional identity” as defined by “history, language, landscape and architecture—that is, by the things we know as the humanities.”¹⁹ *Humanities* is an inherently inclusive and expansive term that implies an almost neoclassical impulse toward incorporation and consensus. *Regional*, on the other hand, is fundamentally romantic in its insistence on the integrity of the local and the particular. And yet, paradoxically, both neoclassical and romantic thought have historically aimed at accessing and articulating much the same ideal values, principles, and truths, albeit by different avenues and from alternative perspectives. Blake’s statement that “Opposition is True Friendship,” then, serves us well as a reminder that perhaps our greatest challenge in all discussions about regionalism and the humanities is to resist the desire for consensus and closure, opting instead to delight in the very irreconcilability of those things that most distinguish us one from another. For, in the greatest paradox of all, those may be the very things that reveal to us just how much alike we actually are, as persons, as regions, and as national entities.

Notes

1. See, for example, Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); and, more recently, Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place*.

2. Immanuel Kant, “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose,” in *Kant: Political Writings*, trans. H. B. Nisbet, ed. Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 51.

3. Steven Vertovic and Robin Cohen, eds. *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: Theory, Context, and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), x.

4. Ivan Turgenev, *Rudin*, trans. Constance Garnett (London: William Heinemann, 1894), 222, quoted in Mark Story, introduction to *Poetry and Ireland Since 1800: A Source Book*, ed. Mark Story (London: Routledge, 1988), 5.

5. Timothy Brennan, “Cosmopolitanism and Internationalism,” in *Debating Cosmopolitanism*, ed. Daniele Archibugi (London: Verso, 2003), 40–51, 45.

6. *Dictionary of American Regional English*, ed. Joan Houston Hall, <http://polyglot.lss.wisc.edu/dare/> (accessed April 19, 2008). Here and elsewhere in this essay, I have turned both to traditional print materials and to electronic ones like Web sites, in part because these two vehicles themselves epitomize the contesting impulses toward globalization and locality. Any conventional printed book or journal is tied to a particular place (and time) in a way that the infinitely portable and placeless World Wide Web is not, just as the former is usually the product of some formal, often academic, process of peer review while the latter is for the most part entirely open ground,

without formal rules for vetting what may be posted there by anyone with access to the Internet.

7. *Dictionary of American Regional English*, vol. 1, *Introduction and A–C*, ed. Frederic G. Cassidy (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), xvi.

8. John Malyon, “Artists by Movement: American Regionalism, 1930s,” *ArtCyclopedia*, <http://www.artcyclopedia.com/history/regionalism.html>. Because of its virtually universal currency and easy accessibility, the World Wide Web exerts an unusual shaping influence upon discourse, an influence that interestingly *preserves* differences and distinctions of the kind involved in the taxonomy of regionalism—even as it tends to level those distinctions—by presenting all of them together, “unsorted” and therefore unprivileged, as happens when one conducts an Internet search. For this reason, I have deliberately included numerous Internet sources for examples in the present discussion.

9. Michael Delahunt, “Regionalism or regionalism,” *ArtLex: Art Dictionary*, <http://www.artlex.com/ArtLex/r/regionalism.html>.

10. Donna M. Campbell, “Regionalism and Local Color Fiction, 1865–1895,” Washington State University, s.v., “Literary Movements,” <http://www.wsu.edu/~campbell/damlit/lcolor.html> (accessed April 19, 2008).

11. David C. Pierce and Richard C. Wiles, “A Place for Regionalism?” *The Hudson Valley Regional Review: A Journal of Regional Studies*, Bard College, <http://www.hudsonrivervalley.net/hrvr/essays/regional.php> (accessed April 19, 2008).

12. *Scottish Women Poets of the Romantic Period*, ed. Stephen C. Behrendt and Nancy J. Kushigian (Alexandria VA: Alexander Street Press, 2002).

13. William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, ed. R. A. Foakes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), act 5, scene 1, lines 15–17.

14. Percy Bysshe Shelley, “On Life,” in *Shelley’s Poetry and Prose*, ed. Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002), 507. Shelley’s essay was first published in 1819.

15. William Blake, “Auguries of Innocence,” in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman, rev. ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 490.

16. Pierce and Wiles, “A Place for Regionalism?”

17. Pierce and Wiles, “A Place for Regionalism?”

18. William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, in *Complete Poetry and Prose*, 42, 34, plates 20, 3. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* was created ca. 1790–1794.

19. “NEH Launches Initiative to Develop 10 Regional Humanities Centers throughout the Nation,” May 10, 1999, <http://www.neh.gov/news/archive/19990510.html>.