



# Regionalism and the Reading Class

*Wendy Griswold*

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Globalization and the Internet are smothering cultural regionalism, that sense of place that flourished in simpler times. These two villains are also prime suspects in the death of reading. Or so alarming reports about our homogenous and dumbed-down culture would have it, but as *Regionalism and the Reading Class* shows, neither of these claims stands up under scrutiny—quite the contrary.

Wendy Griswold draws on cases from Italy, Norway, and the United States to show that fans of books form their own reading class, with a distinctive demographic profile separate from the general public. This reading class is modest in size but intense in its literary practices. Paradoxically these educated and mobile elites work hard to put down local roots by, among other strategies, exploring regional writing. Ultimately, due to the technological, economic, and political advantages they wield, cosmopolitan readers are able to celebrate, perpetuate, and reinvigorate local culture.

Griswold's study will appeal to students of cultural sociology and the history of the book—and her findings will be welcome news to anyone worried about the future of reading or the eclipse of place.

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