

Region and the Short Form in American Literature. Symposium in Honor of Jochen Achilles
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Abstract

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"Critical Regionalism Revisited: Trump, Nativism, and the Idea of Home in a Globalizing World"

How to become modern and, simultaneously, return to the roots? How to integrate economic progress with the preservation and availability of cultural traditions? Those are crucial questions that define a major dilemma of modernity. Underlying this dilemma are differing notions of 'home' and of the role of places and regions in a staggeringly globalized, technology-driven world. In my talk I discuss critical regionalists' celebration of the local, and I look at two opposing notions of 'home' in modern society. Finally, I contend that a sense of place, of being-in-the-world, need be reconstructed by way of narrative rather than by building new walls. Though tantamount with the history of modernity at large Trump's nativism urges us to reconsider our traditional understanding of regions and the local. However, as the Jewish philosopher Levinas argued, to experience a sense of 'at-home-ness' with the world may have, after all, more to do with people than with places.