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*Regionalism and Reform: Art and Class Formation in
Antebellum Cincinnati* (review)

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seafarers' lives. He examines their occupational histories before and after they sailed before the mast, traces the familial and social connections that influenced their maritime experiences, and notes the impact of age and race upon their lives. At once a history of disparate individuals and the communities they formed, this book presents a nuanced and dynamic vision of seafaring lives in motion.

Young Men and the Sea concentrates on the port city of Salem, Massachusetts. First settled by seafaring colonists in the 1620s, the small outpost on the North Shore endured several rocky decades before it began to prosper. The advent of the cod fishery, supplemented by coastal trading, soon led to the development of a complex and successful local economy that expanded into shipbuilding, mercantile activity, and a growing presence in transatlantic trade. By the end of the eighteenth century Salem boasted a prominent merchant fleet that employed hundreds of sailors, as well as growing numbers of shore workers who swelled Salem's population. As seafaring opportunities ebbed by 1850 with the fading of the Age of Sail, the city's workingmen turned to shore employment in the textile mills and other factories that came to dominate the industrializing community.

Maritime Salem is an ideal research subject due to its rich resources of personal and institutional records. Court records, account books, shipping documents and crew lists, church records, family papers, and sea-journals were all meticulously kept and preserved by the literate, historically-minded townsfolk. The surfeit of documentation allows Vickers to reconstruct minutiae including the ratio of carts to boats in town (3:2 in the years after 1645, 32) as well as desertion rates among sailors aboard Salem vessels (which rose from three percent to thirty-three percent between 1726 and 1850, 197). More significantly for the purpose of the book, the quantity and variety of available sources provides a wealth of detail attesting to the experiences and motivations of Salem's seafarers.

The book is organized into seven chapters by chronological period, with the eighteenth century comprising its central section. Only the final chapter titled "Mastery and the Maritime Law" does not quite fit the flow of the narrative, as its broader discussions of maritime discipline and labor relations fall outside the purview of Salem and its inhabitants. Nonetheless, it is as insightful and informative as the rest of the work.

In conclusion, *Young Men and the Sea* is a masterly work of particular interest to maritime and labor historians, as well as a more general readership.

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REGIONALISM AND REFORM: Art and Class Formation in Antebellum Cincinnati.
By Wendy Jean Katz. Columbus: Ohio State University Press. 2002.

Recent American art historical scholarship has positioned artists within complex social contexts from which they absorbed new ideas and to which they contributed new types of themes and meanings. Wendy Jean Katz's study of artistic and civic culture in antebellum Cincinnati stresses interactions between artists, patrons, and public; connections among art, commerce, and moral reform; and intersecting ideals of education, civic promotion, and economic expansion. Her goal is to complicate models of cultural and class expansion and show how artistic works created in the early nineteenth century in this thriving western city contributed both to local and national ideals of American identity.

New cultural opportunities and ideals emerged as varied civic associations supported both artistic production and moral reform. Katz reads the diversity of participants' class backgrounds as evidence for cultural goals that combined the interests of elites, the middle class, and workers into a harmonious and economically successful metropolis. Contemporary behavior manuals and etiquette books contributed to beliefs in the importance of

binding society together through mutual engagement in both domestic and public social reform. These ideals were reflected in patronage for the visual arts, as well-known figures such as Nicholas Longworth and other individuals commissioned paintings and also supported libraries, children's schools, mechanics' education, the Humane Society, and arts organizations such as the Western Art Union and the Cosmopolitan Art Association. This social climate, Katz argues, supported hopes for a diverse citizenry engaged in mutually agreeable social improvement, yet she is careful to observe that these were predominantly middle-class values; such affirmations obscured economic barriers to class membership while pressuring both elites and workers to conform to their codes (9).

Katz sees the works of three well-known artists with links to the city—Lilly Martin Spencer, Robert Duncanson, and Hiram Powers—as illustrating these complex civic goals although none was born or stayed there; Spencer moved to New York, Duncanson traveled in Europe, and Powers eventually set up a sculpture studio in Italy. Yet Katz ties each artist's themes to the city's cultural affirmation of harmonizing and egalitarian cultural ideals. She suggests that Spencer's genre paintings of lively women and children explore the tensions within contemporary discourses of democratic egalitarianism, educational improvement, and gender propriety. She positions Duncanson's landscape paintings in relation to beliefs in nature as a source of both spiritual and moral improvement, and addresses Hiram Power's Neoclassical figures of nude yet morally idealized women as exemplifying contemporary codes of civility and honor in relation to slavery and freedom

With detailed references to wide-ranging cultural and civic developments, *Regionalism and Reform* offers a rich trove of fascinating details and thoughtful interpretations. Katz's thoroughly researched book is an important study and a model for further scholarly efforts to locate individual artists and works within the complex scope of American social and political values played out among varied classes in specific geographical settings.

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BECOMING BOURGEOIS: Merchant Culture in the South, 1820–1865. By Frank J. Byrne. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky. 2006.

In this carefully researched book, Frank Byrne analyzes the culture of antebellum southern merchants and their families. Using not only business documents and newspapers but also diaries, letters, and family papers to uncover their worldview, he finds a group bound “into something approaching a class with distinct interests . . . a dynamic, self-identified community” (3). Although southern merchants “did not produce” (3) a distinct ideology, they shared habits, aspirations, and attitudes that set them apart. Playing an economic role that was distrusted in the Old South, they encountered enormous hostility during the Civil War but emerged, nevertheless, equipped to prosper in the New South.

Merchants “tended to establish themselves in more wealthy, settled regions of the South” (16) and their economic interests tended to align them with the planter class and the Whig Party. But the requirements of their business forced many to travel frequently to the North and such separations “inevitably weakened patriarchal authority” in families whose domestic relations “were evolving into something more akin to those found in northern homes” (36, 78). These families “readily embraced the developing capitalist market economy” and exhibited “behavior historically associated with the northern middle classes” (93). But they were merely in the process of *becoming* bourgeois. Their dedication to slavery, patriarchy, and a conservative evangelical Christianity “proved a critical barrier to the kind of intellectual transformation necessary for them to become