

## *1993 MAASA Presidential Address*

# **“Shit Happens: An American Studies Engagement”**

**Richard P. Horwitz**

## **PART I: Confession, Prelude, Stall**

A Presidential Address—this is a big deal for me. Stage directions may call for a self-satisfied Old Boy, but this one is nervous. I cannot shake the feeling that plagued my last presidential address, at Elizabeth Green Elementary School when I was chief executive of Mrs. Miller’s second-grade science club. As best I can recall, there was the same mix of thrill and dread. Also as best I can recall, my presentation was on something like “The Boreal Owl,” I stole every dreary word from the *World Book Encyclopedia*, and no one noticed or (as far as I could tell) even listened. It was not the sort of experience to amplify the thrill or mute the dread.

Of course, if you know much about this organization (or me), you would know that this confession better bespeaks my *mishigias* than any pressure of the position or the moment. I can summon angst for just about anything, and, realistically speaking, there should not be any pressure at all. In fact—no offense to past-Presidents or to you as constituents—it does not take much to become President of MAASA.

If you tell anyone on the current Executive Board that you are willing to join the Board, you will almost assuredly be nominated, face no opposition, and be unanimously elected within a year. If you then volunteer to host an annual

meeting—which is considerably easier than arranging a wedding with a caterer—you will almost assuredly be appointed, given a generous budget, and told to do pretty much whatever you want. You are also thereby automatically deemed Chair of the Program Committee, Vice-President of the whole eleven-state region for that year, and President-elect for the next. So, not much stands between anyone and high office in MAASA. The association is equally vulnerable to takeover by revolutionaries, intellectual giants and gnats. I rose to this lofty position—esteemed President Orator—because I found the right people to evaluate proposals and brew coffee for three days last year in Iowa City. With such an indiscriminate qualification procedure, why should anyone expect much presidential wisdom? No pressure at all.

On the other hand, there is the moment and my self-respect. What I have to say is likely to be compared with umpteen scholarly papers that members of the audience have been anticipating or preparing for months. Well, some of them, anyway. At least proposals had to be written and approved some months ago. The President, though, can do anything, and I have known of that latitude for at least a year. Moreover, short of utter idiocy (not even indecency! We have no academic equivalent of NC-17), a presidential address is presumed publishable in our journal, *American Studies*. So, by all appearances, I have every encouragement—the freedom, the time, and the near-captive audience—to do more than a passable job. This presidential address—heck, all of them—ought to be absolutely stellar. The pressure is on.

And I know that there have been tough acts to follow, addresses so memorable that they still occupy association lore. For example, in 1989 Steve Watts delivered one, “The Idiocy of American Studies,” that I found incisive and amusingly transgressive but that a share of the audience greeted like a fart in a pup tent. A less aromatic version found its way into the 1991 *American Quarterly* and was promptly Lysoled by commentators in a following issue “Forum” (among the first times I can recall when anything in the journal stirred more than an hour of cocktail-party bluster). So there was at least one presidential address that incited passions and then suit-and-tie respectability before being deloused, shredded, bagged, and hauled to the Wadina landfill. There is also the daunting precedent of Wayne Wheeler, twice President of this body, who delivered a raucous parody of B. F. Skinner’s *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, while methodically shedding his clothes. He eventually accepted the applause of the membership, clad only in undershorts (though Prof. Wheeler assures me that they were bathing trunks). How could I beat that?!

Alas, it will not be with smashing citations or elegant deconstructions of some woefully misunderstood text. I have generally found the print worship in our line of work among its least attractive features. Frankly, I suspect that heavy exposure to the sixty-cycle hum of library fluorescent bulbs causes brain damage, at the very least a perverse tendency to add “ization” onto nouns that already have four syllables. Pending action on my appeal to OSHA, please take note: I included

a couple of citations in the preceding paragraph; that is about all you will get from me.

Please be warned, too, that though I am a card-carrying PC policeman (actually, second lieutenant, grade three, foot patrol), I will miss this opportunity to register objections to white supremacy, colonialism, homophobia, misogyny, ageism, or verbal abuse of the sexually impotent (excuse me, “erectionally challenged”). I assume that nearly all of us already share opposition to such institutionalized oppression. Hopefully, we can also agree that our time might be well spent both refashioning academic discourse and addressing people who would rather communicate than occupy a discursive site.

So, please do not expect precedent-setting theory, moral outrage, theatrics, or biblio-virtuosity. And hereafter, please do not expect me to be so entertaining. So ends Part I: try to amuse MAASA membership, lower expectations, and beg sympathy. Part II: try actually to say something.

## **PART II: Window/Wahini Dressing**

Since I am supposed to be an expert in methodology, I will try a little something about method. What I mean by that term, “method,” is the way we in American Studies make sense of the everyday lives of Americans. I do not think we do so (or at least do so well) by treating method as a “tool” (as if Marxism were a wrench or French feminism a Shop-vac); better to treat method as a human disposition in action, a vaguely purposeful manner of paying attention and forming a response.

Discussions of method more commonly stress the logical, political, and aesthetic warrants for the product of a particular approach. We ask: 1) Are its ontology and epistemology—its assumptions and inferences about, say, the nature of “human motivation” and the status of claims about it—reasonable when considered in the abstract?; 2) Can the approach be applied in a way that voices different social standpoints—say, those of members of various ethnicities or classes—and diverse experiences in the world?; 3) Do the applications formally allow for dramatic tension? Are we apt to conclude that we learned anything worth knowing that we did not know before?

Rather than pursue these points here—yet another *post mortem* on the “context of justification”—I want to direct attention to a side of method that is less easily dissected: the act of engaging a topic, particularly the process that occurs before we can know which methodological tool to apply or even if the tools are better left in the trunk. I have in mind that exhilarating instant when research becomes interesting. It is that moment in American studies that does not already have a distinct logic, politic, or aesthetic but that is in the midst of acquiring them. Methodologists seldom address that occasion. I am trying, then, to explore the half-baked: what goes on when we first realize that we are onto something? We

do not yet know what that something is, how we will get it, or why anyone should care, but feel a buzz of recognition. It is just . . . something.

The observational documentary filmmaker, Ross McElwee, calls that something, “a great Wahini.” It is a term that he ripped of Haole surfers (to mean that one ocean swell that will give you the ride of your life) who in turned ripped it off Hawaiians (who used it to refer to a kind of person, namely a woman). Whether this figurative leap, like those in his films, is best considered humorous or offensive, the resemblance is striking. In making a film, like a surfer scanning the horizon, you look through the viewfinder at wave after wave of imagery. How will you ever edit all that footage so that the remainder has a shape, a look, a pace, a center that makes sense? Then that centering moment, a perfect wave, appears: in making *Silver Valley*, Michel Negroponte catches Jerry salvaging a “Peter and the Wolf” record from a Dumpster; in making *Sherman’s March*, Ross McElwee finally confronts the real Burt Reynolds. These are, Negroponte says, their “great, great Wahinis.”

It is hard to say how you find a great Wahini beyond, “Shit happens.” But what is going on? How does shit happen? I want to try to explain by exploring a single case, by turning the compost, so to speak.

### **PART III: Shit Happens**

I have long aimed to find something to say about farming. By luck and pluck, I have been introduced to a corner of it unusually well. For more than a decade I have been working part-time, one or two days each week, as a hired-hand on a large family farm near my home in Iowa. Of course, I have also read a fair amount of agricultural history, rural sociology and associated commentary, hoping to find a place marked, “Contribution to the literature wanted here.” But none was readily apparent. Instead, each week I donned my farm getup—boots, coveralls, seed cap, chore gloves, and holstered pliers—anticipating mundane rewards: a little exercise outdoors, some male bonding, and the simple pleasure of learning to accomplish tasks that seem novel and tangible when compared to university routines.

One January morning, after an especially frustrating week at the university, I saw my wife off to work and our son off to school, and they could tell by my upbeat mood that I was going to work on the farm. I glanced at the thermometer, put on an extra layer under my insulated coveralls and drove off to take care of the round of hog chores that I always do before joining my friend and boss on the farm, Phil Berglund, for the more particular demands of the day.

It is actually an object of some pride that they trust me to handle such responsibilities on my own. Although your average Iowa farm kid earns that trust by the age of eleven, I had to work pretty hard to prove that I, Jewish egghead from out East, could develop decent hog sense and cope with emergencies that can be anticipated only in the abstract.

In farming you cannot know what will go wrong, but something surely will, as likely as not when most costly or dispiriting. Every farmer must find a way to cope with God's regular reminder that nature still is not (as they say of show cattle) "broke to lead." Although people who can cope and have decent hog sense may be a dime a dozen in this corner of the world, I am flattered that Phil occasionally asks me to take care of his herd when he leaves town for a few days.

Hogs are in one sense a small part of the operation. Phil, who is a few years younger than I, and the Stutsman brothers, Phil's in-laws, a little older than I, work about 2000 acres, mainly feed corn and soybeans, and each year they fatten and market more than a thousand beef cattle. All of this is accomplished with the unpaid labor of backstage kin and an awesome array of gargantuan machinery but very few people on the job: just two "farmers" (Phil and Roger), one full-time hand, part-time or contract help for planting and harvest, and me. Hog work is left for hurried moments when field work or cattle allow.

In another sense, though, the hog business is very important. In bookkeeping, sidelines are not necessarily lesser ones. Hogs are miraculously efficient converters of grain (which often does not fetch its production cost on the market) to meat (which usually does). Moreover, hog checks can be written and received without going through the partnership. Hence, although occupying only a small share of farm equipment or attention, hogs are among the few reliable sources of cash flow that pays interest on loans, puts clothes on the kids and food on the table.

Phil does the farrowing, arranging the conception, birthing, nursing, weaning, and care of baby pigs (gilts and barrows) till they reach "feeder weight," 50-60 pounds. His breeding stock includes about eighty sows and a half-dozen boars. They can be nasty beasts, huge, stubborn, and competitive, especially when confined to small spaces. But we move them in as orderly fashion as possible in groups from one hog lot to another, then to various buildings ("confinement systems") through the breeding cycle. The produce of this cycle is a stream of feeder pigs, more than a thousand each year, which Phil sells to Roger, who "finishes" them to market weight, 260-280 pounds.

As in any family business, relations are generally congenial but fragile. In part to avoid conflict, Roger, who is the middle son of the farm patriarch (Eldon), and Phil, who married into the family and grew up "in town," have over the years divided the labor so as to have minimal daily contact. They may go as long as a week without seeing or speaking to each other, not because anything is necessarily wrong, but because they can get along without it. From my vantage the lack of communication is remarkable—very "Euro-Midwestern" and "male"—but they seem to deal with it just fine, thank you. And they both prize the hog arrangement. Phil has a ready buyer for his feeder pigs (without having to establish their worth in a fickle open market), and Roger a dependable supply (without having to dicker on price, transport, or quality or risk introducing disease to the herd). Of course, there are periodic tensions, as when Phil's pigs are not ready on time (and Roger's expensive finishing unit idles below capacity) or when Roger's unit is full (and Phil's nursery building is bursting at the seams).

Maybe more communication would help, but, then too, those rare breakdowns can be shrugged off along with other “natural” frustrations of the business and reminders of a willful God. The finished hogs consistently grade high enough to demand top dollar at the local packing plant.

The farrowing, the actual birthing and nursing, takes place inside one of two buildings reserved for that purpose. That is where I was headed that January morning, the farrowing house at Eldon’s. I wish I could say that I was intently honing some American studies tools, but I was mainly looking forward to a day of labor away from the office and fluorescent bulbs.

Anticipating the farrowing house at Eldon’s (versus the newer one at Phil’s) is a distinctive experience. As much as the newer unit bespeaks the fastidiousness of 1980s agri-science, the one at Eldon’s bespeaks “making do” in The Great Depression. Of course, any building that is packed full of swine is a far cry from your living room, even if your roommate is a slob. No amount of exposure can dull the sense that swine buildings are noisy and dirty. Experts recommend breathing through a respirator when you enter even the cleanest, most up-to-date unit, where manure falls through slatted floors into a pit that need only be pumped out every few months. The best of units are architected septic tanks.

And the farrowing house at Eldon’s pales before that ideal. Insofar as it was ever “designed,” it was not with human comforts in mind. It is, though, quite hospitable for sows, each confined to a cage-like “crate” made of tubular steel. The crates keep them pointed straight ahead at a feeder and waterer and make them less likely to abandon, lay on, or stomp their offspring (or you). Sows are famous for the way they may at one moment maul you to protect an offspring and at the next maul that offspring to beat it to a kernel of corn. With pipes and wires of various generations dangling from the ceiling to each crate, the farrowing house at Eldon’s could not be easily redesigned or sanitized, even if we had the time, which we usually do not. It is a constant battle to keep the rodent population under control, and a little more than a week after fumigating the place, you must hack your way through cobwebs covered with manure dust to navigate the narrow walkways between rattling crates and screaming sows.

In fact, this was the place where my mettle was tested, back in the early 1980s. I had been working irregularly for a few years, helping sort and feed cattle, hauling manure, running a disk or chisel plow or harrow in the spring, making hay in the summer, filling silos or catching corn off the combine in the fall. I worked just for the experience or in exchange for meat or use of the equipment on my own place. We decided it would be better all around if my position were more regular: I would be on payroll, working as long and hard as anyone else on a given day. No one should have to wonder, “Is it OK to ask Rich to do this job?”

Although Roger does not remember much of this exchange, I can well recall the gut check that was my first assignment under the new terms: hop in the truck, drive to the farrowing house at Eldon’s, and clean it from top to bottom. “If you

run into trouble [i.e., if you're a wimp], you should be able to find one of us around somewhere."

In the summer heat scraping well-crusted manure out from under eighteen crates and wrestling with a pressure sprayer designed for roomier environs is a nasty day of work for two, a much longer and nastier day for one. Of course, the assignment is no worse than any Phil or Roger ordinarily expect of each other. But it is still among the most infamously unpleasant chores in a massively varied repertoire, the kind that incites a knowing smirk, "So . . . going to clean the farrowing house, eh? Have fun." "Yeah, right!"

In fact, I did not really mind. As a seasoned ethnographer, I had weathered such trials before and welcomed the chance to prove myself. Besides, I could always use the exercise, the break from the sweeter smelling but too familiar shit at the university, and the reward of a cleaner farrowing house to work in thereafter, at least for a couple of weeks till the sows, flies, rats, and spiders reestablish their ambience.

In the truck on the way to Eldon's on that January morning, I could chuckle to recall that test so many years before and to anticipate the fact that the farrowing house this time had been cleaned long enough ago that the university/farm divide would be abundantly obvious once I opened the door.

I was feeling downright giddy when I did. Rather than proving myself, I was basking in self-confidence that years of farm experience, the contrast with the university world, a bracing wind on one side of the door and dusty heat on the other only enlarged. As usual, the sows rose, rattling crates, and grunted in response to the opening door, a sign that feed was on its way. Like the hush that overcomes a lecture hall when you approach the podium, it is an odd collective "hello," disconcerting at first but comfortably familiar once you get used to it, and I was amused that I was.

So, we began our normal routine. I flipped on the lights and the switch on the auger that pulls feed from the bulk bin outside to the southeast corner of the building. As feed drops into a five-gallon bucket, I mentally rehearse: Sows with nursing pigs get a half-bucket; those without, a third. As always, watch your step! The floors are slippery with manure and tipped to drain to a central pit, which you may have to vault, if no one replaced the makeshift bridges when the place was last cleaned. When walking between the third and fourth sets of crates, remember to duck or you will hit your head (again!) on the thermostat on the ceiling. Do not try to take two buckets down the second walkway; in coveralls you will not fit. Remember that the sow in the southwest corner is a "bitch;" when approaching her feeder and your head is about a foot from hers, she will leap to attack, her jaw crashing the bars, and bark loud enough to drain the blood from your face. Be ready! And by all means, distribute the feed before the bedlam gets deafening. Once the sows are preoccupied eating, you can go back, check pigs, and make sure everything else is in order. No big deal.

I am relieved that the auger is working smoothly, so I do not have to go out and pound on the bin again to loosen frozen feed and allow more time for the sows to grow restless. They are still just beginning to stir as I finish filling the second bucket, turn off the auger, and head through the cobwebs to the feeders. I am just a little dirty and sweaty and the sows a little impatient as I work my way down the first row. Everything is going smoothly, a condition in farming, especially in winter, that is remarkable in itself. This may be no big deal, but I feel great, well into Zen and the art of hog maintenance.

Teetering on the edge of the manure pit, as I lift a bucket shoulder high to fill another feeder, my eyes drop to admire the baby pigs. (They can be awfully cute.) But what I see is more appalling than anything I have ever seen or could have imagined. The crate floor is littered with tiny dead pigs, and the live ones are pathetically sprawled on all fours, racked with tremors, and soaking wet in their own milky diarrhea and vomit. Oh, my God! What the . . . ?!

Just as the horror begins to register, the farrowing house door crashes open, and I hear Phil bark, "Don't feed them!" And just as quickly, the door crashes closed. He's gone.

Oh, my God! What have I done? How could I have been so damned self-indulgent, so careless? Sure, I have seen plenty of sickness before. Deaths now and then are always troubling but hardly unexpected. In fact, sows regularly drop more than a dozen pigs, and if you can keep ten or eleven alive, you are doing well. But this!? I am like a tourist who anticipates a Kodak moment in a quaint native village only to find a raging plague. Even worse, I am the tourist caretaker. In about thirty seconds, my emotions have tumbled from elation to shame and despair, now bordering on panic.

I race out the door to catch up with Phil. I know he will be in a peach of a mood, even less tolerant of my inquisitiveness than usual, but I have to know: What went wrong? Is there some way this could have been avoided? What the hell can we do now? And we better do something fast!

I catch up and momentarily lose my ethnographic cool. I assault him with questions, and this is not what he wants to hear. In a transparent attempt to get me to shut up, he mumbles something technical, a few letters that are supposed to suffice as an explanation, and then begs, "Rich, will you give it a rest?!"

I do; I shut up, but my heart is still pounding, and the thoughts churn. I am not sure what the letters are—did he say "EDE"?—much less what they stand for or how they are related to the dozens of other abbreviations that fill farm talk: "Rich, did you get the heifers at North Place? Make sure you give them twenty seconds of MGA. You can use the 4020, but if it doesn't start, use the 50. We've got to hit some of the new pulls off the south lot with Naxcel."

Maybe, what the pigs have is a special strain of "E-coli"? I know a little about that.

In any case, a few things are clear. We have a serious disaster on our hands. From their look, I would bet that no more than a couple of pigs will survive the



night, and I do not have the slightest idea what to do. But best to keep mum for now and hope that over the course of the day I can find a way to ease into the subject while we work on other things. The cattle call.

Much to Phil's annoyance, I keep veering back to the subject, but he offers little. At one point, with great disgust, "No, Rich, you did not do anything wrong." An hour later, "It just happens." Yet another hour, "I'm giving them some electrolytes, but I don't know if it will matter. There isn't much of anything you can do."

So, they are all just going to die this horrible death? The whole idea runs against everything I have learned to expect on the farm. Misfortune may be a normal, "natural" part of the business, but we always put up the good fight, usually the fiercest when it looks like a loser. By the time we break for dinner, I recommit: I had better hold my tongue and ponder the possibility that I still do not understand the play of fate and control, of bad luck and screw up on the farm.

But after dinner, while working on some equipment, off on my own, Roger pulls up and steps from his pickup to chat.

God, I wonder if he knows? There go his feeder pigs.

He probably could explain all of this to me, but if he does not know what is going on, I do not want him to hear about it first from me. Relations with Phil could get touchy, and I do not want to add complications, not only because of my ignorance but also because I could too easily destroy their detente. In fact, in generous response to my eternal questioning, Roger and Phil each tell me things—such as speculations about the thinking of the other—before, if ever, they tell each other. And they each know that I have this share of the other's confidence. So, I have to be ever wary to avoid inadvertent betrayals. Again, this is not because either harbors secrets, but because I am confident that they are apt to get along better without this egghead's meddling. But the plague will be a difficult topic to avoid.

Roger hints, "So, you've been down to the farrowing house at Eldon's?"

I volunteer only, "Yes."

"Terrible, huh?"

So he knows!

"Yes, it's TGE," he says, as if those three letters would clear up the whole business. When it is obvious that they do not, Roger begins to explain. "It stands for 'transmissible gastroenteritis.' You mean you don't know about **that**?" He struggles to spare me his incredulity.

"I thought I told you about it, you know, about how I got TGE, in that very same building back . . . not long after I finished at Iowa State and came home to farm. I had just bought a set of gilts and got TGE their first farrow. It was awful. You have to feel for Phil. . . . Sleepless nights . . . It made me sick. I couldn't handle it. I mean the responsibility, all that death. That's why I stopped farrowing. I just sold them off."

As Roger speaks, I begin to understand. Evidently TGE is this angel of death that visits all hog farmers at one time or another. You apparently avoid talking about it above a whisper, at least in public if you are the one it has visited. But it is always there, hovering just above the farrowing house.

Roger explains, "It's amazingly contagious. Once it hits a farm, you can smell it in the air, and every hog will get it. The sows will probably be OK, but there isn't much you can do for the pigs. . . . And no one is sure how it spreads. I told Phil to wash his boots when he was up at my place. (I think, "You mean, I have been feeling so bad, and Phil may have brought this on himself?") But then Roger adds, "No one can know where it came from. Supposedly birds can carry it, just flying from one hog lot to another."

After Roger leaves, I finish bolting some machinery back together and have time to think while I drive to find Phil for another assignment. I wonder, "So, here I was feeling so damned irresponsible and dumb, when the whole business could have been Phil's screw up?" But just as important, Roger reminds me, "No one can know. You have to feel for Phil and envision the elusive demon he battles. Maybe I should write about this episode, say from the vantage of a starling *nosferatu*. At one moment I soar, innocently scanning a pastoral landscape, and at the next, alight to spread death with a touch."

Just as the compositional difficulties of this option begin to register, I find Phil who still looks upset but maybe a little more open to questions.

"I bumped into Roger. . . . [painful pause] . . . I didn't know that he knew."

Phil, reluctantly, "Yeah."

"He said that TGE is amazingly contagious and that you can't do much about it."

"Yeah, I **told** you."

"He also said something about washing boots. Can TGE spread that way?"

"Yeah, I guess so. Roger had a lot of room in his finishing unit. So he bought a load of feeder pigs last week from someone, and I went up to help him sort and unload. But who knows?"

So, I think, "You mean, here I am congratulating Roger for his magnanimity, and he was the one who brought in the TGE in the first place? Phil goes up to help preempt space that could have been reserved for his own feeder pigs, maybe driving them onto a weak market, and this is his reward?"

Yet again I have to refigure the play of luck and screw up. As gracefully as possible, I ask Phil to help me get the story straight. "Geez, Rich, who the hell knows? Can't we talk about something else?" We did and have continued to file it under "shit happens" for the several years that passed since the episode occurred.

But it has become a great Wahini for me. I am not yet sure I can say how or why in any way other than in telling the story itself. Of course, even the story must be distinguished from the moment, the happening shit that I set out to explore. In the telling, the episode acquires order and themes that bear the mark of standard

tools, methods at work. In fact, “method” is a decent name for the craft of turning episode to story.

The marks are already quite deep. For example, through its intimacy—just three people around one building during one day—the story presumes intricacies that anchor actions in a larger world. As much as the story might tell us about hog sense, it calls for attention to other senses of time, space, and place and to the institutions—regional, national, and global—in which they are embedded. Likewise, key themes—such as the play of thrill and dread, fate and control, communication and resignation, the farm and the academy—say as much about here and now, us and this moment, as they do about the farrowing house when TGE hit. For example, it may be the similarity of TGE and AIDS that make this tale a Wahini. Pursuing those methods, themes, and links is my next order of business. “Shit happens” remains a servicable gloss for the way that business began.

## Notes

Thanks are due Bonnie Sunstein for editorial advice and Wayne Wheeler for his recollections. Greatest thanks, though, must be reserved for Phil and Roger and their families for teaching me so much, for reviewing this essay, and for allowing me to publish it.

1. Steven Watts, “The Idiocy of American Studies: Poststructuralism, Language, and Politics in the Age of Self-Fulfillment,” *American Quarterly* 43:4 (December 1991), 625-60. “Forum,” *American Quarterly* 44:3 (September 1992) includes: Barry Shank, “A Reply to Seven Watts’s ‘Idiocy,’” 439-48; Nancy Isenberg, “The Personal is Political: Gender, Feminism, and the Politics of Discourse Theory,” 449-58; and Steven Watts, “Reply to Critics,” 459-62.

2. See Richard Horwitz, “Teaching About Method,” *American Studies*, 31:1 (Spring, 1990), 101-16.

3. Hans Reichenbach, *Experience and Prediction: An Analysis of the Foundations and the Structure of Knowledge* (Chicago, 1938), 6-7. The term, “context of justification” was developed in the 1930s and popularized in the 1940s by philosophers of science (particular positivists) in opposition to the “context of discovery,” where different (less systematic, replicable or rigorous, maybe finally inscrutable) epistemologies were said to operate. “Justifications,” proponents of “the received view” allege, are properly within the philosopher’s province, subject to rational inspection, but analysis of “discoveries” must be left to historians and psychologists. For an introduction to more recent philosophical discussions of such pivotal terms in relating observation to the growth of scientific theory, see: Frederick Suppe, ed., *The Structure of Scientific Theories*, 2nd Ed. (Urbana, Illinois, 1977); and Paul Hoyningen-Huene, “Context of Discovery and Context of Justification,” *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 18:4 (December 1987), 501-15.

4. Such moments are more commonly featured in the preface to a book, before the “real” scholarship begins. They are among the materials that Gene Wise nicely mines in “‘Paradigm Dramas’ in American Studies: A Cultural and Institutional History of the Movement,” *American Quarterly*, 31:3 (Bibliography 1979), 293-337. See, for example, his discussion of Perry Miller’s “jungle epiphany,” 301-3.

5. Michel Negroponce, *Silver Valley* (1983); Ross McElwee, *Sherman’s March* (1985); Jeffrey K. Ruoff, Interview with Michel Negroponce, June 15, 1988, Soho, New York City.