

## On Teaching:

# Teaching About Method

Richard Horwitz

Method has been a touchy subject in American studies circles. In fact, it is touchy almost everywhere in the academy. It is the standard currency for hawking scholarly wares and upscaling insults (e.g., from “What a jerk!” to “The author seems vaguely Derridian”). Evaluations of degree candidates, tenure cases, curricula, publications and grants are more likely to hinge on the approach than substantive details. Missing citations or data are lamentable; but outmoded, unsystematic, insensitive or idiosyncratic methods can be fatal. For most fields, even amidst “blurred genres,” respect for turf can alone be a sign of maturity, legitimacy and intelligence. Discourse centers on the contest of methods: WHICH one (or whose) should reign? But in American studies respect for method, any method, has itself been controversial.<sup>1</sup>

There have been remarkably few publications, for example, that directly address American studies methods, much less how they might be taught. Even the exceptions routinely begin on the defensive. The author starts from scratch, apologetically borrows from elsewhere or denies missionary intentions. Some of the most cited Americanists boast that such reticence is righteous, practical (“principled opportunism”) and humane (“Emersonian”). It allows the imagination unfettered range. To advocate a method is to limit and to exclude in the manner of those regular disciplines from which Americanists have fled or been expelled. It is to court pedantic “methodolatry.”<sup>2</sup>

As the field has grown in the past twenty years, this view has been forced underground. It is muttered more often in hallways than in print. How, after all, can you institutionalize a field—provide dependable opportunities for its practice—without in some manner defining its standards? How can any work be “new” or “better” (or simply “good enough”) without some sense of what is “old” or “worse” or without a way to articulate the difference? Even if we might joyously agree that no method has been canonized, we may have to speak as if it

has (or is about to be) in justifying what we do. These are among the reasons that American studies programs increasingly offer courses on methodology and require them of advanced undergraduate or beginning graduate students. These are also among the reasons such courses are notoriously difficult to take and to teach.<sup>3</sup>

Of course, there are other ways this story, the rise of a curricular “Search for Method,” could be told. The version above, with its stodgy or naïve narrator and with suspicious convenience, renders the search a natural development, an inevitable stage in the progress of American studies to which I contribute. Such posturing extracts a price. For example, it discounts the fact that some of the most cited Americanists have also boldly advocated their approach or at least the need for more philosophical discussion. Not everyone holds their nose—“This is supposed to be good for me”—for doses of Gilligan, Gunn, or Geertz. Without coaching, for instance, applicants to the graduate program at Iowa increasingly define their interests around an approach such as feminism as well as a particular group, place, era or medium (a “substance”). Many of us have long been convinced that methodology is engaging and enlightening in its own right. It, too, has a substance. Teaching about it is no heroic struggle with adversity.<sup>4</sup>

Nor is it clearly inevitable, a stage in the development of the field, a sign of maturity or a requisite for growth. One might argue that institutionalization and principles are less organically connected. For example, with a shift in the balance of power among graduate programs and some key job opportunities in the 1970s, a number of Ph.D.s from or influenced by the methodology-oriented program at the University of Pennsylvania (“Penn types” like me) have been well placed to promote their interests. From this vantage the legitimacy of methodology is closer to a coincidence or a conspiracy than an adaptation. Furthermore, agencies no less distinguished than H.U.D. have demonstrated that their agents can prosper without clear, coherent justification. At least occasionally, even in the history of science itself, codified methods have been partial, uninspired afterthoughts rather than the foundation of insight. In building schools of thought exemplary applications have been at least as important as abstracted procedures.<sup>5</sup> One might reason, then, that institutionalization renders justification unnecessary. When Americanists secure courses, budgets and positions, their authority is established. Nothing more need be said. To teach American studies, just assign books that do it well: “Go, ye, and do likewise.” If a student fails, follow Lloyd Bentsen’s lead and declare, “I knew Henry Nash Smith. You’re no Henry Nash Smith.”

Whether or not any of these stories of method in American studies is itself worth believing, taken together they foreground predictable sensitivities that students (and, I suspect, teachers) of method bring to class. At least they have helped convince me for a dozen years as “D.M.” (designated methodologist) that the subject still merits work. The stories also highlight some of the issues that might well be foregrounded in a class on method in American studies, particularly the history of the field, the dynamics of the academy, the relations between principles and practices and the rhetorics of justification they employ. In the

syllabus to the introduction required for beginning graduate students (“Theory and Practice in American Studies I”), I explain:

This course is an introduction to traditional and emerging forms of American Studies. Some of the problems to be addressed are common to all of the human sciences: How should we assess our efforts? What is ‘good work’? Others entail the particular sorts of materials, techniques, and modes of presentation that have occupied Americanists. While we cannot survey all of these issues, we can begin to develop a better sense of the field and our disposition toward it.

It is not, then, supposed to cover all possible approaches, much less substitute for experience with them. Since for the past couple of years a colleague has handled “Theory and Practice II,” my version of the course has been further focused. Professor Lauren Rabinovitz emphasizes cultural analysis drawn from recent, Marxist and feminist, literary and communications theories and draws most of her examples from nineteenth- and twentieth-century popular culture. I emphasize pedigreed theories in history, literature and interpretive social sciences and draw examples from hither and yon. While, too, Professor Rabinovitz tends to work with specific models and procedures for interpretation, I tend to focus on more general principles, that is, “method” in a special sense of the word.

The word is often used to mean a research regimen, with the implication that people who follow one are “methodical,” meaning either systematic (good) or plodding (bad). Traditionally, social scientists have stressed the first interpretation. They have demanded that procedures be so explicit (“replicable”) that investigators are interchangeable parts. Humanists, on the other hand, have tended to resist any procedure that does not privilege individual voice and vision. Faced with such adamant alternatives, interdisciplinary scholars are resigned to a purgatory, a liminal ground with no aesthetic save pluralism, moderation or anemic “realism.” For example, Margaret Mead once explained that semiotics may be worth endorsing because, in this day and age, not everyone can be a Renaissance person like herself—a tentative endorsement at best.<sup>6</sup>

Of course, Mead was right that conditions have changed. Intellectual traditions creak under the weight of new scholarship and specialties. I only mean to challenge the implication that interdisciplinary approaches—because of their difference from traditional, disciplinary ones—must be a remedy. In many ways the problem is that we already have too much innovation and specialization, too much difference. To energize the field and to consider how our work might avoid contributing to the problem, we ought to evaluate not only the conditions we flee but also their lasting connection to our destination and route to it. Furthermore, since American studies is so often defined negatively, in terms of rejected canons and techniques, it is hardly surprising that it remains much more at home in the

humanities than the sciences. In other words, stock rationales for interdisciplinarity impede effective integration of the two.

One way out of such a trap is to move methodological discussions to a more abstract plane, one that opens to criticism the relationship between any procedure (including even the most anarchist) and the quality of its use. In teaching about interdisciplinary method in particular, then, I have found it useful to distinguish between more and less restricted senses of the word, between technique and method (proper).

By “technique” I mean a research regimen. It includes practical rules or recipes for sampling source material, for defining patterns, for moving from observations to generalizations. For example, Americanists varyingly structure their choice of sources around personal, folk, canonical or mass-market tastes. Narrative conventions may be taken to indicate the most or least culturally salient features of fictions. These are among the questions that debates about “technique” immediately engage and among the most pressing concerns for students and teachers: “What is the right way to get on with it?” It is a natural enough worry, but I must agree with the skeptics and romantics that it essentializes an abstraction. No technique is a shortcut to wisdom (garbage in/garbage out). More importantly, evaluations of technique too rarely or too vaguely engage the changing personal and political interests in terms of which our work should be and almost invariably will be judged.

By “method,” then, I mean a more general disposition, a set of assumptions, affiliations or stories which may be attributed to American studies in particular circumstances.<sup>7</sup> In the tradition of European social philosophers, the target is not the perfect technique, a practical guide for sound scholarship—discussion closed. The end is to engage an ongoing discussion that clarifies historical, logical, and ethical issues attending research.<sup>8</sup>

We might begin, for example, by challenging the way our work manages often contending interests of our subjects, our audiences and ourselves. Or we might unpack the views of human nature and the critical aesthetic our work implies. For example, how does a particular work of cultural criticism make its subjects accessible? Do they seem relatively creative or tyrannized by the society or the setting in which they live? To what extent do they think, feel, touch, act, sing or see? How adamantly do they cling to tradition? Where do social and cultural changes come from and where do they go? Given the approach, could alternatives be imagined? Why, after all, ought we believe the critic’s story? For example, what is the source of its dramatic tension, and what clinches its lesson? How does it engage surrounding stories in and out of the academy? How is the narrator situated in the world of address? How might we be situated in it? What gives us that impression? What assumptions, allegiances or actions ought we engage if we are to go along with the critic? Should we? SHOULD we go and do likewise?

I cannot elaborate here all the questions, much less the alternative answers, that are discussed even in a single go-round of “Theory and Practice in American

Studies.” I hope, though, that the foregoing has communicated some of its spirit, a method, if you will, for teaching about method. What follows comes closer to outlining a technique. It is therefore more obviously circumstantial.

Since the students I face are new to the campus, diverse and unknown before the first week of class, and since materials must be arranged months in advance, the course is extraordinarily prepackaged. Since they are talented graduate students and the course is required, heavy reading and writing assignments are tolerated. In fact, the course has become an initiating rite (some would say, “boot camp”) for the program. If nothing else, students build some solidarity as Americanists. Even though they share few substantive interests, I can assume that they are enthusiastic and already familiar with the academy, particularly the existence of competing schools of thought. For example, they recognize more than gossip in the personal and institutional rivalries that methodological arguments occasion. They also usually expect to encounter some tricks of the trade that will be useful not only for surviving the semester but also for a career in cultural criticism. That is why, for example, tours of reference facilities or special collections in libraries and museums are welcomed, even though we may not use them for the rest of the term. Along with my own limitations, then, such local circumstances suggest that the model that follows would have to be modified for other occasions, but I hope it suggests how some of the principles discussed above might actually work.

Like most courses, “Theory and Practice” begins with a fair amount of housekeeping. In addition to going over the syllabus, course materials, papers, grading procedures, etc., the students are quickly sorted into groups that will be responsible for about a third of the class meetings. I have toyed with a number of ways of helping them get organized. (“Do whatever you want” has not worked very well.) Generally about half of the group-led classes (the first few weeks of the term) are directed to help us respond to the material already assigned outside of class. For example, I may suggest that the group use the library to place the assigned work in a genre or tradition or to assess its reception in reviews of various kinds and dates. Or I may ask them to check on their own how fairly its primary sources were treated. Or I may just ask them to prepare questions that, judging from the group’s discussion outside of class, should give discussions in class a jump start. The remaining half of the group-led classes address primary sources. For example, I may suggest that they bring a favorite source into class, say, an artifact to interpret in the mode of an assigned work or toward ends closer to our particular interests. Or they may design an original exercise or performance or take us on a field trip that brings us in touch with the medium we have been discussing. Generally, I only insist that students opt for at least one group of each type (assigned text and raw material, the first and second parts of the term), that they meet outside of class, and that they exercise their collective imagination to benefit as many of us as possible. The groups are among the most popular features of the course.<sup>9</sup>

## Preliminary Definitions and History of American Studies

The course begins with a series of very basic, related questions: 1) What is the impetus for American studies? Where did it come from? 2) What has been or should be its rationale? and 3) How should we stand within or apart from such legacies?

Assignments, lectures and discussions, then, center on articulating stock answers to these questions and subjecting them to methodological critique. This begins a process that continues all term. Normally, for example, the first assignment is to write and to place on reserve in the library a one-paragraph abstract of a real or imagined example of American studies (“really doing it”). Once students have read each others’ abstracts, we try to identify patterns—implicit stories, affiliations, assumptions. We usually can agree that we already have a converging sense of the field. For example, the abstracts tend to present work that is an alternative to regular disciplines (seen as “elitist,” “compulsive,” “partial”) and that embraces underdogs (women, people of color, “my” or “real” people), pluralism, wholes, feelings and multiple media. Most often they work “from the bottom up” to deflate myths and stereotypes that the “mainstream” or various narrow-minded others (the profane “not us”) promote or accept.

Naturally this leads us to a discussion of the reasonableness of such a view, for example, the mythologies of the academy and epistemology, of boundaries and populism and more generally of freedom (supposedly great for critics; little for their subjects) that the abstracts might presume. The point is not that we have too many presumptions (as if we should be “empty”) or even the wrong ones. There are strong arguments and worthy proponents of nearly every conceivable position. Through lectures or long asides on the evolution of academic specialization and on the development of American history, anthropology, folklore and literary studies in particular, commonplace concerns can be differentiated and developed.<sup>10</sup> Clearly, too, the quality of the criticism we engage does not entirely (or maybe even primarily) depend on the value of the presumptions or lineage we can attribute to it. But in responding to cultural criticism, including our own, we begin to recognize practices that might also benefit from criticism. After just two or three weeks, we can readily caricature some stock constructions of American studies (e.g., as humanly enriched social science, grounded lit crit, vanguard or refuge) and unpack the view of disciplines, history, institutional life and personal agency that each may be said to invoke. As we read articles describing, justifying or aiming to reform American studies, we begin to articulate the views we might best use to re-form our own dispositions and, in so doing, to be more accountable to each other.<sup>11</sup>

### Tradition, Academe, and a Usable Past

Heretofore, the main focus has been academic scholarship. Americanists are people who choose how to work as the rest of the world (e.g., national govern-

ments, funding bureaus, international relations, “spirits of the times”) influence their choices. But we can begin to challenge this distinction—the line between us and them, between free agents and determining systems—by examining one of the most definitive features of American studies, its preoccupation with the United States.

Of course, students are already wary of talk of any uniquely American mainstream. After barely mentioning social stratification in the United States, migrations, diffusion, syncretism, international economy and diplomacy, we are ready to discount allegations (often our own at the outset) that the geopolitical borders of the United States demark anything very distinct or homogeneous. On second thought, we are more sophisticated than that. We can pose as progressives and express solidarity with oppressed peoples by rejecting xenophobia, racism, sexism and analogous “outside influences” that may account for the generalizing impulse in traditional American studies. But is not generalization about the United States still possible, necessary, even desirable?

At the very least we rely on it to justify our own progressive posture. Moreover, it is worth considering that many oppressed peoples, most obviously outside the United States, experience this country, its popular culture and policies, distinctly and powerfully in their lives. While pluralists may rightly worry about qualifying every generalization, it may seem just another mystification to many Nicaraguans or, for that matter, most “minorities” in the United States. Furthermore, in specifiable ways, American studies is one source of powerful stories about the nation. Like it or not, we are implicated in the very influences to which we respond. For example, we can examine critically journalism, cultural exchange programs and high-school civics as institutions with which we trade. In so doing, we can discuss how not only to distance ourselves from misguided nationalism but also to accept responsibility for its construction and effects.<sup>12</sup>

### **Approaching “Our” Culture**

Even students who began with a profound distaste for method by this point acknowledge its far-ranging implications. It is a good time to learn from predecessors, to see how they might offer solutions to concerns that threaten to overwhelm us. How, for example, have they defined their calling? justified, responded and contributed to the urge to generalize about America? or managed pressures from the academy, the state, “their” people and personal vision?

Frankly, assignments on this theme are among the most difficult to set. Just about anything could be used as an exemplary approach, and I always feel torn between personal favorites and old or emerging classics. Some are worth reading because they so invite caricature; others because they so defy it. Generally, at this point in the semester I opt for classics, essays that are widely recognized by modern Americanists and that are easily placed in context.

Our discussions center on ways these authors privilege their point of view by assuming a “correct” relationship to or distance from their subjects and readers. Some will claim they must be right because they are outsiders (in self- or socially-imposed exile, distant enough to “debamboozle”), because they speak from the belly of the beast (close enough to sing of self and culture), or because they are marginal (doubled in consciousness, inside and outside at once). Each of these alternatives raises methodological problems for us to assess. We can close this segment by considering recent reflexive or post-modern permutations. Together these works suggest a variety of predictable ways that lived experience, especially experience with social inequality, might best be related to cultural criticism in practice.<sup>13</sup>

### Focus on Culture

Americanists have been just as preoccupied with culture as they have been with the United States, and few of their decisions may be as momentous as their sense of the term. We may agree that it denotes an essence of sociality among a people but significantly diverge in the ways we identify and explain that essence. In short, “culture” has hundreds of definitions. Thanks to self-critical research on the history of most of the humanities and social sciences from which Americanists borrow, their methodological implications have been significantly unpacked. For example, various senses of the word “culture” can be said to imply a definition and relationship of self and other, to privilege particular sorts of evidence in a way that their “meaning” might be best discovered, criticized, and communicated. And critics tend to bag what fits in their creed. If for example, we assume that culture is like a game, we should not be surprised that, whatever the particulars, our subjects come across as players, referees and score-keepers. If it is like a language, they are likely to emerge as more or less articulate speakers and scribes.

Clearly, there is insufficient time to sample many precedents. But since I am most versed in anthropologists’ theories of culture, since it is fashionable to borrow from that source, and since many humanist and scientific anthropologists (unlike, say, cultural and behavioral geographers) still aim to converse, I emphasize the long history of their debates. Most of their positions have abundant analogues in other fields.

Through reading and lectures, I aim to help students anticipate the method of cultural criticism that various senses of “culture,” whatever their disciplinary home, are likely to effect. At the very least, I hope that students will recognize some of the rich, complex allusions to prior theorizing that Americanists might easily miss in borrowing any particular version of “culture in the anthropological sense.” They should know that in anthropology itself the expression better evokes a framework for debate than a substantive consensus. Of course, given our circumstances, we need not reach the same judgements. But we can learn from anthropological theory some of the conditions and consequences our senses of “culture” may imply.<sup>14</sup>

## The Exegetic Tradition

At this point we can return to the roots of American Studies, usually called “Myth and Symbol” or “the literature/intellectual history synthesis.” To emphasize its methods (which can be found in other circumstances, texts, sources, and terminology), I place it in a broader exegetic tradition.<sup>15</sup>

Given their station in the academic pantheon and their regard for sacred (“inherently powerful”) texts and misguided souls, for *Walden* and James K. Paulding, we can find much of Hermes in Lewis, Marx (Leo, not Karl), Rourke, Smith, and Ward. They wrote as apostles for whom false prophesy was national mythology. Instructive parallels can also be drawn between their interest in American culture and contemporary anthropologists’ interest in “the superorganic,” literary critics’ in “form,” and historians’ in “the American mind.” There are sufficient similarities to consider the strengths and weaknesses that have been identified in these related fields. In this light, for example, the much-bemoaned elitism of myth and symbol is neither as obvious nor as easily excised as some critics allege. In particular, it is far from obvious that favoring popular or folk expression (a change in sampling technique) will be any less elitist if the exegetic method remains.<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless, there are particular features of the method, such as its elegance, its regard for the dynamics of narrative and the room it provides for editorializing, that may be well-worth preserving. Recent developments in criticism suggest ways to do just that while emphasizing the more earthly conditions of textual production and consumption and the contest over their meaning. But to do so may entail a break with the exegetic tradition, not only its favored sources, but also the whole relationship of critic to culture. This is a subject to be explored in considerably more depth in “Theory and Practice II.”<sup>17</sup>

## Resources for American Studies

For most of the balance of the term we focus on the variety of source materials which now occupy Americanists and figure in the division of academic labor. At Iowa as elsewhere, for example, faculty are hired and curriculum is structured to emphasize classes of media. Within American studies itself (officially in the Popular and American Culture Associations) scholars can be distinguished by their favorite source. It is worth asking how each poses more or less unique challenges and opportunities.

This is no mean task. For example, review essays in American studies often foreclose the question. They may, in fact, be solicited and written to promote the author’s favorite source: “These books show how much you can do with my stuff.” Techniques are likely to be considered little more than “tools” for dissecting the meaning that the stuff “embodies.” Ecology, they might say, is the ultimate context; material culture represents all of society; photos quote from reality; and music captures the spirit. While there is reason to credit such claims,

there is also reason to unpack the method that might make these qualities seem so evident, special and valuable. In so doing, we often find good reason to direct similar attention to other sources (e.g., to treat photos as material culture, ecology as music, etc.) or to question the method that so privileges one source over another. Clearly, then, one of my aims is to encourage students to reason from methodological commitments to sources with the same ease that they often reason in the opposite direction.<sup>18</sup>

Each medium, then, is treated as a course unit. We begin with a group presentation or tour a special collection to gain experience with the medium itself. Then we read an article or two, usually touting the virtues of the medium, and finally discuss a work or two of cultural criticism that mines it well. Progressing through the units, we can contrast works to reevaluate their uniqueness and explore ways to integrate their strengths in light of our own evolving, methodological commitments. This may be one way to help build communication across specialties.

Clearly, too, this is an occasion for me to assign some books I admire. As usual, it is tough to narrow down the list. I usually opt for recent publications that range over the American past and that address each other in ways that will invite methodological comparison. Media are treated roughly in order of the transparency that might be attributed to them: land, documents, folklore, artifacts, pictures, music. We proceed at once, then, from the distant to the near past and from sources that “speak for themselves” to those that seem to defy inscription.<sup>19</sup> I introduce a set of very general methodological terms for keeping track of comparisons.<sup>20</sup>

### **Varieties of Synthesis in American Studies**

We close the term by examining works that exemplify some of the most promising recent syntheses. Students select readings from two lists of options falling on either side of a persistent divide in the field. On one side are works that address the nation as a whole or an alleged mainstream; on the other, particular communities or subcultures. As usual, we can organize our discussions around the privileging of one focus over the other. We soon discover that their differences are less clearly marked, less inherent in the focus itself, than their authors may claim. For example, there is good reason to consider subcultures in the context of national or global inequality and the “mainstream” more properly a subculture of Euro-American patriarchs. At some point and in some manner all cultural criticism distorts “actual” unities and diversities in social life, whether by essentializing on nations or groups or, for that matter, individuals.<sup>21</sup>

Nevertheless each mode typically exemplifies distinctive methods that may be more effectively combined once the divide is bridged. The final term paper challenges students to identify the work of cultural criticism that comes closest to doing just that and to suggest how it might be improved by adopting methods of other works.

This model is the best I have so far discovered for introducing students to American studies methodology. Unfortunately, I have little way to predict how it might serve others. In fact, colleagues who have covered the course in my absence have relied on extensive revisions. For undergraduates or in the absence of curricula on research techniques, radical changes would be required. Moreover, students give my version of the course mixed reviews. It is very tough going. They commonly report that it does not seem terribly coherent or useful until they begin original research or approach comprehensive examinations. I am comforted to know that most of them then find it very helpful, indeed.

In short, I doubt anyone else could or should simply follow my model. But I hope it has helped others better imagine and articulate the ways we can teach about method in American studies.

## Notes

Iowa Students who have survived "Theory and Practice" deserve much of the credit and none of the blame for this essay. Insofar as I ever learned how to teach the course, they taught me how to do it. I am also grateful to Lauren Rabinovitz and Al Stone for editorial advice.

1. Clifford Geertz, "Blurred Genres: The Refiguration of Social Thought," in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York, 1983), 19-35. Note the persistence of the question, "Can 'American Studies' Develop A Method?" For example, it was the title of both an article by Henry Nash Smith in 1957—*American Quarterly* 9 (Summer 1957), 197-208—and an address to the American Studies Association by John William Ward in 1982. See also Gene Wise, "Paradigm Dramas' in American Studies: A Cultural and Institutional History of the Movement," *American Quarterly* 31 (Bibliography Issue, 1979), 293-337.

2. Joel M. Jones, "American Studies: The Myth of Methodology," *American Quarterly* 31 (Bibliography Issue, 1979), 293-337. See also: Linda Kerber, "Diversity and the Transformation of American Studies," *American Quarterly* 41 (September 1989), 415-431; Bruce Kuklick, "Myth and Symbol in American Studies," *American Quarterly* 24 (October 1972), 435-450; Guenter H. Lenz, "American Studies—Beyond the Crisis?: Recent Redefinitions and the Meaning of Theory, History, and Practical Criticism," in *Prospects* 7, ed. Jack Salzman (New York, 1982), 53-114; Luther S. Luedtke, "Not So Common Ground: Controversies in Contemporary American Studies," in *The Study of American Culture: Contemporary Conflicts*, ed. Luedtke (Deland, Florida, 1977), 323-367; Leo Marx, "American Studies—A Defense of an Unscientific Method," *New Literary History* 1 (October 1969), 75-90; Jay Mechling, Robert Merideth, and David Wilson, "American Culture Studies: The Discipline and the Curriculum," *American Quarterly* 25 (October 1973), 363-389; Robert Merideth, *American Studies: Essays on Theory and Method* (Columbus, 1968); Robert Sklar, "The Problem of an American Studies 'Philosophy': A Bibliography of New Directions," *American Quarterly* 27 (August 1975), 245-262; Smith, "Can 'American Studies' Develop a Method?" (1957); Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*, reissued with new preface (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1950), vii-x; Mary Turpie and Joseph Kwiat, eds., *Studies in American Culture: Dominant Ideas and Images* (Minneapolis, 1960); Gene Wise, *American Historical Explanations: A Strategy for Grounded Inquiry*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis, 1980), xxi-xxvii, and "'Paradigm Dramas'" (1979).

3. The small number of publications about American Studies pedagogy generally address "substantive courses." See for example, Brooke Workman, *Teaching the Decades: A Humanities Approach to American Civilization* (Urbana, Illinois, 1975); and Jay Mechling, "If they Can Build a Square Tomato: Notes Toward a Holistic Approach to Regional Studies," in *Prospects* 4, ed. Jack Salzman (New York, 1979), 59-77, or "An American Culture Grid, With Texts," *American Studies International* 27 (April 1989), 2-12. For many years on request the ASA has offered to reproduce syllabi of courses that members volunteer, including a small number of courses on method. In print the only explicit discussions of teaching about method in American Studies may be in Mechling,

Merideth, and Wilson, "American Culture Studies," (1973) and Wise, *American Historical Explanations* (1980). In 1989 and 1990 both *American Quarterly* and *American Studies* began publishing a series of articles on teaching.

4. Nearly all of the works cited above in one way or another advocate an approach. Clearly, Mechling, Sklar, and Wise have. And I must agree with Wise in "'Paradigm Dramas'" (1979) that, even in their most anti-method (I would say, "anti-technique") harangues, "myth-and-symbol" scholars have cultivated a following. For example, in *The Unusable Past: Theory and The Study of American Literature* (New York, 1986), Russell Reising confidently critiques THE method in American Studies, as if we all knew what that was. Although Americanists have readily cited works in the philosophy of science (particularly Thomas Kuhn) to dignify their ambivalence toward method, few if any go so far as to invoke Paul Feyerabend. See, for example, *Against Method: Toward an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge*, rev. ed. (London, 1988).

5. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1970).

6. Margaret Mead, "From Intuition to Analysis in Communication Research," *Semiotica* 1 (1969), 19-20.

7. Admittedly, this definition is a bit of a hedge. It aims to avoid choosing among three distinct modes of "meta" criticism that seem equally valuable (and equally partial) to me—logical, political and rhetorical (hence, "assumptions, affiliations or stories"). In the first mode we might examine a particular work of cultural criticism to analyze its premises and the reasoning that links them. In the second we might examine the context of its production, how it is responsive to various constituencies or naturalizes the status quo. In the third we might specify the richness of the story, the source of its conviction and our feelings for the narrator, the scene and other characters. In the first we might approach a work with cool, precise detachment; in the second, with passionate urgency; and in the third, with a reflexive aesthetic. At least these are among the most common reactions of students, and I aim to encourage them all.

8. Here I am improvising on some of the insights of Anthony Giddens (who improvises on Emile Durkheim) in *New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretive Sociologies* (New York, 1976), 8. Clearly, it must be admitted, too, that I feel less bound to teach more practical research techniques because they are so thoroughly addressed elsewhere in the curriculum. Among the works recently cited in or around American Studies which similarly address method are: Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier and Roy Rosenzweig, eds., *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public* (Philadelphia, 1986); Peter L. Berger and David Kellner, *Sociology Reinterpreted* (New York, 1981); Richard H. Brown, *A Poetic for Sociology: Toward a Logic of Discovery for the Human Sciences* (Cambridge, England, 1977); Michael Cowan, "Boundary as Center: Inventing an American Studies Culture," in *Prospects* 12, ed. Jack Salzman (New York, 1987), 1-20; Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis, 1983); Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1982); Giles Gunn, *The Culture of Criticism and the Criticism of Culture* (New York, 1987); Guenter H. Lenz, "American Studies and the Radical Tradition: From the 1930s to the 1960s," in *Prospects* 12, ed. Jack Salzman (New York, 1987), 21-58; George E. Marcus and Michael M.J. Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences* (Chicago, 1986); Mechling, "If They can Build a Square Tomato" (1979); Ralph V. Norman and Charles H. Reynolds, eds., *Community in America: The Challenge of Habits of the Heart* (Berkeley, 1988); Janice A. Radway, "Identifying Ideological Seams: Mass Culture, Analytical Method, and Political Practice," *Communication* 9 (1986), 93-123; "A Round Table: What Has Changed and Not Changed in American Historical Practice," *Journal of American History*, Special Issue, 76 (September 1989); Cecil Tate, *The Search for a Method in American Studies* (Minneapolis, 1973); "Within and Without: Women, Gender, Theory," *Signs*, Special Issue, 12 (Summer 1987); Raymond Williams, *The Sociology of Culture* (New York, 1981).

9. Generally, there are about nine groups; four are assigned-text- and five are primary-source-oriented. Much to my surprise, I have had good luck just passing out a roster (themes and dates) or putting one on the board and letting students sign up for any two groups (one in each half of the term) they prefer. Cliques are not yet formed, and there seems to be a spontaneous urge for symmetry. They spread themselves out pretty evenly.

10. See, for example, the references cited in note 8 above, and: Richard Armour, *The Academic Bestiary* (New York, 1974); Peter L. Berger and David Kellner, *Sociology Reinterpreted* (New York, 1981); Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York, 1976); Sande Cohen, *Historical Culture: On the Recoding of an Academic Discipline* (Berkeley, 1986); Lewis A. Coser, Charles Kadushin, and Walter W. Powell, *Books: The Culture and Commerce of Publishing* (New York, 1982); George Devereux, *From Anxiety to Method in Behavioral Sciences* (The Hague, 1968); Ellen C. Du Bois, et al., *Feminist Scholarship: Kindling in the Groves of Academe* (Urbana, Illinois, 1985); Julienne Ford, *Paradigms and Fairy Tales: An Introduction to the Science of Meanings*, 2 vols. (London, 1975); Norma Haan, Robert N. Bellah, Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan, eds., *Social Science as Moral Inquiry* (New York, 1983); Thomas L. Hartshome, *The Distorted Image: Changing Conceptions of the American Character Since Turner* (Cleveland, 1968), and "Recent Interpretations of the American Character," *American Studies International* 14 (Winter, 1975), 10-17; Thomas L. Haskell, ed., *The Authority of*

*Experts: Studies in History and Theory* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1984); Robert S. Lynd, *Knowledge for What? The Place of Social Science in American Culture* (New York, 1964); Lewis Perry, *Intellectual Life in America: A History* (Chicago, 1984); Theodore K. Rabb, "Coherence, Synthesis, and Quality in History," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 12 (Autumn 1981), 315-332; Laurence R. Veyssey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago, 1965); Rosemary Levy Zumwalt, *American Folklore Scholarship: A Dialogue of Dissent* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1988).

11. The only two readings that I find nearly essential are Jones' "American Studies: The Myth of Methodology," (1979) and Wise's "'Paradigm Dramas'" (1979). Also worth considering are: Gunn, *The Culture of Criticism and the Criticism of Culture* (1987); Jefferson B. Kellogg and Robert H. Walker, eds., *Sources for American Studies* (Westport, Connecticut, 1983); John Lachs, "Philosophy and American Studies," in *Challenges in American Culture*, ed. Ray B. Browne et al. (Bowling Green, 1970), 47-54; Guenter H. Lenz, "American Studies and the Radical Tradition," (1987), and "American Studies—Beyond the Crisis?" (1982); Luedtke, "Not So Common Ground" (1977); Jay Mechling, ed., "Some Voices in and Around American Studies," *American Quarterly* 31 (Bibliography 1979), 338-406; Sklar, "The Problem of an American Studies 'Philosophy'" (1975); Gene Wise, "An American Studies Calendar," *American Quarterly* 31 (Bibliography 1979), 407-447, and "From 'American Studies' to 'American Culture Studies': A Dialogue Across Generations," in *Prospects* 8, ed. Jack Salzman (New York, 1983), 1-10.

12. The three texts that now seem best to assign on American uniqueness and potential implications outside and inside the United States are: Sacvan Bercovitch, "The Rites of Assent: Rhetoric, Ritual, and the Ideology of American Consensus," in *The American Self: Myth, Ideology, and Popular Culture*, ed. Sam B. Girgus (Albuquerque, 1981), 5-42; George Black, *The Good Neighbor: How the United States Wrote the History of Central America and the Caribbean* (New York, 1988); and Frances FitzGerald, *America Revised: History Schoolbooks in the Twentieth Century* (Boston, 1979). I also usually find time, here or midst later discussions of American character, to assign: Ralph Linton, "One Hundred Per Cent American," *The American Mercury* 40 (1937), 427-429; Laurence Veyssey, "The Autonomy of American History Reconsidered," *American Quarterly* 31 (Fall 1979), 455-477; and Rupert Wilkinson, *The Pursuit of American Character* (New York, 1988). Other works worth considering include: Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, *After the Cataclysm: Postwar Indochina and the Construction of Imperial Ideology* (Boston, 1978); Robert M. Crunden, ed., *Traffic of Ideas Between India and America* (Delhi, 1985); Cynthia Enloe, "We Are What We Wear: The Dilemma of the Feminist Consumer," in *Of Common Cloth: Women in the Global Textile Industry*, ed. Wendy Chapkis and Cynthia Enloe (Washington, D.C., 1983); Esquire Magazine, *Esquire's The Soul of America* (New York, 1986); Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley, 1980); Richard P. Horwitz, "Foreign Expertise: American Studies in Taiwan," *American Studies International* 27 (April 1989), 38-62; Francis L.K. Hsu, *Americans and Chinese: Passage to Difference*, 3rd ed. (Honolulu, 1981); Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven, 1987); Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America* (New York, 1983); William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick, *The Ugly American* (New York, 1958); Ernest R. May, "Lessons of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy" (New York, 1973); Frank A. Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations* (New York, 1981); Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic And Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York, 1982); Herbert I. Schiller, *Communication and Cultural Domination* (White Plains, New York, 1976); Jeremy Tunstall, *The Media Are American: Anglo-American Media in the World* (New York, 1977); Reinhold Wagnleiter, "Propagating the American Dream: Cultural Policies as Means of Integration," *American Studies International* 24 (April 1986), 60-84.

13. For the moment, I prefer to begin with an essay that may be the single most frequently cited manifesto for American studies, Ralph Waldo Emerson's "The American Scholar," in "The American Scholar" Today: *Emerson's Essay and Some Critical Views*, ed. C. David Mead (New York, 1970), 13-30. Among the works with which it most conveniently contrasts are: W.E.B. Dubois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings," in *The Souls of Black Folk* (rept. Millwood, Illinois, 1973), 1-12; and Maria Mies, "Towards A Methodology for Feminist Research," in *Theories of Women's Studies*, ed., Gloria Bowles and Renate Duelli Klein (London, 1983), 117-139. Among other works worth considering or excerpting are: John L. Aguilar, "Insider Research: An Ethnography of a Debate," in *Anthropologists at Home in North America: Methods and Issues in the Study of One's Own Society*, ed. Donald A. Messerschmidt (Cambridge, 1981), 15-26; Luigi Barzini, "The Baffling Americans," in *The Europeans* (New York, 1983), at least 228-253; Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, abr. ed., ed. Richard D. Heffner (New York, 1956), and *Journey to America*, rev. ed., trans. George Lawrence, ed. J.P. Mayer (New York, 1971); Benjamin Franklin, *Benjamin Franklin: The Autobiography and Other Writings*, ed. L. Jesse Lemisch (New York, 1961), 83-106; Wayne Franklin, *Discoverers, Explorers, Settlers: The Diligent Writers of Early America* (Chicago, 1979); Marita Golden, *Migrations of the Heart* (Garden City, New York, 1983); F.O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (New York, 1941); Michael McGiffert, ed., *The Character of Americans: A Book of Readings*, rev. ed. (Homewood, Illinois, 1970), especially 21-36, 41-70 and 250-268; Vernon L. Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought: An Interpreta-*

*tion of American Literature from the Beginnings to 1920* (New York, 1927-1930), especially II, 386-399; George W. Pierson, *Tocqueville in America*, abr. ed. (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1969); David M. Potter, *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character* (Chicago, 1954); Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category for Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91 (December 1986), 1053-1075; William Carlos Williams, "Poor Richard," in *In The American Grain* (New York, 1925), 144-157. After sampling such works, I ask students to prepare an extended methodological critique of a recent work that addresses problems in point of view in a more self-conscious, convoluted way. The three that seem to have been most successful for this purpose are an essay, an ethnography (which can be read as a novel), and a novel: James Baldwin, "Stranger in the Village," in *Notes of a Native Son* (Boston, 1955), 143-158; Theodore R. Kennedy, *You Gotta Deal With It: Black Family Relations in a Southern Community* (New York, 1980), especially through 129; and Allison Lurie, *Imaginary Friends* (New York, 1967). There are, too, innumerable documentary films as well as reflexive ballads from the world of popular music that invite analogous discussion. The list of candidates is truly endless.

14. To quickly survey the history of anthropological theories of culture and relate them to theories in other fields, I generally have to rely on lectures. Although quite disciplinary and whiggish, sufficiently elementary texts worth considering include: Lewis L. Langness, *The Study of Culture* (San Francisco, 1974) and Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory: A History of Theories of Culture* (New York, 1968). These can be better placed in the context of recent debates with such essays as: Roger M. Keesing, "Theories of Culture," in *Annual Review of Anthropology* 3, ed. Bernard J. Siegel (Palo Alto, 1974), 73-97; and Sherry B. Ortner, "Theory in Anthropology Since the Sixties," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26 (January 1984), 126-166. Since Clifford Geertz has become the stock source of "culture" for many in American studies, it is often a good idea to sample his most frequently cited works and criticism they have attracted. For example, even if there is not time to read his ethnography, consider Geertz's: "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, 1973), 3-30; "Blurred Genres" (1983); and the versions of "\_\_\_\_\_ as a Cultural System"—religion and ideology in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, common sense and art in *Local Knowledge*. To suggest some of the arguments surrounding his reception in anthropology itself, I recommend: William Roseberry, "Balinese Cockfights and the Seduction of Anthropology," *Social Research* 49 (1982), 1013-1028; and especially Paul Shankman, "The Thick and the Thin: On the Interpretive Theoretical Program of Clifford Geertz," *Current Anthropology* 25 (June 1984), 261-279. I close this unit with a recent work that includes a version of "culture in the anthropological sense" that may be most useful for interdisciplinary critics. For that purpose I now assign George E. Marcus and Michael M. J. Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (Chicago, 1986). See also: Richard H. Brown, *A Poetic for Sociology: Toward a Logic of Discovery for the Human Sciences* (Cambridge, 1977); James Clifford and George E. Marcus, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley, 1986); Lloyd S. Etheredge, *The Case of the Unreturned Cafeteria Trays: An Investigation Based Upon Theories of Motivation and Human Behavior* (Washington, D.C., 1976); John H. Moore, "The Culture Concept as Ideology," *American Ethnologist* 1 (August 1974), 537-547; Richard A. Shweder and Robert A. LeVine, eds., *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion* (New York, 1984); Richard Sykes, "American Studies and the Concept of Culture: Theory and Method," *American Quarterly* 15 (Summer 1963), 2553-270; John Van Maanen, *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography* (Chicago, 1988); Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York, 1976), and *The Sociology of Culture* (New York, 1981).

15. For a model myth and symbol work, I usually assign Smith's *Virgin Land* (1950). Other works, such as Leo Marx's *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York, 1964), are shorter and easier to fault, but I still think *Virgin Land* deserves attention, precisely because it inspired such a following and defies dismissal. Among the other works worth considering are: John F. Kasson, *Civilizing the Machine: Technology and Republican Values in America, 1776-1900* (New York, 1976); R. W. B. Lewis, *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago, 1955); Glenna Matthews, "Just a Housewife," *The Rise and Fall of Domesticity in America* (New York, 1987); Matthiessen, *American Renaissance* (1941); Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought* (1927-1930); Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind*, rev. ed. (Baltimore, 1967); Constance Rourke, *American Humor: A Study of the National Character* (New York, 1931); Alan Trachtenberg, *Brooklyn Bridge: Fact and Symbol* (New York, 1965); John William Ward, *Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age* (New York, 1955). I also found it nearly essential to assign the two most often cited defenses of myth and symbol: Smith, "Can 'American Studies' Develop a Method?" (1957) and Marx, "American Studies—A Defense of an Unscientific Method" (1969).

16. The following critiques of myth and symbol are routinely required: Kuklick, "Myth and Symbol in American Studies," (1972); Tate, "The Search for a Method" (1973), 105-133; R. Gordon Kelly, "Literature and the Historian," *American Quarterly* 26 (May 1974), 141-159; and Nina Baym, "Melodramas of Beset Manhood: How Theories of American Fiction Exclude Women Authors," *American Quarterly* 33 (Spring 1981), 123-139. Other works worth considering include: Clinton Keeler, "A Method for American Studies," *Midcontinent American Studies Journal* 3 (1962), 50-52;

Fred Matthews, "The 'Myth' and 'Value' Approaches to American Studies," *The Canadian Journal of American Studies* 3 (Fall 1972), 112-121; Reising, *The Unusable Past* (1986); and David S. Reynolds, *Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville* (New York, 1988).

17. To help imagine some alternatives, I recommend beginning with: John Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago, 1976), 5-36; Dave Morley, *The Nationwide Audience* (London, 1980), 1-11; and Donald Dunlop, "Popular Culture and Methodology," *Journal of Popular Culture* 9 (Fall 1975), 375-383. Time permitting, I try to assign at least one work that maintains a literary focus but moves explicitly and powerfully away from the exegetic tradition. Janice A. Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill, 1984) may still be the best, especially if it is read along with "Identifying Ideological Seams" (1986). But students have found exciting, compact exemplars elsewhere, such as Rena Fraden, "The Cloudy History of Big White Fog: The Federal Theatre Project, 1938," *American Studies* 29 (Spring 1988), 5-27. Other works worth considering include: Robert C. Allen, *Speaking of Soap Operas* (Chapel Hill, 1988); Howard S. Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley, 1984); Tony Bennett, "Texts, Readers, Reading Formations," *MMLA Bulletin* 16 (Spring 1983), 3-17; Donald Carbaugh, *Talking American: Cultural Discourses on Donahue* (Norwood, New Jersey, 1988); Cathy N. Davidson, ed., "Reading America," *American Quarterly*, Special Issue, 40 (March 1988); John Fiske, *Television Culture* (London, 1987); Herbert J. Gans, *Popular Culture and High Culture* (New York, 1975); Todd Gitlin, *Inside Prime Time* (New York, 1983); Gerald Graff, "The Pseudo-Politics of Interpretation," and Daniel T. O'Hara, "Revisionary Madness: The Prospects of American Literary Theory at the Present Time," in *Against Theory: Literary Studies and the New Pragmatism*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago, 1985), 145-158 and 31-47; Richard A. Peterson, ed., *The Production of Culture* (Beverly Hills, 1976); Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860* (New York, 1985); Harold Veesser, ed., *New Historicism* (New York, 1989).

18. I often encounter students who begin with an interest in particular sources (e.g., "I love detective stories") and come to me for a theory to justify their taste. They ask, in effect, "What method can I use to explain how *The Maltese Falcon* is a key to American culture?" (In fact, one can read myth and symbol as a theory concocted to justify working with American literature.) Of course, there are many alternatives, and each of them might suggest a range of approaches to the book and other sources. While I do not mean to frustrate such students with insistent theory, often I must because I do not see how such questions can be answered without first deciding, for example, what I am to understand by "the key" and a desirable relationship to it. It is always possible that reasonable answers to such questions will not only diminish the importance of Hammett, but also the privileging of any particular source. To many students this is frustrating news, indeed, but necessary, I think, if methodology is to be useful rather than ornamental.

19. My list of exemplary texts changes from year to year and clearly reflects my own limitations and, at least indirectly, the expectations of the graduate students I have faced. Some of the readings are selected because I know they will be welcome; others because I suspect that they might be too easily ignored. In any case, there is not enough space here to suggest alternates or even to justify my choices or to explain how they might best be compared. Here, though, are the works which I have most recently assigned: 1) LAND, LANDSCAPE, AND ECOLOGY—William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of the Land* (New York, 1983); 2) DOCUMENTS—James W. Davidson and Mark H. Lytle, "The Visible and Invisible Worlds of Salem," in *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection* (New York, 1982), I, 28-55; John Demos, *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England* (New York, 1982), 153-210; Carol F. Karslen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (New York, 1987), 182-251; 3) FOLKLORE—Marlon Riggs, dir., "Ethnic Notions" (California Newsreel, 1987); Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana, 1984), xv-16, 127-195; Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York, 1977), ix-xiv, 81-135, 367-445; 4) ARTIFACTS AND MATERIAL CULTURE—Simon J. Bronner, *Grasping Things: Folk Material Culture and Mass Society in America* (Lexington, 1986); Susan Strasser, *Never Done: A History of American Housework* (New York, 1982), xi-xvi, 3-10, 85-103; Susan Porter Benson, "Palace of Consumption and Machine for Selling: The Department Store, 1880-1940," *Radical History Review* 21 (Fall 1979), 199-221; Gertrude Fraser and Reginald Butler, "Anatomy of a Disincent: The Unmaking of Afro-American History," and Michael Wallace, "Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States", in *Presenting the Past*, ed. Benson et al. (1986), 121-132 and 137-161; 5) PICTURES—John Berger and Jean Mohr, *Another Way of Telling* (New York, 1982), 11-129; David Jaffee, "One of the Primitive Sort: Portrait Makers of the Rural North, 1760-1860," in *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation: Essays in the Social History of Rural America*, ed. Steven Hahn and Jonathan Prude (Chapel Hill, 1985), 103-138; Davidson and Lytle, "The Mirror With a Memory," in *After the Fact* (1982), II, 205-231; Peter Seixas, "Lewis Hine: From 'Social' to 'Interpretive' Photographer," *American Quarterly* 39 (Fall 1987), 381-409; 6) MUSIC—George T. Nierenberg, Dir., "Say Amen, Somebody" (Pacific Arts Video, 1982); Carol Flake, *Redemptorama: Culture, Politics, and the New Evangelicalism* (New York,

1984), 1-23, 169-194; Greil Marcus, *Mystery Train: Images of America in Rock 'n' Roll Music* (New York, 1982), 112-209.

20. Through class discussion and handouts we work on a grid that includes the values of methodological variables for each reading. Key variables include: disciplinary home, genre, ingredients/sampling procedure, authorial distance, dramatic tension/narrative resolution, root metaphor (analogy for connecting culture, society, individual, source and meaning), logic/recipe for moving from one ingredient to the next, time frame, change/continuity of interest, and, most generally, the relative mix of verisimilitude and holism as opposed to precision and comparability that the work effects.

21. Most recently, for works with a national focus I gave students the choice of: Robert Bellah *et al.*, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (New York, 1985); Karen Haltunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-class Culture in America, 1830-1870* (New Haven, 1983); or Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York, 1982). For community or subculture: Sarah Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class, and Gender on an Anglo-Hispanic Frontier in the American Southwest, 1880-1940* (New York, 1987); Elizabeth Ewen, *Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars: Life and Culture on the Lower East Side, 1890-1925* (New York, 1985); John Mack Faragher, *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie* (New Haven, 1986); or Richard P. Horwitz, *The Strip: An American Place* (Lincoln, 1985).