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MODERATOR: Well good afternoon everybody and thank you for joining us on what we consider quite an historic occasion. We have, for the first time in everyone's reckoning, a gathering of the former editors of *Signs* -- 30 years of a brain trust for feminist scholars. [Applause] We also are celebrating lots of wonderful things happening at Rutgers in feminist scholarship -- in the world with women's accomplishments. And before we actually get into the panel proper, I wanted to note that the person whose idea it was to create an archival exhibit of *Signs*, Kayo Denda, received tenure at noon-time today. [Applause and exclams] I assume there was a cause and effect relationship. [Laughter]

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One other great accomplishment we've just heard about this very day is that Charlotte Bunch, who is on sabbatical and working in Africa right now, has just been awarded the Board of Trustees Prize for Research Contributing to Change in the World. [Applause and exclams] After all that good news I would like you now to welcome the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Holly Smith. [Applause] HOLLY SMITH: Thank you very much Mary. It's a pleasure to welcome you to a celebration of *Thirty Years of Feminist Scholarship*. A celebration that highlights the unique contributions that scholars working within academic institutions have made to the feminist project of remaking the known world. The archival exhibit: *Launching a Journal, Building an Interdisciplinary Field - The Legacies of Signs*, both marks and is itself an example of the fruitful intellectual collaborations that are possible within the unique environment of university life. The exhibit was the idea of Kayo Denda, Rutgers University's Library Specialist in Women's and Gender Studies and Fernanda Perrone, the Rutgers Special

Collections Librarian overseeing the *Signs* archives. Is Fernanda in the audience? Thank you Fernanda. [Applause] To mount the exhibit they drew on the support of the Rutgers University Libraries, the current and former editors of *Signs*, the assistance of Dr. Andrew Vollmann of the University of Chicago Press who searched the *Signs* archives at the University of Chicago for helpful artifacts, the insights of a remarkable Women and Gender Studies doctoral student, Kelley Coogan, who has read every article ever published by *Signs*. [Laughter and applause] Kelley want to stand up? The extraordinary graphic design talents of Professor Jackie Thaw of Rutgers Mason Gross School of [the] Arts -- is Jackie in the audience? Not so. Oh, she has a class, sorry.

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And the wonderful creativity of two Rutgers undergraduates, Karen Lamb (sp) and Danielle Schecker Kenosky (sp), who are working as art interns at *Signs*. Karen, Danielle are you in the audience? There are wonderful people working on this project. The results of this productive collaboration surround us. A multimedia visualization of the innovative theories and concepts developed by feminist scholars in the issues of *Signs* to enrich our understandings of the world. A graphic demonstration of a world in which women's lives, experiences and perspectives are placed at the center of analysis, thereby transforming received views in profound and systemic ways. That seven of the 10 scholars who have edited *Signs* since its creation by the University of Chicago Press are present at the exhibit today, makes this an historic occasion in its own right. An occasion that will be captured on film and preserved in the *Signs'* archive. I am delighted to welcome Cate Stimpson, Barbara Charlesworth Gelpi, Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres -- I'm not sure of the pronunciation Joeres -- Barbara Laslett, Karen Allen (sp), and Kate Norberg to Rutgers and look forward to hearing their thoughts about the complex interaction between the growth and development of the premiere academic journal of women's studies and the creation of an

interdisciplinary field of feminist scholarship. Rutgers is proud to be the current home of *Signs* and proud to continue to play a role in supporting transformative feminist scholarship. Our university and our world are much the better for this pathbreaking work.

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Thank you. [Applause] MODERATOR: I'm delighted to say that we also have with us today Dr. Andrew Baumann from the University of Chicago Press and he would like to send some greetings to the audience from the Press. Thank you.

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Speaker Name

[Applause] ANDREW BAUMANN: My name is Andrew Baumann. I'm the Publications Manager responsible for *Signs* at the University of Chicago Press. I'd like to thank Mary and her colleagues for organizing both this wonderful exhibit as well as what must be really a unique event as both Mary and Holly have noted. To have nearly all of the editors of a scholarly journal representing more than three decades of that journal's editorship together in one room to share their experiences as stewards of a publication that has contributed so much to the field of women's studies. The University Chicago Press is very proud of *Signs* which is demonstrably the premier feminist studies journal, publishing essays that bridge a wide range of disciplines. But as proud as the is of *Signs*, it goes without saying that we owe the journal's success to its editors. *Signs* was originally conceived by Jean Sachs (sp) who was an alumna of the University of Chicago and manager of the journal's division at the University of Chicago Press from 1966 until she retired in 1984. By 1973 Sachs had recognized a pressing need for a journal on women that was simultaneously academic, international and cross-disciplinary. The earliest document

in the Press's *Signs* file is a letter dated October 1973 -- a copy of which is actually on display in the exhibit -- in which Sachs wrote, "The journals and newsletters now being published on women are almost without exception not academic or devoted to only one or two aspects of the problem. There is no journal now published that brings together research and all of the various disciplines that are relevant to increasing our understanding of women and men. There is a crucial need for an outlet, for a cohesive body of literature that would be of a different order from that appearing in the pages of a popular journal such as *Ms.* or the publications by and for women." Sachs's concept began to take shape when she attended the very first *Scholar and the Feminist Conference* at Barnard College in May 1974. It was there that she met *Signs*' founding editor, Catherine Stimpson (sp), who defined the new journal's editorial direction. And the first issue of the journal appeared the following year. The editorial scope and vision of *Signs* may have evolved over the past 30 years in response to changing issues and particular challenges as we will surely learn from today's panel discussion. One thing that has not changed is the Press's mission in publishing *Signs* and our commitment to ensuring that it remains the leading journal in women's studies. And with that I'll give soapbox back to [sic] Maria. [Laughter and applause] MODERATOR: I should note that the three former *Signs* editors who are not with us today all deeply regret that they are not with us today. Geno Barr (sp) had surgery several weeks ago and had expected to be fully recovered and had very, very much wanted to be with us. And with great sadness let us know that she was still in a wheelchair and not able to travel through airports. But she did wish to send her best regards and she also sent us some wonderful artifacts for the exhibit including a tie dye of the original *Signs* logo that was done by her 11-year-old daughter [laughter] when Gene became the editor of *Signs* [laughter] and that's on the display case in the back. Sandra Harding (sp), one of the UCLA editors, is giving a talk on leadership

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at the Jefferson School of Leadership in Richmond, Virginia at this very hour and was very, very sorry that she couldn't be with us. And Judith Howard (sp), another editor from the University of Washington, was asked if she would spearhead a site visit from the Carnegie Foundation today. And it's also the day in which one of her Ph.D. students was winning a university award and she felt she would really like to be there for her student. So they wanted to come and they are sending all of their good intellectual energies our way. The wonderful archival exhibit created by Kayo Denda and Fernanda Perrone provides us an opportunity to reflect upon the nature of feminist scholarship, its relationship to particular academic institutions and conventions and its role in the feminist transformative project more generally. The exhibit makes visible the largely invisible labor of knowledge production. Illuminating the creativity and the organizational challenges involved in founding a journal and forging a new academic endeavor. It shows us the photographs, letters and memos of particular women --Jean Sachs, Catherine Stimpson, Joan Bernstein (sp), Donna Stenton (sp) who conceptualized and launched *Signs*. The exhibit also situates these founding documents in the context of the rich legacies they made possible. It frames the historic artifacts with the names of authors and the titles of articles subsequently published in the journal. Lurking in the shadows of these visual traces is the even less visible labor of thousands of scholars who have served as peer reviewers for all the submissions, not only those that succeeded in being published but the less fortunate ones which were not. And under deeper cover still are the dedicated journal staff in the editorial offices and at the University of Chicago Press who devoted untold hours to journal production, marketing and maintenance. The exhibit makes clear that in bringing together innovative ideas and creative intellects, the publication of *Signs* involved more than the production of a series of pathbreaking texts. From the outset *Signs* has been deeply involved in the formation of an interdisciplinary, feminist, epistemic community. Exploring the rich interconnections between feminist journal-making and the constitution of a new intellectual community is the focus of our

panel today. The exhibit and the panel focus our attention on those exhilarating and mysterious moments of mutual creation. Feminist literary critics have taught us that origin stories are often gendered whether the genre under investigation is epic, autobiographic or [unintelligible], narratives of birth, growth and development crafted by men are often focused on mythic self-making and heroic individuation. While women's life-writing often centers upon themes of sustaining relationships, interdependence and mutual endeavor. So we should not be surprised if the central themes that emerge in a discussion of the origin, growth and development of *Signs* in relation to the birthing of a feminist epistemic community differ in its important respects from discourses on field formation in traditional disciplines. Consider for example how dismemberment (sp), which Hagel conceived as the fundamental technique in Reason's Analytical Arsenal, figures in the stock narrative of disciplined formation in the 19th century; where Bacon had defined philosophy as the domain of realistic possibility encompassing everything that can be theoretically or actually occurring. Under the influence of August Comte (sp), the sciences -- both natural and social -- broke away from philosophy, denouncing metaphysical speculation and staking their ground on the sturdy foundation of positivism. In quick succession, political science and sociology tore themselves away from the arts of history and diplomacy and carved out new territories whose borders they carefully policed. The creation of scholarly journals played a crucial role in establishing and patrolling the methodological boundaries of these new intellectual terrains.

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By contrast, the founding documents that Kayo Denda, Fernanda Perrone and Drew Baumann have unearthed for us from the *Signs* archives at Rutgers and at the University of Chicago speak not of tearing apart or breaking away, but of fortune ties across disciplines, constructing bridges which can afford new routes and vistas for those intrepid travelers willing to set out on an intellectual adventure. The founding artifacts envision an encompassing and inclusive community with ample space for adventurous women and for qualified men -- to quote the founding proposal that Catherine Stimpson sent to the board of Chicago Press. [Laughter]

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Archival documents

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also make it clear that the scholars who founded and shaped *Signs* were keenly aware of the politics of knowledge production. They recognized the critical importance for feminist scholarship of gaining the imprimatur of the prestigious University of Chicago Press. They understood that an academic journal is itself a mechanism for the legitimation of an intellectual field. They were keenly aware that placing editorial control of a journal in the hands of feminist scholars would accredit new and different forms of knowledge and they also believed that feminist political convictions could heighten the objectivity of scholarly investigations.

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Unlike methodologies developed in accordance with positive presuppositions -- which explicitly deny any political dimension to scientific or philosophic inquiry -- the feminist scholars who shaped *Signs* acknowledged that particular political convictions inspired their work. As a political movement, feminism exists to eliminate racial and gender-based domination in all its manifestations. But how does feminism contribute to heightened objectivity or indeed to the production of truth? It's possible to read *Signs* as providing 30 years of contestation over and insights into this question. In an effort to explicate how feminist principles could contribute to academic research, Adrienne Rich noted suggestively that quote, "A politicized life ought to sharpen both the senses and the memory." Close quote. The sharpening that Rich alludes to involves a way of attending to dimensions of existence often overlooked in traditional academic accounts. Feminist convictions attune scholars to power dynamics that structure women's and men's lives. By making power dynamics visible and probing silences, absences and distortions in dominant paradigms feminist inquiry challenges established explanatory accounts and identifies new questions for research. As philosopher of science Allison Wiley has pointed out, quote "It is the political commitment that feminists bring to diverse fields that motivates them to focus attention on lines of evidence that others have not sought out or have thought unimportant. To discern patterns that others have ignored. To question androcentric or sexist framework assumptions that have gone unnoticed or unchallenged and sometimes to significantly reframe the research agenda of their discipline in light of different questions or expanded repertoires of explanatory hypotheses." Jackie Thaw's graphic displays of selected content from *Signs* provide glimpses of articles that advance systematic critiques of androcentric bias in theoretical assumptions, interpretive strategies, genre, styles of representation, rhetoric of inquiry, problem selection, standards of evidence, models of explanation, research design, data collection, analysis of results, narrative strategies, and discursive formations. This is just the beginning. [Laughter] The titles allude to damage done by

false universals, biological determinism, essentialism, a colonizing gaze, heteronormativity, insensitivity to race, class, ethnicity, disability, nationality and other markers of difference. Through articles such as these and through special issues, critical debates, interdisciplinary forums, and provocative viewpoint editors,

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the editors of *Signs* have facilitated the emergence of this feminist epistemic community that interrogates both disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge. Again as Jackie Thaw's graphic designs demonstrate and

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the notions are being projected on the wall behind your back. So I guess you need eyes in your back of the head to trace all this. But as Jackie's designs demonstrate, *Signs* has provided a venue for feminist scholars to struggle over analytic categories and approaches and to learn lessons from our own mistakes, from our own omissions, distortions and myopias. Through original insights, trenchant critiques and continuing exchanges, feminist scholars have used the pages of *Signs* to create and to call into question the most basic categories of feminist analysis including women, gender, sexuality, class, race, nation, and indeed feminism itself. With each successive year *Signs* authors have developed innovative analytical tools to help frame new research questions by problematizing the given and denaturalizing the taken-for-granted intellectual vistas have expanded with intense debates over a host of innovative concepts. Consider for example how our understanding of the world has changed over the past 30 years with the introduction of conceptual tools such as intersectionality, gender as an analytical category, technologies of gender, gender regimes, gyno-centrism, feminist epistemology,

standpoint theory, situated knowledges, gyno-criticism, life-writing, sister outsider, lesbian continuum, mestiza consciousness, triangulated consciousness, sub-alternity, hybridity, world traveling theories, reproduction of mothering, domestic labor debates, technologies of gender, feminization of poverty, the boundaries of public and private shifting - elusive and permeable, the international division of labor, the gender dimensions of globalization, domestic violence, heterosexism, heteronormativity, women's double-duty and triple-shift, the glass ceiling and the sticky floor [laughter], the ethics and politics of care, relational accounts of the self, reproductive freedom, sexual harassment, gendered institutions, negotiated identities, resisting subjects, homo-social environments, scopophilia -- an all-time favorite, sexual objectification, phallogocentrism, the logic of identity, the faces of oppression, feminist imaginaries, queer communities, gender mainstreaming, the politics of parity, and the politics of parody [laughter], and the dream of a common language as well as its continual dissolution [laughter]. *Signs* first 30 volumes constitute a rich archive documenting how feminist scholars have deployed both gender and intersectionality analytically to raise new questions about the social constitution of subjectivity, the materialization and stylization of bodies, the identities of desiring subjects, the designation of objects as desirable,

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patterns of desire, sexual practices, gendered performances, the terms and conditions of sexual exchange, the asymmetries of power in public and private spheres, the politics of reproduction, the distributions of types of work by race and ethnicity, the organization of domestic activity, the divisions of paid and unpaid labor, the structures of formal, informal and subsistence economies, the segregation of labor markets, patterns of production and consumption, terms and conditions of labor exchange, opportunities for education, employment and promotion, the politics of representation, the structures and outcomes of public decision-making, the

operating procedures of regulatory and redistributive agencies, the dynamics of diasporas and decolonization, and the potent contradictions of globalization, war-making and militarization. They have also focused on women's manifold resistances against the oppressive forces that structure and constrain our lives. Feminist knowledge production in all these spheres has transformed our understanding of the past and of present worlds and raised powerful challenges to establish disciplines. This archival exhibit and the panel today documents that transformative work. Joining me on the panel today are the scholars who performed the arduous intellectual labor required to envision these intellectual innovations and bring them to the public domain. The exhibit illuminates the wonderful fruits of their labor. Our panelists are here to share with us the back story. To provide glimpses into the processes through which an interdisciplinary community of scholars has been constituted in and around the premiere journal of feminist scholarship. It is a great honor for me to share the podium with this extraordinary group of scholars. To enumerate their many accomplishments would take far longer than the panel itself today. You will find exceedingly brief biographical sketches of each of our panelists in the program, but I'd like to highlight just a few things that these pioneering feminist scholars have in common. Catherine Stimpson, Barbara Gelpi, Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres, Barbara Laslett, Karen Allen and Kate Norberg (sp) are award winning scholars and award-winning teachers. They are also members of that rare intellectual cohort of distinguished academic administrators. They have created and directed centers and institutes for research on women, women's studies programs, and women's studies departments. They have been Deans of graduate schools and Presidents of professional organizations. Each has authored pathbreaking works of scholarship in their disciplines and in the interdisciplinary field of feminist scholarship. Each has helped to build women's and gender studies on her home campus and across the United States. Each has won national and international recognition for her distinguished contributions to intellectual life. And most importantly, for our purposes today, each has devoted at least five years to editing *Signs*. [Laughter] In talking with our panelists about how best to proceed today, we thought that it would make sense to move

across both time and space from 1975 to 2005 -- from New York to Stanford, Stanford to Duke, Duke to Minnesota, Minnesota to Washington, Washington to Los Angeles, and then back again to New Jersey -- through a series of questions. So taking our timeline as a cue, the first question for my distinguished colleagues is to take us back in time to the founding moments of each of their editorships and to share with us their original visions for the journal and the temporal context in which they undertook their work, the strategies they devised to realize that vision and the challenges they confronted. Our first speaker will be the founding editor of *Signs*, Catharine Stimpson. [Applause] CATHARINE STIMPSON: Mary thank you so much. These are five marvelous colleagues that Mary of course wishes to speak. So I'm going to race through the material. MODERATOR: I'm not going to talk anymore so you are fine. CATHARINE STIMPSON: Well, that's a mistake [laughter]. Well. So, if I stumble over my words, correct me. But here we go and I'm going to try to limit this to three minutes so we all have plenty of time. Let me first begin with thanks. Mary, thank you so much for bringing this together and Holly for being here.

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You have here six very happy women. We're so happy with your recognition. We're so happy to be together. We're so happy to have the chance to look back -- sometimes in wonder, sometimes in anguish -- but we are, isn't it fair to say, very, very happy and grateful. I also want to thank you for mentioning Jean Sachs. She was a toughie. She was smart. She was wonderful. We are here because of her. And in your list of origin you left out two other factors, which is accident and "fems". [Laughter]

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Some of you know the story of how Jean Sachs discovered me. It was indeed 1974. I was barely tenured after what we can only call one of those tenure scraps. And I had sort of thought of this thing called *The Scholar and the Feminist* and we were all meeting at Barnard College and

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Speaker Name

many of you in this room were there. And Jean came in. She smoked heavily at the time and so she had a smoker's voice. And it turned out, she had already offered the editorship to Carolyn Heilbrun who said no. So she sat down beside me and we were having one of those institutional salads that so characterize women's studies lunches at the time. [Laughter] And at the end of our conversation she thought to herself -- as so she later said -- she thought to herself,

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Speaker Name

maybe this is the one. [Laughter] Maybe this is the one. But she had to check me out. Now there was a little group of us that had barely gotten tenure. One of them was Pat Graham who went on to be Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, the President of the Spencer Foundation and one of America's most distinguished historians of education. Another was a little tennis player named Donna Shalala. [Laughter] Donna was then a young faculty member at Teacher's College and she was to go on, as you know, to work at HED to be secretary of Health and Human Services. She is now the President of 14 and she's at her fifth college presidency and a remarkable character. So Jean somehow found them

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Speaker Name

and went up to them and said, "I've got an interest in this Catharine Stimpson. She's in the humanities. Does she know anything about the social sciences?"

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Speaker Name

[Laughter] They lied. They lied. They put their hands in the fire and they said, "Oh you should see that woman read a chart." [Laughter]

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Speaker Name

Jean happened to believe them. So there I was with my skill in charts and graphs and invited to become the editor of *Signs* and then you know we moved into one room. One room

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Speaker Name

in the third floor of Barnard Hall at Barnard College, working with typewriters and one telephone. And didn't we have the most marvelous time? I would note though before I answer your question more directly, the strong connections between *Signs* and Rutgers. Because Joan Bersting (sp) a founding Associate Editor was at Rutgers. Two founding Editorial Board members were then at Rutgers -- Elaine Showalter and From a Zeitlin (sp), the great classicist.

Another founding Associate Editor, Donda Stenton (sp), came from Barnard to Rutgers. And I of course put in many, many happy years here at Rutgers from 1980 to 1998 with time out at the MacArthur Foundation. But I look at this room and the brain trust sitting in these red covered chairs -- because I look at how many of you contributed to those early days -- so the brain trust is in this whole room. And I think we all want to acknowledge everyone in this room who gave so much and did so much. Women in politics, Ruth, Sue? We were in this together.

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What was our vision, you asked. What was our vision? We knew we were part of a growing intellectual movement that not everybody loved. [Laughter]

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We knew we felt passionately about it. We also knew that we cared about the highest ideals of the academy and what we wanted to do was to make it visible, make it grow

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and make it permanent. And again and again we asked ourselves, how can we make it permanent? Not that it wouldn't change, but how could we make it permanent? How could we make it irrefutable? How could we make it unstoppable? What could we do together to so act that we could not be forgotten. And the work of all of us

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could not be forgotten. That was the concept. And then the rest of you were stuck with some of our decisions. And not in any particular order, but, of course a journal, as you know so well,

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is a financial enterprise. You know the pages

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do not drop on you like manna from heaven.

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So we worried about our subscriber base. We worried about our finances. And I'll never forget when Jean Sachs told me we'd moved into the black. In the fourth year we moved into the black and I literally screamed, "We're in the black! We're in the black!" [Laughter]

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And you have to recognize the help of certain foundations. Marian Chamberlain at the Ford Foundation

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who gave me the magnificent grant \$5,000.00 to take some time off from Barnard. Eleanor Barber, now deceased, at the Ford Foundation.

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The Lily Foundation. And then that little tennis player. That little fibbing tennis player. A little fibbing tennis player who was then at the Department of Housing and Urban Development who somehow managed to find some money in some budget

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to finance the issue of women in the American city.

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The format. I am not lying when I tell you I woke up one morning in a shack on Long Island.

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And it was one of those semi-miraculous moments where the format was simply there. It appeared like a vision of the format, archives, reports, revisions. And

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I sat down with my typewriter and typed it out. We made two basic decisions; one was no poetry. Now this sounds silly and Tama (sp) is making a terrible [inaudible], but

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we didn't want to be --I'm sure there are historical residents here --we didn't want to be accused of sentimentality. We were going to go where the toughest play and beat them at their own game. We did decide on footnotes.

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I beg those of you in the front row of the audience, Oh graduate students, Oh graduate students, you will not believe what I am about to say. The huge fight. A huge fight in feminist theory and women's studies in the early 1970s was whether or not you should have footnotes. Because they were seen as a sign of masculinist hegemony. [Laughter] Did we ever have footnotes. [Laughter] The name. Those pages over there will record one of the greatest comedies in the annals of feminist scholarship -- our search for a name. *Signs* came up at the very last moment always to be fused with *Science* with its 400,000 subscribers and a linguistic journal

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and many a Hungarian. Did I disappoint by saying we were not a linguistics journal? Then, who would work on it?

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We made certain crucial decisions. One I think was central to have an international Board. And one of the letters over there says we are still looking for international correspondents from a list of countries. We knew we had to be international. We knew we wanted some people outside as well as inside academe, so on our first Advisory Board we were privileged to have the help of Elizabeth Hardwick. Elizabeth Janewig (sp). Susan Sontag. Yes, Susan was on our early Advisory Board. We knew of course we had to be interdisciplinary. And one of the answers to your questions Mary is of course the clash of voices creates truth. Truth does not arise on monologues. Though I am trying to disprove that theory right now. [Laughter] Truth arises out of the clash of perspectives -- hopefully as civil as possible. And we knew we wanted to be diverse along a number of axes. Our successors did far better on race, but as I looked over those early issues, I think we did better than we were sometimes accused of being. When I look at our Editors and the articles we published, we knew we wanted a variety of institutions. On our first Editorial Board was a scholar from Jackson State University. They were public and private. And yes, men. I cannot tell you the flak we took about men.

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Selling out --like footnotes -- selling out to the masculine hegemony. [Laughter] So John Money (sp) agreed to be on the Editorial Board. Paul Lauder (sp) and Marty Duberman (sp).

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And we had an article by a man on male contraceptive. I can't tell you the flak we took for publishing an article on male contraception. But we were doing gender as well as women. And certainly the issue of male contraceptives has something to do

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with the study of gender.

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One of the authors was my brother-in-law. That's how we got that one, one of the authors was my brother-in-law, but he had to go through the reading process. And then of course --and now I turn the microphone over -- we sat around in Barnard College and from the beginning thought about

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succession. We had seen too many institutions wither through sclerosis. So it was very early on when we said, with the concurrence of Jean Sachs -- that we would serve five to six years and then it would move. That we would stay fresh by making sure there were always fresh voices and fresh editors. And I remember Barbara. I remember Barbara was having dinner with Jean Sachs. It was at an MLA and I said, "Jean there's someone here name Barbara Charlesworth Gelpi you want to check out. But I didn't vote for your charts and graphs. [Laughter and applause] BARBARA GELPI: I felt a little conscience-stricken. It seemed to me, in talking to Jean Sachs -- and it wasn't that I had lies, fibs told for me -- I think I told them myself. [Laughter] But, you know

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the whole question of was I an interdisciplinary scholar? Well, yes. I knew a little bit about history as well as about English literature and that was it. I didn't know. I didn't even know enough to say I knew about charts and graphs. [Laughter] But, at the same time, when, when *Signs* came to Stanford we had given to us and it was an enormous gift.

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And we knew it. Yeah we did know it and appreciated it. The gift of this journal with its, with its different sections, its essays, reports, archives and so on. And so we didn't have that, we didn't have to do that kind of thinking through how it would be. And we also had [been] given these incredible Boards that Catharine and Donda and Joan had created. So we had all that given. This came to us in 70, in 19...well we really sort of knew it was going to come as about 1979. And this occasion made me think back to that time.

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It still was, as I remember it. As I remember it, it was still heady days of the second wave of feminism. It was all so new, so exciting. We were so delighted to be there telling the men that they hadn't thought about it all. And that we could think of it as well as they could. That we could think of our own things. But it was also, as those of you who were there may remember, it was the days of sisterhood. "Sisterhood is Powerful" was the... So that we did, and we did see ourselves as an intellectual sisterhood and as, in a way, the second group of editors really worked as a community. Though I was the editor and I was chosen by Jean Sachs. But still all of us went to impress Jean. There were six of us: Estelle Friedman in history, Nan Cohein (sp) in political science, Carol Jackelin (sp) in psychology, Marjorie Wolfe in ethnography and anthropology, Myra Strober (sp) in economics and Shelley Rozaldo (sp) in anthropology. And I have -- I was looking through the Stanford archives. I came on this so late

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that I didn't think it would be in time to get to these, so I just brought it. And I'll pass it around here. These are Xeroxes. I'll pass around this image of one of our brainstorming meetings. I think it's in Shelley's backyard and I have the names under, underneath them. So maybe I'll just bring those around. If you could, you know, just pass them through. But when you, when I looked at that -- because I am still an English professor, retired -- what came to my mind as I read it, was from a male poet. Well and I don't know any qualified [male poets]. CATHARINE STIMPSON: Wordsworth. BARBARA GELPI: Wordsworth on the French Revolution wrote, "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive but to be young was very heaven." Now actually I wasn't all that young,

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[Laughter] So, we did feel this extraordinary sense of community, of being part of an ongoing process that we owed to

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Catharine and to Jean Sachs. We were very aware of that. And I think that the way I can best tell what we, what we had as our vision is a quote that's from the first editorial. And I'll highlight the words there

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that stressed community. "There is no single feminism among us." And that's where it begins this. "There is no single feminism among us. Among us, the group of Editors or in the wider community of feminist scholars and interested readers. We see our responsibility to the feminist community as one which involves the most, which involves intellectual commitment to the best and most interesting ideas in all academic fields as well as participatory commitment in the process whereby ideas become action." So, now those words like group and community and you notice that I just used community as a singular nod, presupposes that there is "a" single, coherent feminist community. And that the forum for such a community was *Signs*. And we did, but I think you have to say that we did learn very quickly and I noticed it was even by the second editorial that

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it's not that simple [laughter].

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Now Catharine I know, as I say, we took this and we found many things which are, many things in the logistics --because another thing we lied about was how much we knew about editing.

[Laughter] We knew nothing about editing. [Inaudible]

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And that is to say I had edited literary works and I knew about the pencil on the page. I was very good at that, but the process

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and timelines and all that. Now we're very fortunate, very. *Signs* is very fortunate in the person who early became our Managing Editor and remained as Managing Editor

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from the rest of the time at Stanford, Claire Novak. And I was so pleased to see that her picture is there, and her image and with her, Susan Johnson -- who went on to become a feminist historian -- who was the just out of college, but was an absolute, absolute whiz at footnotes.

[Laughter]

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So we, we. And Claire had had training and did get us on track

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with that. So that was all right. But what we began to discover very early was that there isn't a single voice. There's no community. There's not a single community. And. So I don't know. I think maybe I'll save that part because what that all involved may come to the next question. So, you'll see us at our raw, clean start [laughter]. And Catharine and I were just saying to each other the whole process thought was one of which we had many, many extraordinary times of

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difficulties. But at the same time, that community of scholars remained that for those five years and as I was saying that actually those five years are still the intellectual capital that I am working on 25 years later. [Applause]

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RUTH-ELLEN BOETCHER JOERES: Unfortunately, but now we've left and there's Minnesota. There are two of us here and we're not going to speak in unison. BARBARA LASLETT: We were the first dual editorship of *Signs*. And we were joined by Mary Jo Maines (sp), an historian at Minnesota because, from personal contact she knew we were both quite unhappy in our departments. And she thought this would be a way of getting us out of our departments, which came about.

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From the very beginning we saw what we were doing as having a feminist vision of collaboration. Collaboration not so much in the spying sense of the term, but rather collaboration in the sense of cooperative activity. And we began that even before we wrote the proposal to the University of Chicago Press recommending us and Minnesota which I think was going to be the first public institution to have *Signs* come to it. Because we had a series of luncheons. We did not...

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We sent out a general and open call primarily, but not exclusively I think, to women throughout the campus saying that we wanted to have a conversation with them about what they thought were the important things that we should write about in our proposal. And the luncheons went over quite a period of time, but we did come back with some ideas. And what was important to us was the inclusiveness of the entire proposal. The entire process of bringing *Signs* to Minnesota. This

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is the first time I've ever made a public presentation without a written text, so you'll have to excuse a few gaps in my

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presentation. What was our vision? Well, we had four parts of the vision and we're each going to talk about two of them. The first was a vision to try and reconnect or to connect

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to things that were happening in the real world. Particularly to connect with political and social issues. Now this is in fact Mary's second question that she posed to us, so we're not going to talk too much about our answers to that question here because we'll have another

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opportunity to do so. But we did establish a new section in the journal. A section called Forum. Which was meant to, or at least part of it too developed over time, but it was to look at points of contestation around the world that involve women's issues. So that our first Forum was on women in countries in Eastern Europe -- in Poland and

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In Hungary.

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And we had one essay on abortion in Poland and a second essay on social policy in Hungary. The second area that we considered most important was internationalism. And with connecting with what Cate spoke about,

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to be open to, to be open to what was going on in "elsewhere" in the world. I mean I must say I am humbled

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by what editors and scholars have done after our editorship. I think it's just

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fabulous. And today we heard about a project that Mary is engaged in for *Signs* which throws the door open to international issues in ways that we couldn't even conceive of in 1990. The third issue had to do with. Interdisciplinarity. I began as an interdisciplinary scholar. My masters was a master's in social science although my doctorate was in sociology. And most of my academic work has been in fact at the intersection of history and sociology. But Ruth-Ellen and I developed with our organizational sense about how we had to structure interdisciplinarity and not leave it up to whim or chance or even individual choice. So we decided we were going to have our internal review process among the Board of Editors, of Associate Editors and perhaps I should just add that in these luncheons that we had we found that they were a very large

number of feminist scholars on campus who wanted to participate in *Signs*. And there was no way they could be on the Board for the whole five years. In fact, we only had one scholar, a Chinese historian named Ann Walther (sp) who was on the Board for the full five years. So we had a schedule. We had a rotating Board where people would be on it for one, two, or at most three years. Again it depended on what their schedule and commitments were. Well, for each manuscript -- we went through every manuscript when it first came in -- and sort of just excluded those which were completely inappropriate for some reason. We also, I mean this was also true in the book review process because we kept getting books on dentistry I remember. I don't know maybe it had to do with *Signs*. Teeth and signs or something. [Laughter]

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In any case, it was a tiny percentage of the materials that we received that were not reviewed at all. We would send the manuscript to two internal editors -- one in the social sciences, one in the humanities -- then it would come back. And we would send out to external reviewers if it was approved for going out to external reviewers

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in the social sciences, in the humanities. We even tried to run the book review section in that way. We would get people outside a field to review a work and I would say all of those ideas were a disaster. [Laughter]

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Totally unworkable. They were very heartfelt and they were very well meant, but it was a disaster. One time we assigned to do a book review of a work on French history and now we had already given up the idea of the humanities, social science --besides history is

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in the middle. We set to work on French history to a Russian historian who panned the book. But it was by a very prominent historian who wrote us. We made sure that panning was lightened by the editorial pen since we would not publish scathing, nasty reviews. But we had a letter from the French historian

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when the review finally came out that she said, "Why in the world did you ask a Russian historian to review my book? And we felt terrible. [Laughter] And I wrote her full of apologies and just feeling like we've done a terrible thing because she said, "Well it's no good apologizing now, it's already out there in the public domain. And you know a lot of

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my peer group reads Signs." So, here she was and we just felt terrible. I will say I did not know this historian although I knew that she was a very prominent French historian, but I did meet her some years later and even feminists mature. [Laughter] And I went up to her at a party and introduced myself and again articulated this "mea culpa" and so on. And she said, "It's all right. It was a whole bunch of years ago." So even feminists

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do mature. It was a very complicated process we instituted. It didn't work because it was so complicated.

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We had this review time that was gargantuan before we could get back to authors with a go. With a decision. And we tried to change it and did change it as we went along. And then the fourth vision we had -- and Ruth-Ellen will be speaking about this -- had to do with language. And I will now turn the mic over to Ruth-Ellen. [Applause] RUTH-ELLEN BOETCHER JOERES: [Inaudible]...at the time. But another reason would be, Barbara mentioned this first Forum, the Poland piece and the Hungarian piece.

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We were faced with something or at least I was -- I should just speak for me -- where I just simply hadn't thought about it. This was a whole new thing that opened up to me with that one, but also with later things -- either in the Forum or elsewhere -- which was that we would get back manuscripts, either just submitted or commissioned pieces such as these, that seem to be talking about a feminism that was not my idea of feminism. And in the years since I have learned much more about this and have learned how to read manuscripts. At the very beginning I didn't even know how to read these manuscripts. I had the instinct that I would need to make them like my kind of feminism which is... But I say my American kind of feminism. And that was a problem that was an interesting problem. I don't think that we, we, it was actually because we would have to be dealing and tossing around thoughts that either maybe we once upon a time had, but we're far too sophisticated to have those thoughts now or whatever. But it was marvelous but difficult. And that brought another. So there was both the practical stuff of getting stuff back and forth, finding people,

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and then this more interesting thing about feminism itself and how we were defining it or how we wanted it defined in the journal. Because after all it was our journal, but it wasn't really, so you know that made it interesting. The thing about language -- I mean the only thing that I want to say which is probably --

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I just gave a lecture at the University of Minnesota a couple of weeks ago and ended up quoting from my one *Signs* editorial. I wrote one editorial by myself.

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Barbara read it over and commented on it that helped and various other people looked at it. But it was something that really was part of the visionary thing at the beginning, because I think if I had any clear idea when we took *Signs* on, it had something to do with the language in which *Signs* presents itself. And I was coming from literature, coming from a very strong sensitivity to language. I've always been like this and I don't apologize for it. And I don't consider it conservative, you know, I've been accused of things and that's most awful if I get accused of conservatism. But it certainly had absolutely nothing to do with that. What it had to do with was my feminist vision was communication. Not just collaboration, but also communication. I wanted. I knew this -- I knew this from when I became a feminist -- that it was terribly important to me to be able to talk to everybody and to hear from everybody and to understand everybody. And that's about the simplest level to say that. But what it amounted to in terms of *Signs* was that we had a wonderful Managing Editor for most of those five years, Jean Barker Nunn, and at a particular instance we were having a really hard time. Our Board actually got together -- the Board of Associate Editors -- once a month and we reviewed the manuscripts that were, had passed through all the stages and did sort of the final discussion before Barbara and I would make the final decision. And we were working at that point on a manuscript that had come in that was immediately sent on by the Associate Editor who read it. And also accepted pretty much by the people outside or one person accepted, one didn't. Anyway, there was some confusion and by the time that poor manuscript eventually was accepted and published, Jean Barker Nunn used the term "heavy editing" and what she had had

to do was, essentially in this room full of Associate Editors, everyone with an opinion on this particular piece -- the piece was a piece about, it sort of starts in the L.A. riots and its title partly is *Beyond White and Other* and it was trying --it was written by an English

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professor -- but it was trying to work with various things that were not simple. They were out of dichotomies and by the time this finally got done, every single person in that room had an opinion -- had more than an opinion. I mean it was a very intense discussion and the article was weighed down by that heaviness. And it was published and it is a smart piece still, but I just recently discovered it in, not reprint, but in a book by this same person. And it has a different title which is interesting right away, but it also has been -- I think a lot of that got delicately taken out again.

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But the debate...What I'm trying to say is that this effort to accommodate, widely, opinions can lead to some pathetically pretty awful products. And so anyway, but I got into the editorial idea and did write this editorial on writing feminist prose and it had many unforeseen ramifications, one of which was that I had a call from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and the woman asked if she could come out to Minnesota to talk about this.

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And she did and stayed several days and she didn't talk about only that, she talked about *Signs* and talked with us about *Signs*. And took our picture --or somebody took our picture. At any rate, eventually an article appeared and it was

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she had concluded on the basis of this piece -- which was really about language and the language in which we communicate and my need to have that language clear -- she concluded that we weren't doing theory anymore. And I do not see the connection between those two things and I don't to this day. But I still think, I still have this old feminist need for community and for

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broad community and for a way in which we do not turn each other off by the language we use. And this is part of the interdisciplinary problem. It's not, you know, it's also among academics, it's not just academics and the rest of the world. But I think, you know,

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there were things. We made efforts. I think Barbara learned as I learned from Barbara, we learned to think more together about language and that was a good thing. But I'm going to stop there and move on to. Let's see, Karen Allen. [Applause] KAREN ALLEN: We were very lucky at Washington. I was

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particularly lucky in that my friend and sometimes co-author, Judy Howard, agreed to be my Associate Editor. And it is so ironic that you used the term Cate, C&G because Judy, as a sociologist, is fabulous at charts and graphs [laughter] and it was even a term in our office. We'd get an essay and I'd look at it and I go, "Oh, it's a C&G essay!" Judy should be the first one [inaudible]. [Laughter] So that was great. And the other way in which we were lucky is that we inherited a journal, which by the time that we got it in 1995, was extremely prestigious,

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very rigorous in its scholarship, a highly desirable place to publish and had made its scholarly reputation, not I think due in small part to that insistence early on footnotes. I mean seriously, those of you who are younger scholars I think don't have

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probably quite the sense that some of us have of how difficult it was to establish work on women and gender as a serious project in the universities and colleges in which we lived in the 70s. So the fact that the early editors insisted that the journal be rigorous and have footnotes and look,

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you know, recognizable to those people who are not so interested in our topics was very important and I felt very lucky about that.

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I just want to then say that what we wanted to go on to do then was to focus on two things that sort of became touchstones for us.

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We wanted to be provocative and we wanted to take more risks because we felt that we could do that having inherited the journal that we inherited.

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This is what I wrote just very briefly in my beginning editorial. "Twenty years after its founding, *Signs* has established its academic credentials. Its peer review process is rigorous. Its essays often groundbreaking. Its reputation prestigious. We think it is time now to take more risks, to provoke more debate, to prize the lively, to experiment occasionally with innovative forms, to sharpen the scholarly edges of discussion. We look forward to publishing articles in various voices, articles engaging gender, race, culture, class, nation, and/or sexuality" -- a mantra with which we are all familiar and which is now become.

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longer, I guess if you're talking about that list. It's always, always awkward and we acknowledged this awkwardness even as we were talking about it. And we wanted those things to be either as central focuses or as constitutive analytics. "We are looking for exciting essays that will launch new inquiries or prompt intense debate." So that's what we were trying to do and the way that, some of the ways that we came, went about doing it, one was we added more people to our international board to make it increasingly international. To add younger scholars and to make it increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. Those were the first things that we did was to try and signal some of the directions that we wanted to move by that. Another thing that we tried to do with regard to that mantra was to think about intersectionality -- a word that Mary has pointed us to -- which meant trying to think, coming off as we were of a kind of era of identity politics, how might we think about intersections among those that mantra. That is, what does, how do nation and issues of gender and sexuality and/or class and/or race -- how can we theorize and think about and have sites around that kind of notion of intersexuality. [Laughter] Intersexuality actually was something that came up in our topic [inaudible]. All kinds of intersections. So that was a particular focus that we had.

But our real push was trying to be more risk-taking. The way that we signaled this most obviously was to change the cover of the journal.

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The cover did what it needed to do to establish the journal that we inherited. So we asked the press -- I'd like to say we insisted, but actually it was I think a good joint process -- about changing the cover in order to signal to our scholarly readers that we wanted to do something different. And I'm sure you know what the cover of *Signs* looks like now, it still looks like that. I just want to point out one thing to you and I borrowed a library copy from

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Rutgers to do that. There was a huge controversy about the top of the "S" running off the page. It was like, "Oh my God, you can't do that!" It's like too weird graphically. But we wanted to, we wanted to make a point that we were going to shift some directions.

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We went to being able to publish a four-color cover once a year. That again was something that the Press had not been able to do before. And I, as a humanities person, said yes but Critical Inquiry has four-color cover and we have a larger subscription base. So, we were able to do that and then go to art on the front of the cover and we had a great time in the office and being able to be in better contact -- really probably contact of a different sort -- with visual artists, feminist visual artists around the country. We had an open call. Sometimes we solicited material. We had, as you remember, we had both photographs and original art and illustrations of various

kinds --sometimes in color, sometimes in three color and sometimes in black and white. So that was one of the things that we did to signal the directions we wanted to go. The last thing I might mention in this part of our discussion was our very first special issue was on youth culture. We thought it was important. We were getting nervous you know -- feminism -- we wanted it to like not die with our generation and so we were really pushing to interest younger scholars and we did that first by having a youth culture special issue. [Applause] CATE

STIMPSON: Thank you for changing the cover.

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RUTH-ELLEN BOETCHER JOERES: We were not permitted to. We wanted to but we were not permitted to. KATHRYN NORBERG: Well, I'll be brief because I'm last, but also because I've changed my remarks after having heard everything that was said here today. I think it's not just because I'm a historian that I notice now how much things change, but how much they also say the same. I'd like to point out that after what Cate Stimpson said that, "...at UCLA not a week went by that we did not receive poetry and fiction for the journal and then angry calls thereafter asking how dare we exclude poetry and fiction from the journal." For this event I read over what Sandra Harding, my co-editor and I wrote, when we actually applied to the journal to be editors. And I got about halfway through and was increasingly embarrassed because I realized that much of what we said never either had already come to be or in fact we went off in other directions.

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One of our goals was to be global. That's

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basically whatever we want to set with a different word. And we wrote a great deal about it and that turned out to be one of the easiest things that we did because no sooner did the office open than we received a fabulous issue, special issue, on global feminisms that had originated in Seattle. So that happened for us immediately but we continued to pursue that.

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I think the roots that -- because this was a theme that has gone through what everyone has talked about -- the roots of the journal was such that we couldn't help but succeed in making the journal more global. We did pursue all sort of angles. We also published two years ago an article on abortion in Poland.

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It's a different Poland today, but remarkably similar.

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We found right away because of the good foundations that had been laid in the past that we didn't have to work hard to receive articles from women around the world. *Signs* has a very strong international subscription list. Now

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I point out they are mainly women and institutions from the English-speaking world. I think that's inevitable. We have strong readerships in places like India. We receive lots of articles from India and also Israel. Australia, a country that has a lot of feminists in it. So, of course Ireland and I'm sure I'm leaving out some. Because of the work that was done at the advent of the journal, the journal actually has changed. Yes, now it has an international readership. It has an international community and so it wasn't very hard for us to realize one of the things we wanted to do which was to make the Journal speak to feminisms all around the world.

[Applause]

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MODERATOR: For those of you who haven't had the fun of working in a *Signs* office there is at least a nine-month time lag from the time you submit an issue for publication until it comes out. So for a feminist journal that wants to engage contemporary world affairs, that time lag creates real challenges. So for our next round of thoughtful contributions I've asked our panelists to talk about how they negotiated the significant from the trivial, how they tried to figure out what was an issue that they wanted to be working on 18 months later, two years later, three years later. Because of course the world keeps erupting in unexpected ways. And also, what kinds of eruptions happened internal to the politics of feminism? Sometimes with

respect to reactions to articles published in the journal, sometimes in angry responses to what didn't get published in the pages of the journal. So I'd like them to share with us some of their thoughts about the relationship between the publication process, the selection process, the planning process and this enormously complex world that they were working in. Cate.

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CATHARINE STIMPSON: I really want questions from the audience, so let me do this literally in about one minute. First I want to say to the people who are now Editorial Assistants and Managing Editors, our first Editorial Assistant,

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look at her name, Martha Jane Nelson. It may not mean much to you now, but Martha Jane Nelson went on for a variety of editorial jobs, founded *In Style* and is now the Managing Editor of the *People Magazine* Group and a very powerful, powerful professional [inaudible] and a great feminist. We were not a newspaper. We were not a newsletter, we were a journal. So we were to look at [unintelligible] things deeply and to look at things broadly and try to pick topics that we thought would have resonance for the future. And so our special issues; power, China, - - early on China -- religion, national development, science, women in Latin America, women in the American city, and our final issue -- sex and sexuality. We tried to look at things that we felt had resonance. Secondly, we let the field speak to us and when the field came, despite all its dissidents and fractures and ruptures, we would hear things from the field. And I think all of us were very attuned to what our readers were saying and to what our critics were saying. And from that cacophony and chorus of readers and critics, you begin to get a sense of significance.

A third, yes we edited heavily. Donda Stenton (sp) was a genius Editor and when our group passed on to Barbara, I gave her a little silver pair of scissors because she was such a great Editor. But you could tell sometimes. You could tell when the page had resonance. When the page had a crackle to it. When the page had something original. Of all the fight, of all the difficulties we had -- and there were many -- some of them now ludicrous in retrospect, probably what really came to the boil most ferocious with was the conference that gave birth to our women's national development issue. It was the first issue of women in national development. It was an international gathering at Wellesley College and the women from the developing world -- as the [unintelligible] said with the Third World -- rose up literally in rebellion against some of the white, American women. Tama were you there? [From audience] No. Ruth, were you there? Rose, you remember. You remember. Well they rose up in rebellion against the white women in the first world who had organized the conference. Remember the tears? There were plenary sessions through the night. And it was not a love fest. It was passionate. It was angry. And out of that came the issue that I think is still -- I'm still very proud of that issue, we all were. But then you begin to see that sisterhood took a lot of negotiation.

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BARBARA GELPI: I can take up that theme because so far as the time-line, I think that Catharine said it, one heard. And we did have also in the U.S. and international [inaudible] to try to keep -- again, it's a -- you have to weed out. But I don't remember thinking of that as a particular problem. No, but we too right away -- I was telling it -- right away we began to surface. From the first editorial which we had this wonderful idea of community, but even the second editorial I noticed, and this is for Summer '81 -- of course it is written in December '80. But then this you can hear that this is coming from -- suddenly we realized --AAH!, we are a very elite

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university and here we are speaking for women. So it's a feminist... So, this editorial says feminism cannot be considered the privilege of an elite minority of women sufficiently free of life's possible ills to concentrate on the fulfillment of their interesting lives and talents. On the contrary, behind feminism lies the impulse toward the universal betterment of women's lives. And yet, the relation between the western feminist interests and those of other women in the world remains problematic. Now that does say, we may be wrong, we are seeing the problem. Seeing ahead of time. And in '82, again true feminism challenges the disciplines with questions relating to women. But to what extent are those questions still bound by the values and viewpoints of the dominant cultural groups? Are the questions those of a privileged, white,

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heterosexual, middle class and does their language, while reflecting some women's experience and knowledge, leave others totally invisible.

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Well, we've gotten that word "invisible" already.

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There has been. There has been far too little scholarship by and about women of color, lesbians and women outside the United States published in the journal.

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We must redress this imbalance. So we had the idea I don't feel that we did redress the imbalance, but this comes to what do I think was one of the particular political eruptions that posed the unique challenges during my tenure, '80 to 85. Nineteen eighty-three, this bridge called my back. And I think at about that time -- and Catharine and I were there again -- that NWSA Conference in which the women of color in the United States rose up against the white feminist establishment. And that too was a conference fraught, yet, I do think looking back one of the things that strikes me remembering is -- and that I think I realized even at the time -- was this is awful! But this is,

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this is good. This is the way it has to be. This is a process. RUTH-ELLEN BOETCHER JOERES: Well at the time... First of all, you know when this particular question as we got it was longer, but it also talked about grappling with the urgency of contemporary events. And so on our first thought when we started that was we were far too busy to forecast. We were just trying to keep up and we were not as thoughtful as we might be now, but because we were just trying to get through. And one of the things that Barbara mentioned then that was very important to us from the very outset which was for us to reestablish, to establish, to maintain, to improve

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Speaker Name

real world connections. And this certainly goes back to the language, but it wasn't just language, it was a lot of things.

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And yet we... There at least two instances -- one sort of funny -- where we agonized and it didn't really work. Our last special issue was *Theory of Practice* and we had a

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practitioner -- that is she was the person at the University of Minnesota who, Anne Thorson Truax (sp), who was running the office which involved itself with sexual, cases of sexual harassment on the campus. The rest of us were all academics and we worked very hard together to try to make this a theory and practice issue and we virtually got nothing from practitioners.

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Which you might have expected. They were far too busy to sit down and write. And it was a struggle for us and it was an eye-opening kind of experience. This didn't stop us wanting to do it, but I don't think we were very successful with that. The funny sort of thing was that, in the case of the Forum, one of the forum topics that had been suggested was to get a couple of attorneys who worked, who speak in the name of mothers, and get them over against

attorneys who speak in the name of children. And whose names should pop up --this being whatever year it was -- but Hillary Rodham Clinton so. [Laughter] Well, why not. So we wrote a letter. We wrote letters to a number of people, but to her as well because she has a certain reputation -- or did in that day -- have a certain reputation in that direction. She, needless to say did not respond. This was however right before Clinton had taken office. I think it was earlier that year, but I think perhaps he'd been elected by then.

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In any case, we heard nothing for a while and then we received a printed card that looked sort of like this and it said, "Thank you." Oh I'm sorry, we sent along a couple issues of Signs as well, right? And what came back is this printed card saying, "Thank you so much for the gift." And I just was fairly angry, so I wrote an angry letter back. An angry, but at least slightly irritated letter back and explained this had not been... this had been a legitimate request and we felt that there should be some answer. And I wasn't around when Barbara received a telephone call from the White House -- well, it wasn't the White House yet -- from her office. Someone saying they were terribly sorry, she really was very busy and perhaps later. But that, we didn't give up on reaching out in the real world for that. But I mean it was, that was certainly one of the sobering experiences that again, thinking not only about language, but thinking about this extension activism. I mean we were really impressed, Cate, by your editorial to the point that we quoted, I'm sure, more than once the activating idea that you had about Signs. It should be an activating thing. I can't remember what I wrote, but I know that it was "activating" and we really took that to heart and tried very hard to do that.

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And needless to say, succeeded in some ways, but not in others. But Barbara is going to talk about a couple of other things. BARBARA LANSLETT: We were both. Firm and committed members of Second Wave feminism. And we've subsequently learned that feminism and Second Wave feminism is really not the same thing. But nevertheless we had this commitment to be connected to political and social

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issues. But in our work, the day to day running of *Signs*, not only were we extremely busy, but we came to understand the limitations of an academic journal. That to have the kind of journal

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that Kate described as wanting *Signs* to be, it was an academic journal. There were real limits on what could be done. We too thought of the special issues that we commissioned -- or that we commissioned editors for -- as having more of a sort of concrete kind of focus. But we got into trouble with that, particularly in relation to one special issue. And that is because the Editor of that special issue, the local Editor, but nevertheless the Editor thought that she and members of her Editorial Board should have the final say

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in what was published. Well, you know of course that the whole issue of hierarchy in feminist thought was alive and well at that point. But one of the things that Ruth- Ellen and I felt was important was that we were responsible for the journal and in the end our decision was what would reign. We took a vote at our Editorial Board meetings. We had the votes and frankly I don't recall our ever going against them. Maybe Ruth-Ellen's memory will be better than mine on that, on that point. But what we did come to see is that if we couldn't influence a public discourse on issues of abortion, on issues of immigration, on issues of sexism, on many such issues which were of grave concern to us, [then] there was one audience that we had -- that we could have

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an effect on and that was the students who took our classes. A student of mine did a dissertation at Minnesota in which she discovered that women with the most feminist views

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were -- this was a, I won't bother going into the design of the study -- were those women who had taken women's studies courses. Now one can say that there was a selection factor by the very fact that they were taking

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women's studies courses. But you know we all need support. We need support in argument to be able to say well no, this --you know I read this article in my class and it has given me these facts. Just a thought; I also taught this kind of stuff in Holland and I was just amazed. These students didn't know that the proportion of working women in Holland was minuscule. Working in jobs. Paid labor was minuscule. There was no public debate on this in Holland at the time. So this connects again with Ruth-Allen's concern -- mine as well, but articulated much more clearly by Ruth-Allen --

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with language. We had to be able to produce articles that were of high and complex content and analysis. But that would be in a language that even undergraduates should be able to read. If we couldn't do that, then the one arena in which we could have activist impact

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would be lost. And I always felt that if you want to be a political activist, work in politics. That's not necessarily something that you can do, but you can teach. And we all have done that. The other point too. I want to make two other, actually three other points very briefly. One has to do with the fact that -- well there are two things that were going on -- after each of our board meetings we had a dinner among the Associate Editors who had attended the meeting or some couldn't attend the meeting but came to the dinners afterward. And I do have to thank the University of Chicago Press and Bob Farrell (sp) who was then the person with whom we worked with at the Press. That they were willing to fund these things. It was incredible generosity. You're running out of time. OK. I'm going to stop. But also that we could recognize

that in addition to being scholars, we were employers and that feminism had to fit into what our relationships were with the staff of *Signs*. It was not always easy, but it was certainly something that was important to us in the realm of the practical. KAREN ALLEN: I'll just say two quick things. One with regard to the notion of the definition of feminism which is clearly a theme in everything that people have said so far. When *Signs* came to Washington, feminism and feminist was already a monolith in the public press. There was no question about that. It was also a monolith for many of our students. Feminism is what my mom did in the old days. Feminism was only for white, middle-class women. Now it's not true that those things weren't true. They were. But despite, I think our very best efforts, we were still working especially on questions of diversity. And I think we are still working on that question. I absolutely think that. When we then came to do our last issue, Special Issue at Washington [coughing] besides the globalization, the one that we sent off. We did one for the turn of the century. We were very conscious of course of the [unintelligible] that was going to be at Washington [coughing] when the century turned. We called it *Feminisms at A Millennium*. "Feminisms" plural for obvious reasons. "A Millennium" because millennium is a western, religious overtones word that was a media word and we wanted to just, again in our trying to be provocative, respond to those two sort of monolithic ideas by little tweakings of language. That was one point. The second point that I want to make was we took it as a given that *Signs* is an academic journal. We tried to think about OK, I'm an academic. How do I read? When I think of a scholarly journal not having world enough and time to read everything. I read those things that are interesting to me in my discipline. That's what I do because I'm going to write on things X or Y. So what we tried to do was to have a variety of disciplinary discourses and then we used what we called the *Signs* frame which was, we would write back to the contributor and say, "Thank you. What you need to do or what we would like you to do in the first part of your essay is to make a frame so that scholars who are not in your field could understand what they're going to get out of this article in the first three pages," since we're all, as I say short of time, "that we all perhaps tie to their own theoretical, methodological, political interests." So that was the way that we were trying

to bridge disciplinary discourses which of course sometimes are dense and especially in my field. I think if you read books maybe you write really complicated dense language about them. But we wanted to have an introduction that would say to other scholars, "What am I going to get out of this particular piece?" KATE NORBERG: To the question, "How do you keep that journal relevant and can it be overtaken by events?" The UCLA office was overtaken by events. It was in our office that 9/11 occurred and in fact I remember that event because I had to call our staff members; Cassandra and I decided they shouldn't come in because you have to drive by a federal building and we didn't know what was actually going to happen next. Actually we were then had a special issue coming through our office -- a very good one on cultural memory -- and our Special Editors, Val Smith and Marianne Horowitz proposed to do a symposium on 9/11 right away. Now that doesn't mean it came out the next, you know. There was a lag time nonetheless and then eventually another set of Special Editors also did a symposium on 9/11.

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Was it still relevant? You know it's not always a good thing to -- sometimes it might be a good thing if some of the things we did suddenly were rendered irrelevant by the course of events. [Laughter] In 2000 -- I think I have these dates right -- in 2003, the very beginning, we received from Iris Marion Young, an article I hope some of you have read called *On the Perils of the Security State*. I'm sad to say it's just as relevant today as it was then. [Applause] MODERATOR: We are almost out of time, but instead of us doing one more round I think it would be good to open up in case folks in the audience would like to have a chance to ask our panelists some specific questions. CATHARINE STIMPSON: Or memories or comments because so many people here have contributed over the years. MODERATOR: Well they are all being shy so you have one more minute each to talk about what you think of as your most significant accomplishment

as an editor of *Signs*. CATHARINE STIMPSON: That we had something to pass down that people thought was worthwhile. BARBARA GELPI: That we

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Became really aware of -- we didn't -- we weren't able to implement, but that we really became aware of a number of very crucial divides among feminisms and among women. And we tried to find ways of beginning to address those. RUTH-ELLEN GOETCHER JOERIES: It's terrible.

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I didn't know...[inaudible] [laughter]. Is this working? Anyway, it doesn't matter.

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Well, I think it is the experience for me at least, was the most exhilarating. I have to speak personally of my life in terms of my career and that it is with me still. And I think it is with me still because at least the five years that we were editing brought so much new into my head that I'm still processing it. BARBARA LANSLETT: Well I have to echo Ruth-Ellen on this. I am currently working on a book, which will talk about historical logic, social science logic

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and literary logic. It's a book which will be by three social scientists and it's all going to be looking at personal narratives. That would never have happened without the five years of *Signs* as the most -- to use Ruth-Ellen's word -- "exhilarating" intellectual experience of my

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more than 30-year career. KAREN ALLEN: It's impossible to say what your greatest accomplishment was because that's not up to us to say. It's up to the readers to say. We had a fabulous time. That's the end of my comment. [Laughter]

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KATE NORBERG: Sandra Harding and I had a great time too. We had a great staff. It was wonderful.

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If I could say seriously what our accomplishments would be, it would be that largely -- not through anything we did, but because of the growth of the journal and because feminism is still a vibrant entity in the world today -- we were able to publish like the *Inquinteros* (sp), which was about Latina feminisms. Those women came to us,

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you know, saying we want...will you publish what we're doing as a follow up on an article that occurred in the journal for five years previous. I think the other achievement we had is it's easy to say that feminism is dead. If you believe that, reading an article that was published by Sandra and me by Mary Hawksworth [laughter] called *Premature Burial*. We're very proud of that achievement. Also, that there are still areas in academic feminism, I suppose the community to which we speak most directly, where there's still a lot of struggle going on. We published articles on feminism and economics. Also feminism and international relations, feminism and physics, feminism and architecture -- the first one that had ever been in the journal -- and these are still areas where feminism is still a young enterprise and still very much a struggle. But, I guess my message is the journal is healthy. And so is the feminism itself. [Applause]

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MODERATOR: Thank you all for coming out today and please join me one more time in a round of applause for our wonderful panel. [Applause]