

Shelley Stamp: My name is Shelley Stamp. I'm professor of Film and Digital Media at the University of California, Santa Cruz. It's March 24, 2016. And, I'm here in Chicago at the Fairmont Hotel to interview Jane Gaines, professor of film, at Columbia University.

Professor Gaines has been instrumental in the development of three subfields within media studies; the study of Oscar Micheaux and his circle, physical evidence, and women in the silent screen. Her two books *Fire and Desire: Mixed-Race Movies in the Silent Era*, and *Contested Culture: The Image, the Voice, and the Law*, both won the Katherine Singer Kovacs Book Award from the Society for Cinema and Media Studies.

I want to begin by asking how you got interesting in becoming a film and media scholar? You begin your working life as a schoolteacher, correct? And, what prompted you to switch gears?

Jane Gaines: Well, I think this is very important for our field, Shelley, because the statistic is over 50 percent of those who founded the field of film and media studies began in literary studies.

So, I had my first degree from Northwestern in American and British literature. And, I got a job. And, I discovered that the students were not interested in Shakespeare. I think it's historically important because that first job I did creative dramatics. And, the second job was in a high school at the time that President Johnson had instituted the Title IV funding for upgrading American public education. So, the school I was in had a new curriculum full of electives. So, I taught a course called Early Film Comedy, and it was not really about cinema. It was about how do you get low-level students to read. But, I became completely fascinated with Mack Sennett, the Keystone Kops, Laurel and Hardy. And, I also taught production. So, it was with a background of frustration with my elite literary degree, and what happened when I learned about social class difference, that then, of course, I had to get on this new bandwagon.

So, I went back to get my PhD in film and television studies at Northwestern Radio/TV/Film, that was the department. And, that was my third degree from Northwestern.

Shelley Stamp: And, what the program at Northwestern like then?

Jane Gaines: Well, we were in the vanguard. The historical Midwestern universities; Madison, Wisconsin, University of Iowa, Northwestern, the Big Ten, they had these communications studies programs. So, starting film and TV was not difficult there. It was the Ivy Leagues that had the slowest start. And, I'll get that, later, the trouble I had setting up that kind of a course of study at Duke, and at Columbia.

So, what was interesting is it was easy within the school of speech to argue this was an aspect of communication, but I think that you're gonna ask me the question about the Visual Evidence conferences. It began when I took as an undergraduate major, a course in documentary film from Jack Ellis, who had founded that department at Northwestern. He was writing the biography of John Grierson. And, I will never forget the entire syllabus. It was *The River*, it was *O Dreamland*, it was *A Time for Burning*, and *The Lonedale Operator*, in a documentary course, which as we know is a Griffith narrative fiction film.

There was no writing. The textbook had one chapter on *Harvest of Shame*. In other words, there were no publications on documentary to use as a textbook. And, we didn't have Xeroxes in those days. We only bought textbooks. And I think now, how many years later, the plethora of great thinking in published writing on documentary theory, and practice. But I think it was the vision of the National Film Board, the potential that the Canadians had picked up, and then the frustration of *The Plow That Broke the Plains*, *The River*, The American Farm Security Administration, what hadn't happened when the government hadn't followed through, that really fascinated me, and lured me away from literary studies, which was so set and stuck in time. It had no room for the growth that I saw as a young intellectual.

Shelley Stamp: So, Northwestern, it sounds like, there was great opportunity to study film and media within communications.

Jane Gaines: Well, yeah, Jack Ellis had hired Paddy Whannel from the British Film Institute education department, and Paddy brought Geoffrey Nowell-Smith. He'd actually brought Peter Wollen, and Laura Mulvey came with Peter Wollen. And, "Narrative Cinema and Visual Pleasure" ... I often revert that term "Visual Pleasure, Narrative Cinema", I can go either way with it, was written in Evanston, Illinois, for a conference in the French department at Wisconsin, Milwaukee. And so, I always think back to that house where I know it was written. It was department building. It was torn down. We should put up a plaque. So, there was that legacy in that department. It was the moment of semiotics, the *grande syntagmatique*.

And for me, I was teaching school, actually still, at the time when I started my PhD. It was a great way of earning money. And, it was extremely thrilling because we were challenging the idea that meaning is established, known by the author, which is the basic way we were approaching literary appreciation. And instead of arguing that meaning was a given of the text, semiotics was about how things mean, not what they mean. And for me, that was extremely radical. I remember in my beginning years, Chuck Kleinhans was assigning Umberto Eco's *Theory of Semiotics*. I loved that book because it made more systematic what I had been taught as a literary scholar to just ... we used to call it impressionistic criticism, to just ... how should we say ... just divine from the text. So for me, it was a wonderful breakthrough, and a challenge to the established wisdom that had been handed on. And, I think that's the pattern in

my career, wherever I made a move, it's been to challenge the established, and to try to take another path. Why else would we become scholars?

Shelley Stamp: That's an incredibly rich environment you're describing with documentary, and foundational feminist texts, and semiotics. That's a rich environment.

Now, let's talk about Duke. You founded the Film/Video/Digital program at Duke, and directed that program for a couple of decades.

Jane Gaines: 18 years.

Shelley Stamp: You suggested that was a more difficult institutional situation.

Jane Gaines: It was very difficult. Yes, it was difficult because of this assumption about really, mass culture. And, I began in an English department at Duke as an assistant professor, non-tenure track, because they weren't sure what to do with film studies, or film history. And, in this English department, I remember proposing a course on television to the curriculum committee.

And they said, "You can't have a course in television, there's no text."

These people were furniture. It was an old department. And, I realized that we couldn't grow as an undergraduate curriculum, or as a PhD program unless we had some institutional base, as in outside departments.

So, I started a program to put in the two key components; one, production, and the other, exhibition. Previous to my time there, only student clubs had done production, and exhibition. And so the assumption was, this is what you did at Durham Tech, you learned how to, or this is what the clubs did. And, I knew it was a field. Of course, it was a field. There were people in the field who were legitimate scholars. There were publications. But, this news had not reached this Duke University, this old southern institution.

So, every inch was very, very, difficult; establishing the credibility of the field, getting on a tenure track, getting tenure. And, it was actually because I had two great chairs; Stanley Fish, who was chair in English, and then, Fred Jameson, who was my chair in the literature program. And, they, of course, saw that the key here was critical theory.

Film and media studies has always shared critical theory. Its great moment in the 70s was the moment of post-structuralism with literary studies in its new iteration. So, when new people were brought in to Duke, to do literary studies ...

It's interesting, we had a provost who once said, "We want to make a great institution here in the South, and we should do two things well; one, literary studies, and two, religion."

So, he began to beef up the literary studies side. And, that's really why it could happen there, because of one physicist who had a dream. Yes, something like that institutionally, will always happen.

Shelley Stamp: Alright. Could we switch gears, and talk about your scholarship. You've had an extraordinary influence on the field. And, I think I want to begin by asking about your work on Oscar Micheaux. You co-edited the collection, *Oscar Micheaux and His Circle* with Pearl Bowser, and Charles Musser. And, you co-created with them, correct? Micheaux Retrospective at Pordenone. Can you talk about the genesis of that work on Micheaux, and what was know about his career when he began?

Jane Gaines: Sure. Actually, this comes out of literary studies. And, maybe there's a plus to being in a department where you're connected with a broad group of scholars. And, "Race, Writing, Indifference" was the special issue of *Critical Inquiry* that no one forgot. It had a red cover. Skip Gates had edited it, with Anthony Appiah. And, Skip came to Duke for a short period. He was on my faculty.

And so, suddenly, we were reading Nella Larsen, *Quicksand and Passing*. And, if you were an Americanist, which I thought I was, I believe that you also should be an African-Americanist. So this, within film and media, this was a no-brainer, because everyone ... It's a young field. It's always historically been a young field. I guess now, it's not so young anymore, but the readiness, I knew if Charlie, and Pearl, and I began working on this, that everyone would want to teach it.

And I recall, the opening was Phyllis Klotman who had started the archive, The Black Film in Indian, called me up, and Skip had just been, just been appointed at Duke, and she said,

"Ah, we've gotta claim African American studies for our field. And, I've just learned from Susan Dalton that from the Spanish Archive, in Madrid, they have at the Library of Congress received a 35mm print of a film called, La Negra. And, Thomas Gripps suspects that it is *Within Our Gates*."

I'm shortening the story, here, because I went to Washington. I saw it with the Spanish intertitles, and the lynching sequence. And immediately, I knew what Susan Dalton had there, at the library. They restored it. They put out a VHS. But, they took the Spanish intertitles off.

And as a group, Pearl, and Charlie, and I said, "Oh no. That erases this whole history of its being lost, how did Micheaux get it to Spain. And then, the Belgian discovery of the film, *The Symbol of the Unconquered*, which had half Flemish, and half French intertitles. And, we're still trying to figure out how it was that Micheaux got these films to Europe. So, there was this fascinating mystery. And again, the Library of Congress got involved. But now, there is a DVD that has put back the legacy of those intertitles that were translated back into English.

So, it's interesting that this field picked up this double discovery of the two silent Micheauxs, but some of us took the discussion of Micheaux relative to *Birth of a Nation*, to the historians, that the AHA, the Historians Society, did a couple of panels, and they were not actually so interested. They were interested in *Birth of a Nation*, but the reason was because it was the story of reconstruction. So, they weren't ready. One, they didn't understand that a film archive is a different kind of archive, that you access it differently, you think about it differently. And, they weren't ready for this idea of the counter, which in our field, this sort of counter film, counter cinema, the alternative.

We had a paradigm ready for that relation between *Birth of a Nation* and *Within our Gates*. And so, many people have taught that. And, I think Charlie, and Pearl and I, when we took it to Pordenone we were really anticipating that this would happen in our field, but not other fields, yet, slowly.

And then, we started a newsletter, my colleague, Charlene Register, who was at Chapel Hill, and is still there, and I, because she was working on black newspapers. It occurred to me that we had a T. S. Eliot society in the Modern Language Association. Well, we should have a Show Society. So, we did some paper newsletters. And, it was really thrilling to see how many people contributed.

And then, now, we're working on discovering William Foster, and his career in Hollywood, and we'd thought he'd made one film in Chicago. So, the excavation of black cinema continues. Most recently, the most exciting discovery is that a woman in Oklahoma, Drusilla Dunjee Houston, who's family were in the newspaper, the black newspaper business. She had started in 1909, to write a poetic response to *Birth of a Nation*. Between 1909 and 1930, she revised it several times. And, one woman who's actually trained as a scientist bought it from the family.

At the Birth of a Nation Conference in London, two summers ago, we had her Skype in, and discuss this document, which I've seen scans of. But here we go, it's like the Womens Pioneers project. Every example that you think couldn't possibly exist, surprises you.

Shelley Stamp:

That's amazing.

And, I also wanted to ask you about your article, "White Privilege and Looking Relations: Race and Gender in Feminist Film Theory". It was published, I think, over 30 years ago, it continues to be incredibly influential. I think it's been reprinted 11 times, and counting, probably more. A student of mine just discovered it, and was blown away. So, I wonder what you remember about the genesis of that piece, and the conversations that you were entering into ... ?

Jane Gaines:

Well, this is, I think, important to bring up because, Shelley, what I would say to scholars coming along is, they should follow Laura's position. My article was in

response to Laura, okay? And as I said, the "Race, Writing, Indifference" *Critical Inquiry*, that special issue, put race/gender/class on the agenda. So, I never liked the psychoanalytic approach that Laura took in "Narrative Pleasure and Visual Cinema", and I wanted to speak out. And so, I really wrote a polemic. And later, I had a conversation with Laura, and she said,

"Well, I, too, wrote a polemic."

So, the point is, whatever you write, it needs to come from a place of passion, and you need to write something that someone else is not going to write. Either because they don't dare, they think the field isn't going in that direction. But then, you see, how many articles will you write in your career that will be the breakthrough. You tried, and you try, again. But, the point about both your scholarship, where you position yourself, and also, what you do as an administrative worker, you must do not the job that someone else will do. Someone will always do that. You need to do the job that needs to be done. You need to start the program that isn't there. Okay?

Shelley Stamp: Yes.

Jane Gaines: Do that.

Shelley Stamp: Alright. Can we switch gears a little bit, and talk about Visible Evidence.

Jane Gaines: Yes.

Shelley Stamp: You've had an impact on so many fields, and Visible Evidence is another one. Now, with a biannual international conference, a long running book series, can you talk about the beginnings of Visible Evidence, and the ways in which you were intervening in the conventional study of nonfiction, and documentary, and how you imagined that?

Jane Gaines: Yeah. What's interesting about documentary is in 1993 when we did the first Visible Evidence conference, and it was Brian Winston, and Michael Renov, and I, and had pretty much been the consistent forces, it was supposed to have been in Whales, Cardiff, where Brian was starting as dean, and that didn't work out.

So, I just said, "Okay, we'll do it at Duke."

And, George Stoney did the first preview of *Uprising of '34*, which was about strikes in the southern textile mills in 1934, a terribly important organizing battle. And for me, it was the return to that legacy of the National Film Board, but also, the legacy of the Soviet Agitprop.

And, a couple of things were coming together. One, Bill Nichols had just published his documentary book, *Representing Reality*, and in that book, he says

that, in the 60s documentary fell out. Suddenly, post-structuralism's critique of realism meant that you couldn't just turn the camera on the world. But, we thought we were the perfect people to start back up because we both were post-structuralists critiquing that window on the world approach, to turning the camera on to everything, and we were committed to social change, that legacy of the Soviets in 1917. And so, that militant leftist radical tradition that is *Borinage*, Joris Ivens the continuation in the Film and Photo League, which we now understand there were film and photo leagues in Germany, all over the world, organized by money from Lenin.

So, and *Jumpcut* around the same time, earlier, this is my roots, and thinking about documentary, we'd done so much with Julia Reichert, and Jim Klein, around *Union Maids*. And I recall, is that *Jumpcut* work crew, we had long discussions about why Julia Reichert, and Jim Klein had not made mention that these *Union Maids* organizers were communists. And, their second film following that, *Seeing Red*, which they shot in color. They went from black and white union maids, to color, was about that communist history. So when, we began to return to documentary, it was very thrilling for me because of this preparation, and that legacy of social change, and using cameras as a kind of utopian idealist moment.

And, I continued returning to this after the Visible Evidence Conferences in rethinking the Arab Spring, and this moment relative to new media, what is new media doing for organizing. Well, we can get back to that in the end, in terms of the future of the field.

Is that helping some of those tributaries that ran into the thinking when we began to start Visible Evidence, which we thought would maybe be a couple of years. It's been every year since 1993, on a different continent. And, the Buenos Aires conference in Argentina had 800 proposals.

Shelley Stamp: How do you think that that conception of Visible Evidence has shaped the study of, for lack of a better word, nonfiction, or documentary film, it seems to me that that concept has really broadened, and expanded, and complicated the traditional studies of documentary. Do you think that's true?

Jane Gaines: Well, yes. Number one, we started with this strategies, we called it Visible Evidence strategies question of making, and history research at the same time. So, it was always supposed to have this making component.

The hardest question on our field remains this theory and practice question. We're always trying to train graduate students to do both. And, I like to quote Michael Chanin when he once said ... He's both a maker, and a historian theorist of documentary ...

"Where does the theory go when you make the film?"

And, my second aspect here, explaining why documentary has such a long legacy, number one, is the theory of practice the question is tough, two is, I say philosophically the question of realism is basically the question of existence. And because it's an unanswerable question, Visible Evidence will never go away as a conference.

Does that help?

Shelley Stamp: Yes, yes. Alright.

And then, another institution that you've been incredibly important in founding, or sub-field, let's say, women in the silent screen. And, I wanted to begin by asking about the Women Film Pioneers Project, which has become a monumental, extraordinary undertaking. Can you talk about the inception of that project, and what your original idea was, and then, how it's grown since then?

Jane Gaines: Yeah. Maybe, it kind of parallels developments in our field, Shelley, because again, it was the year I was at Vassar College. We were quite aware it had been a traditionally a women's college. And, I was, for one year, thanks to Sarah Kozloff, the Luce Distinguished Visiting Professor, and I thought that we needed to do a project to foreground women. It was a women's college. And, I'd written a proposal that was designed to bring thinking, and art history, like Linda Nochlin together, discovering women artists with film, and photography, and Kaplan and the idea was a conference, maybe some institute ... It never went anywhere.

And, I always like to finish things. So, I went back to Duke with this project. And, my graduate students became interested in reading the early Tony Slide books, you know, all of them, the early feminist women directors, early Lois Weber. And, they started to list these names. But for me, it was a carry over from Micheaux where everyone said there was no black filmmaking. And, rule of thumb, the theoretical core of feminism in 1975, feminist film theory was, there were no women, no women on the screen, and the women in the audience aren't really women because they're spectatorial transvestites. You recall? And so, this empirical explosion challenged that theoretical position.

Now this is not to say, I'm an empiricist. I'm deeply skeptical in empiricism. The only reason I'm interested in history is the way that we can use history to unsettle assumptions in the present. Because the empiricist will never exhaust the possibilities. And, the empiricist is in danger always of falling into the trap of making a factual statement, which I always felt that the next research discovery would disprove.

So, the Women Pioneers, actually, when it was first proposed as volumes, soon overran the volumes. Illinois Press, Joan Catapano, the famous editor, had signed us up.

And she said, "I'm sitting here with three feet of paper, and we cannot make volumes out of this."

And, I was transitioning from Duke, where my graduate students and I had still been planning for volumes. And at Columbia, The Center for Digital Research and Scholarship was a new experimental program. The library at Columbia had invested in the future of publishing. And that new director, a woman, Rebecca Kennison said,

"Okay. This is our pilot project."

But what they thought, you'll love this, Shelley, all the computer people looked at it, and they thought, still images, documents, moving images, we'll have them all ... They didn't understand about 35mm and archival prints. And, this is even more funny, when they set us up, you go to the Women Film Pioneers Project, which has been published in 2013, officially, online, as a digital database. They had sent a kind of Facebook ovals to be filled, with images, that we would discover online, and we had to explain to the computer programmers that this was so early. There were either no images anywhere in the world, or they were in archives deep in the former Yugoslavia.

Because, we were intending at that point, we were getting inclinations, tips from women I would meet in Pordenone, that there was someone who had been making work as a director, assistant director, in some obscure place. The most obscure, we've now discovered Tazuko Sakane in the Manchukuo studio in Manchuria. This is a great, exciting discovery, and she had seen films by Dorothy Arzner, and says,

"I would like to make film like Dorothy Arzner."

So, we have effectively, set up this possibility of actually picking up the challenge that the computer programmers set for us, of filling in these ovals, that are, so many of them, empty, which is the portrait. How many in our lifetime can we document?

So, it also, this project, is a digital historiographic project, is a challenge to theories of the history, as you well know. I also wanna say that I like the way you picked up ... you always tell the story about going to the academy, and talking about Lois Webber. You knew that there was more to Tony Slide's book, which has been important.

And they would say, "No. Tony's Slide is working on this."

And you said, "No. There's more."

And, your sense that there was more was so important, Shelley. There was a big story with Lois.

Shelley Stamp: Yes. It's interesting to hear you talk about all of these subfields that you've been involved in, and that, it's this curiosity that you have, and this insistence that there is something more, that's driving so much of this.

Jane Gaines: There is, and they corollary to this, there were no women is, there were no, the films didn't survive. Which is why when we started the Pioneer's Project there were so many graduate students who volunteered their time before we had funding for them. And, they input the extant titles. You can now click on them, and go to the FIAF Archives.

And, we just decided early on, no one knew what we were talking about at Columbia, when we said we have to list, we can't just let people hope. And so, it's there. If anyone wants to prove, they can go to the FIAF Archives. These prints exist. And, there are hundreds, and thousands that they appeared in, in many cases, but also, wrote, directed, edited, or were in miscellaneous jobs like, publicist.

We're just finding, we're astounded at the kinds of jobs. Our occupations list never stops expanding.

Shelley Stamp: Now, also parallel, or maybe coming a little after you started in on this long project, are the conferences, that have become very, very, important, right? ... Gender and Silent Cinema, 1999 in Utrecht, was kind of the first of these conferences, that then became a series of biannual Women and Silent Screen conferences, all over the world, now. What do you remember about that first gathering in Utrecht?

Jane Gaines: In Utrecht.

Shelley Stamp: Yeah.

Jane Gaines: Well, this is an interesting thing because when you're always at the first conference you'll think, there won't be another. You know, in the wrap up sessions that you have? Oh, how wonderful it would be if someone else would pick this up. And, what's been amazing about both Visible Evidence, and Women and the Silent Screen, is that we've needed no central organizing committee, which can be such a waste of time. Institutions have wanted to do both conferences so much ... You remember organizing the Santa Cruz, you got the idea from Utrecht, you went to your institution, and you just picked it up from the last institution. And, that's the way that it will roll.

Now, that we can connect with each other online, it can be much more international, and that's been really thrilling, don't you think?

But, I also am, in this international aspect, thinking about Women and the Silent Screen has brought to our attention some key titles that we need to get, I call this, the canon-busting phase. We need to get out there. And, I'm thinking the

really great case would be Elvira Giallanella's *Umanità* which is this experimental antiwar, 1919 film. The wonderful story about it is that Monica Dall'Asta, my co-writer, editor, was putting together an Italian conference, *Non Solo Dive*, which is effectively, without saying women pioneers, it's not just divas, and preface for the silent screen, Bologna conference that she did, Women and the Silent Screen. And, there was a list that she was working off from, and someone said,

"Oh, what is this title doing on this list."

And checked in Rome archive, and no one had looked. This film really never had exhibition in its time, but it is such an antiwar, post-1917 statement, and extremely modernist. And that film, we did one showing at Pordenone, with the other American antiwar, Ida May Parks, *If Your Country Should Call*, which is much more of a narrative about a mother who inadvertently sends her son ... Actually, she poisons him temporarily, to get him off from going. It's ... You know the film I'm describing.

We need much more attention to those discoveries, because they're still in 35 somewhere, and we need massive, we need massive influx of cash, somewhere in the world to get these films into DVD. But, the Pioneer's project, we've been doing short, streamed clips, which is a start.

But our big dream, Shelley, I think you'll like this is, we've been working on an exhibition to propose an alternative history of the early years, all women. So, we replace the Lumière, the Gaumont with Alice Guy but more recently we discover Georgette Méliès, the daughter of George Méliès, was a projectionist. She was a camera operator, and I am loafed to put together this history, right now, because we keep finding key components. But yet, I think in our lifetime, it's doable. That make sense to you?

Shelley Stamp: Absolutely.

Jane Gaines: And not because it's the truth, because it as an alternative, it has a way of shocking us into rethinking the established wisdom. Right?

Shelley Stamp: Absolutely. Yes.

Jane Gaines: Okay. That's the reason.

Shelley Stamp: Yes. Now, that's a great vision for the future, right? How else do you see the field evolving, where do you think we're going? I've got a great sense of the energy that you have for projects into the future, like this alternative history of early cinema.

Jane Gaines: Number one, the cinema, the history of cinema, at some point, will be, I like to say, on the head of a pin, but really if you just hold up your device, whatever we

call it, in whatever language, the history of cinema could be that compressed. So, the history of compression is important.

Now, we do history of technologies, not just because it's history. History gets a lot of acclaim, and there's deference to history, but the reason for doing historical excavation, is because it gives us ideas in the present. And, we need to get ahead of developments in the industry. We need to critique the industry. It's moving so fast we can't keep up with it. So, we've really got to think, two time periods, two centuries, at once. So, the rationale for doing what I call, theories of history, and historical archival work, is to unsettle assumptions, and to give us ideas. It's not that we're living the consequences of something that went before, but these are ideas, and hypotheses. Why do we go back to the kinetoscope?

Why did Antonia Dickson say in 1894, when she first wrote it. "What is the future of the kinetoscope?"

And, she got dropped. She really wrote that history of the kinetoscope, the kinetophonograph. If you look at his version in 1933, William Kennedy-Laurie, her brother, it's bowdlerized from her version. So, that is pretty earth-shattering, to think that the first technological history in our field, was written by a woman who was a musical, logical genius. And the only reason for me, it's not about gender, exactly. Gender is what we take as a category that shakes things up. It's about rearranging historical knowledge.

So, to bring us up to the present question, we probably, because we're taxed as theorists of technology, and historians of the technological change, we're thinking okay, television proposed a decade ago, that what could be done is, channels could be tailored, and targeted to key audiences. Well, television didn't actually achieve it, the phone achieved it. And as theorists, and historians of the technological moment, we have to think okay, how has this achieved it. But, I don't believe we were so concerned as scholars, with what was happening with television, because it was always about more stories. We can analyze these stories.

But now, my worry is that we need to always to be thinking ahead of the device. Why this device? Why now? And, what portion of our time is it asking us to contribute? I'm very worried about our intellectual resource. The most important intellectual resource we have is time. And, we need to use these devices to save our time, not to waste our time. And so, it's that kind of question. And effectively, a historiographic database is a time saver, that you get you amass. You save time for other scholars. You amass the primary research. You show where it is, and then people can start reconfiguring it. But on a daily basis, we have to think, our communications with each other. How can we use social media to organize political resistance? That is perhaps the best use of it.

And I love this phenomenon at Columbia Press, I'm on the board, now, so, I read books before they get published. A book has come through, a sociology, that

proves that the right has made more in the US, use of social media, than the left, and used the left's tactics. So, we need to take back our tactics. And, we're in this better position as departments of media theory. And, knowing the cinema century the way we know it, we're well positioned.

I would also say something, another project that I think is very important. So, number one, we need to be thinking the two moments. Within cinema century question, Shelley, as you know, after World War I, the U.S. completely cornered the world market. And, I think about you relative to this, because *Shoes* was discovered in Japan, in 1916, Lois Webber *Shoes*. I am haunted by that. And, I know it was well received. There was enthusiasm for those universal prints. And lately, I've become very dedicated to what I call, this is the question, what was it that the U.S. exported to the world? And, my answer is actually melodrama, picking up from a position that Christine Gledhill, Linda Williams, have held to for over a decade, that we need to acknowledge the basis of motion pictures coming out of theater of structural melodrama.

Now, whether that displaces the paradigm of the classical Hollywood narrative export, or not, that remains to be seen. But, that's a very excited debate, because the FIAF Archive discoveries that we're making in the Women Film Pioneers Project suggest how many archives around the world still hold these prints. They're all mixed up, as you know. And, when we start to sort this out, and trail what landed where ... I think about Weihong Bao's *Fierce Cinema*, and how she's doing the connection between the Chinese prints that arrive, so much of the serial queens.

You suspected this very early, and I want to commend you for that. Why as feminists in the 70s didn't we realize how spectacularly important those serial queens were?

It was not just worldwide either. So sorry it gets reduced to Pearl White, because we know there was Helen Holmes, before that there was Gene Gauntier. I always say that she was the first, actually, the Confederate Spy, the three Confederate Spy films. And, she did her own stunts. And, then Pearl, the Kalem Company, Helen Gibson, Kathlyn Williams, Grace Cunard, and they were exported. And the Soviets loved them, remember? Eisenstein loved Pearl White.

So, the origin of radical cinema, Pearl White, *House of Hate*. So, we shake things up because we've done the archival excavation. And, I don't see that the basic histories are actually putting that research in the intro to film textbook I use. The eleventh edition of Bordwell and Thompson does not indicate this well-known incursion of the American popular films into the Russian popular audience, at that prerevolutionary moment, and then, picked up by Kuleshov and Eisenstein.

Shelley Stamp:

Yeah, that to me, is one of the key challenges, right now, is incorporating all of this extraordinary research, all of this extraordinary unsettling of history that you're talking about into the main narrative. That, to me, is the challenge.

Jane Gaines: Now, I commend you again for that, too, Shelley, that you've often said, you read these text books coming out, and it's still not registering, still. Now, my hypothesis is it's very troubling that it does upset, and unsettle a lot of givens. But, how thrilling, right?

Shelley Stamp: Right. Absolutely. Absolutely.

Jane Gaines: What a great moment. What else? What did we leave out?

Shelley Stamp: Well, maybe that's a good point to start, or a good point to end, rather, which is the unsettling, history as an unsettling project.

Jane Gaines: Is an unsettling, ongoing project.

Shelley Stamp: Yes.

Jane Gaines: Yes, in which we never give up.

Shelley Stamp: Yeah.