From the Editor

It has always needed to be said, and it becomes ever more obvious why. In the midst of a pandemic that, because of longstanding and deeply entrenched systemic injustice, disproportionately causes harm and death to people of color, it needs to be said: Black lives matter. In the weeks following the brutal police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis — just one of the latest heinous acts in a history of racist violence going back centuries to the origins of the U.S.A. — it needs to be said: Black lives matter. Partway through a week when largely peaceful protests here and worldwide are gathering strength but often being countered by violent shows of force, it needs to be said: Black lives matter.

It needs to be said in every white-dominated space, including academic and feminist settings; it is a feminist issue. It needs to be said here, in this space, on this page. Black lives matter.

It must be more than said; it must be acted upon as if it is really true. Resources for engaging in struggles for racial justice exist in increasing numbers, and should be highlighted. In this space in particular, we want to amplify the voices of people of color looking at justice through an intersectional lens. Perhaps foremost among those voices is that of Kimberlé Crenshaw, who originated the discourse on intersectionality (as well as the term itself) more than 30 years ago. Crenshaw’s African American Policy Forum produces an ongoing podcast, “Intersectionality Matters,” on which, starting in late March, the series “Under the Black Light” has addressed life in and around the pandemic with a focus on racial justice. Indian author and activist Arundhati Roy was a recent guest on “Under the Black Light.”

Two of the book reviews in this issue of Resources for Gender and Women’s Studies have particular relevance right now: see Charmaine Lang’s review of Barbara Ransby’s Making All Black Lives Matter: Reimagining Freedom in the 21st Century, which begins on page 11, as well as Jasmine Kirby’s review, beginning on page 9, of This Will Be My Undoing: Living at the Intersection of Black, Female, and Feminist in (White) America, by Morgan Jerkins.

This is the first, but possibly not the last, issue of the journal to be published a bit unconventionally because of circumstances related to the COVID–19 pandemic. The editing process has been largely the same as ever, except that the editor and most, if not all, of the reviewers have been working at home instead of in more conventional workspaces for the past few months. The biggest change is that this issue is appearing first online—as a PDF on our office’s website—instead of in print. The page layout process hasn’t changed, though (other than being done from a home office), and when onsite campus operations have resumed more fully, we’ll publish a printed and bound paper version and mail it to all subscribers.

JoAnne Lehman

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