



Reading and Writing the History of Biology at *JHB*

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Accepted: 14 December 2022 / Published online: 20 December 2022
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It's hard to believe it's been five years, and what a five years it's been!

When we started as the new *JHB* editorial team in 2018, some conditions were evident and remained stable: we inherited the reins of the prestigious journal that had launched the discipline of the history of biology. We took seriously our responsibility to nurture and nudge the journal along as the same scholarly outlet that nurtured and nudged us as young biology historians. We also aimed, like all previous *JHB* Editors, to encourage new scholars and broaden areas of scholarship. Soon, however, other conditions arose that took us (and the rest of the world) by surprise. The various shifts caused by the global pandemic continue even today to present significant challenges to journal production. For one, COVID-19 reshaped the patterns of manuscript and book reviewing (the lifeblood of new scholarship), as it became harder for university-based faculty to take on additional responsibilities while transitioning to online pedagogy. It changed the flow and frequency of submissions and the production process in ways that we are only now beginning to recognize and assess. We have done our best to adapt.

When we began, we had many aspirations for *JHB*, hoping to expand its traditional lines of scholarship and readership.¹ We realized many of these goals, such as encouraging topics in new areas by creating the Topical Collections section and launching the new “Biology in Culture” review section, directed by our Book Review Editor, Lijing Jiang. Other planned initiatives took forms other than what we originally envisioned. We hoped to include pieces reflecting on past impactful *JHB* articles. This did not become a regular feature, but we were able, in celebrating the completion of the Darwin Correspondence Project, to assess the critical role *JHB* has played in advanc-

¹ Inaugural Editorial, *JHB* 51, 1 (2018): 1–3.

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ing scholarship on Darwin over the past five decades and offer essays highlighting scholars' changing historiographical approaches.²

We brought certain organizational skills to our work as Editors—both of us have held elected leadership positions in scholarly societies. But beyond this, we brought our commitments as fellow readers and writers of the history of biology. The novelist Zadie Smith once remarked: “The secret to editing your own work is simple: you need to become its reader instead of its writer.”³ We propose an extension of this principle: the secret to editing a journal is to keep *reading* and *writing*, all while thinking about how to enable other readers and writers in the field to interact. We now more fully understand that interaction is the soul of scholarship, an ever-evolving relationship to which journals and their editors should attend in ways beyond tracking quantitative impact metrics.

After volume 55, we hand *JHB* over to a new and capable editorial team: Nicholas Rasmussen and Betty Smocovitis, who take over as Co-Editors-in-Chief beginning with Volume 56 (2023). Individually and collectively, they bring to this task an impressive breadth and depth of scholarly expertise in the history of biology. They plan to implement new ideas and changes to sustain and expand the journal's relationships with readers and writers. We are confident they will do a terrific job.

As the two of us move on to other personal and professional opportunities, we are deeply thankful for the excellent support and many joys that have accompanied this job. We thank Lijing Jiang for her superb work as Book Review Editor. We are grateful for the fantastic support we received from Springer-Nature Publishing, especially the guidance of Ties Nijssen, Hans van Sintmaartensdijk, and Marielle Klijn. We appreciate the ongoing assistance provided by the current Associate Editors, Nick Hopwood and Luis Campos (and previously Lynn Nyhart), the Topical Collections Editors, and the Editorial Board. And finally, we particularly thank the hundreds of reviewers whose generosity and discernment as *readers* helped us do our job and immeasurably enriched the scholarship we published.

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² See *JHB*'s Darwin Collection and the three essays by Janet Browne, Paul White, and Bernie Lightman in *JHB* 54, 3 (2022): 379–409.

³ Zadie Smith, *Changing My Mind: Occasional Essays* (New York: Penguin, 2009), p. 108.