Editorial

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This issue of *BioSocieties* exemplifies the range of approaches that our Journal brings to the ‘social studies of the life sciences’. In a special section on ‘Big Biology’, leading social theorists interrogate and, in some cases re-frame, the very idea of ‘Big Biology’ as representing a fundamental shift in the scale, organization and outputs of scientific research. The articles examine a wide range of scientific activities, from mouse models, to cancer research, to synthetic biology and the Human Genome Project. In undertaking such analyses, each author must acquire sufficient expertise in that area of science to enable understanding, analysis and competent critique. It is worth noting, and acknowledging, the amount of work and training that this ‘sufficient expertise’ requires. Yet, even while we as editors encourage such excellent work by multi-literate researchers, and advocate for funders to recognize the additional training needs that such research requires, we are made aware in this special section, notably in the commentary by Javier Lezaun, of the implications of the gravitational pull that draws social scientists even further ‘inside’ the expanding star that is ‘Big Biology’.

The editors of the special section – Gail Davies, Emma Frow and Sabina Leonelli – have provided an excellent introduction to the articles in the special section. The focus in the rest of this issue is on developments in neuroscience (we note again our editorial pleasure over the range of the life sciences represented in articles in *BioSocieties*). The article by Carla Meurk and colleagues takes on an issue of growing interest among social science scholars of neuroscience: what impact do currently popular neuroscientific accounts of complex and troubling individual behavior have on how members of various publics think about the brain–self–behavior relationship? As the authors show in their empirical research on public views of addiction as a brain disease, the answers are not at all straightforward. Similar complexities are in evidence in our Books Forum discussion. Reviewers Todd Meyers and Natasha Dow Schull present overviews of four books that reveal the varied socio-political and personal forces that surround psychotropic drugs in particular, and the implications of these forces for global scientific research, national health-care provision, and self-care and clinical practices.

Finally, a note to potential authors. *BioSocieties* has moved to an electronic submissions system for all new articles. Please refer to the advice for contributors in this journal, and at <http://www.palgrave-journals.com/biosoc/index.html>.

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