more to historians of particular conditions and to physicians concerned with their own procedures of classification and practice than to medical social scientists. Little broader scope but an interesting practitioner's perspective.

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Henry Harris, *The birth of the cell*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1999 pp. xii, 212, illus., £20.00 (0-300-07384-4).

Harris offers a solid description of microscopic anatomy chiefly for the nineteenth century, with forays especially before. Readers will quickly discover Harris's passion for the topic, its workers, and the art of observing things microscopic. The author is a highly experienced microscopist who here is tracing the historical origins of his practice in search of the process of assembly: how did evidence for cell theory come to be collected? Who was responsible for discovering what? Harris's goal is to look past "many standard accounts ... in particular the perfunctory versions given in general textbooks" (p. xi) and describe a far more complex network of research in which internal tensions and competing projects are brought to the foreground. Who *really* discovered the cell doctrine, and what else was discovered in the process?

Harris deserves much praise. The examined range of primary published sources is impressive. So too is the provision of quotes, with English translations accompanied by an appendix of original language texts. Harris's coverage is broadly European, and his awareness of intra-European rivalries makes him sensitive to looking past favouritism grounded in nationalism. This sensitivity brings Harris to offer valuable descriptions of early nineteenth-century French research, including that by Henri Dutrochet and François Raspail, in an effort to prove not everything new came from a small set of German hands. Others, too, are saved from similar "historiographical injustices" (p. 64) as Harris builds a diverse and talented community around—plus a populous intellectual parentage for—well-known cell theorists such as Matthias Schleiden, Theodor Schwann, and Rudolf Virchow. They certainly were not alone. This book provides superb coverage of relevant researchers and texts. Harris's expertise with the craft of microscopy combines with his scholarly eye for detail in the literature. This is a work of immense patience and care. As epilogue, short chapters also consider late nineteenth-century investigations of chromosomes and determinants of heredity.

Yet, historians will be disappointed. Harris forces his historical actors to see through his eyes and not their own. This presentism is explicit (pp. 24–5) and defended on realist grounds—Harris is too experienced a microscopist to let nature count for nothing in the construction of facts. But here he goes too far. By reducing research to a primitive form of discovery (where either we see it properly or we don't), Harris fails to value the distinction between *seeing* and *seeing as*. The complex interpretative matrix filtering observation as each microscopist peered through their lenses goes unexamined. How can cell thinking be sensitively described while complex debates about the origin of life and the nature of animation are excluded? Nature underdetermines understanding. Whether they include natural theology, animalicular theory, *Naturphilosophie*, or harsh materialism, these matrices shape the ways researchers

come to understand phenomena. By stripping all this away, Harris fails in the enterprise of understanding the past: describing what researchers thought they saw and explaining why they thought they were right. What were they *really* doing when they were thinking about cells and their place in the animated body? His stripping away of the interpretative matrix also devalues the contributions microscopists sought to make to wider cultural and metaphysical debates. Harris's approach is not mandatory for those defending scientific realism, and he is naïve in supposing he has rediscovered his subject. This book is fundamentally a scientist's effort to establish priority in discovering the modern view of nature.

Historians also will criticize Harris on scholarship. For all his attention to priority and communication, Harris provides almost no access to the large historical literature on his subject. Is there nothing of value in the recent history of science for the historian of microscopic anatomy? Though not his primary focus, the history of technique and instruments are treated lightly except when invoked to explain limitations and errant interpretations. Integrating this growing body of literature also would have served Harris well, especially as it is clear he is well qualified to provide such integration.

Despite its fundamental flaws, Harris's book offers a useful survey of sources and people for microscopic anatomy and cell thinking. The narrative offers a substantial improvement on elementary accounts found in the biologists' textbooks and gives the next generation a firm foundation to build upon. That Harris leaves much to do should be seen more as a challenge to the historian than as a criticism. That he could speak to the intellectual context but chooses not to remains this work's greatest disappointment.

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Lucy Bland and **Laura Doan** (eds), *Sexology in culture: labelling bodies and desires*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1998, pp. x, 236, £45.00 (hardback 0-7456-1982-7), £13.95 (paperback 0-7456-1983-5).

Lucy Bland and **Laura Doan** (eds), *Sexology uncensored: the documents of sexual science*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1998, pp. xv, 261, illus., £45.00 (hardback 0-7456-2112-0), £14.99 (paperback 0-7456-2113-9).

If the proliferation of biomedical theories of sexuality characterized the last *fin de siècle*; then the explosion of scholarly interest in those theories characterizes ours. *Sexology in culture* is an excellent collection of the kind of focused studies that have made the history of sexuality such a dynamic research field in recent years. The essays are as interdisciplinary as was sexology itself and show how medical and psychological elements were always intertwined in sexological discourse with legal, political and, above all, cultural notions of gender-appropriate desires and conduct.

No better illustration could be found for this statement than the concept of sexual inversion. As Merl Storr shows in her essay on Richard von Krafft-Ebing, inversion was far from equivalent to what we call homosexuality: it incorporated a number of grades and forms of deviation from cultural concepts of true masculinity and femininity—same sex eroticism was only one of these. This crucial point is also emphasized by Jay Prosser, who argues that not homosexuality but the far larger category of transgender phenomena was the primary concern of the pioneer sexologists. Exploring the question of inversion from another perspective, Joseph Bristow shows how Havelock Ellis's collaboration with the classicist John Addington Symonds petered out because of irreconcilable differences on the origins of inversion: for Symonds, it was healthy