that downplays contrarian evidence and thus endangers a proportion of the pill-popping population. The final case study explores the hypocrisy of a multibillion-dollar tobacco industry that manipulates the discourse on health and addiction to protect its corner of the drug market. These case studies collectively reveal some of the hypocrisy concerning the prevailing separation of drugs into discrete categories of good or evil, safe or unsafe.

The next section considers how drugs are characterized depending on various political, commercial, or social contexts, and DeGrandpre further argues that categories of disease and addiction are equally subject to these influences. While concentrating on users and on the context in which drugs are used, he demythologizes illicit and licit drugs to demonstrate how their characterization is largely related to social attitudes toward users rather than pharmacological properties. For example, he examines the idea of a "placebo text," which involves the anticipated effects of a substance; part of the placebo text includes the cultural assumption that "withdrawal is a pharmacological and physiological fact that cannot be denied" (p. 120). DeGrandpre challenges this assumption, arguing that addiction and withdrawal are social symptoms and that while individuals might enjoy the effects of a drug and its associated rituals, users are culturally (not physiologically) conditioned to accept the discourse of addiction as a reality of drug consumption. He provides several cases that contradict this myth of addiction; for example, thousands of American soldiers used opiates in Vietnam, yet less than 1 percent exhibited signs of dependence after returning home (p. 117).

In the final section DeGrandpre takes a close look at how drug trials and evidence are constructed and ultimately uses this analysis to challenge existing scientific theories about addiction. Animal studies convincingly suggest that the environment strongly influences drug-taking behavior and, furthermore, that social support systems determine the likelihood of dependence. Tackling pharmacological science head on, he concludes that even medical science does not uphold the demarcations between good and bad drugs or between valid "sick" "users" and invalid "abusers."

The implications of this book are significant. For example, the tobacco industry has now publicly recognized the medical risks involved with smoking, alongside an acceptance that smokers are "pharmacologically enslaved" to nicotine (p. 92). Antismoking campaigns have thus targeted new and potential users rather than addressing the smoking population. DeGrandpre contends that smokers *can* quit without health consequences, regardless of how difficult quitting might be for personal and social reasons. At the heart of this book lies the suggestion that America's trouble with drugs rests within an ideological acceptance of a system that considers drugs good or evil on the basis of evidence and reasoning that is inherently, though not necessarily maliciously, corrupt. Political, commercial, scientific, and cultural interests have legitimized a language of pharmacology that ascribes social meanings to drugs, and this same system validates addiction, withdrawal, and dependence as medicalized experiences. If, as DeGrandpre suggests, an effective "war on drugs" is to be waged, it requires new authorities; and the medical and pharmacological sciences are not designed to assume this role.

ERIKA DYCK

Ronald E. Doel; Thomas Söderqvist (Editors). *The Historiography of Contemporary Science, Technology, and Medicine: Writing Recent Science*. (Routledge Studies in the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine.) xv + 312 pp., figs., index. New York: Routledge, 2006. $131 (cloth).

In this collection of fifteen essays, historians, archivists, and journalists share their experiences in dealing with classified archives, imaginative witnesses, and vanishing digital sources, providing a perspective into the daily work of those investigating recent science, technology, and medicine (STM). A first theme running though this volume is oral history. The historian of medicine Tilly Tansey reflects on her long experience in organizing witness seminars — collective oral histories juxtaposing several witnesses and historians — a setting that provides "a form of open peer-review" (p. 270). Thomas Söderqvist, a historian of the life sciences, explores his emotional and moral involvements in the more intimate interviews he conducted with Niels K. Jerne in the preparation of a biography, a genre that provides "a way of practicing the care of one's scholarly self" (p. 122). The historians of science Ronald E. Doel and Pamela M. Henson argue that the history of contemporary STM would benefit from more extensive use of photographs as evidence, even though the methodology for their interpretation has not reached the sophistication of oral history.

Another theme, by far the most striking, con-

cerns access to and preservation of archives. This problem is particularly acute for the study of contemporary STM, because national security concerns, the privacy of living witnesses, and ephemeral digital media have all limited the availability of primary sources. When the scholar Anne Fitzpatrick gained a "Q clearance" from the Department of Defense in the 1990s, she went to the Los Alamos National Laboratory to examine classified documents about the development of nuclear weapons. She questions the received view that her new status alone gave her access to hidden secrets. There were no such secrets, claims Fitzpatrick, and holding a security clearance does "not automatically award a scholar access to every classified document" (p. 70). It remains crucially important "to cultivate good relationships" (p. 75) with the scientists and archivists.

Secrecy is also a product of the history-dot-com bubble, as the historian of medicine David Cantor demonstrates. After submitting an essay review highly critical of commissioned histories of cancer research in Britain to *Social History of Medicine*, he received several threats of legal action from colleagues in the field, probably echoing the voices of their corporate sponsors, who were criticized in the review. Dwelling on the theme of secrecy, the historian of technology Michael Aaron Dennis's provocative essay turns the issue on its head. Secrecy is not only an evil threatening the values of science and democracy (and preventing historians from doing their jobs); it also encloses a space for democratic practices, conferring moral authority on civilian scientists and making priority claims possible, thus playing a constitutive role in the production of knowledge.

The ephemeral nature of digital records may pose a more serious threat to the field than the culture of secrecy. Bruce V. Lewenstein, who creates archives on topics such as cold fusion, Y2K, and other recent technoscientific events, and Arne Hessenbruch, who has developed a Web site at MIT on the history of material sciences, take critical looks at the persistent lamentations that the digital age will lead to historical amnesia. Comparing Web pages to printed records might not be appropriate after all, because Web pages contain much information that would never have reached a wide audience before the advent of the internet. Rather, they are more akin to oral culture, the immense majority of which has quietly faded into oblivion.

The subtitle of the book, "Writing Recent Science," reflects a third theme. The science writer Keay Davidson shares the journalistic difficulty of telling stories about science without becoming "cheerleaders for science" (p. 23). He praises history of science for providing a critical look at the epistemic authority of science. The neutrality of the historian's perspective is addressed by Alexis De Greiff A. and Mauricio Nieto Olarte, who see in the study of South–North technoscientific exchange an opportunity for social studies of sciences to "rediscover and vindicate its political vocation" (p. 255). Finally, the historian of science John Krige contributes an innovative historical fiction, a "fable based on fact" (p. 153), demonstrating how this literary genre might enrich the writing of contemporary science.

This valuable book covers ground similar to that in an earlier volume edited by Thomas Söderqvist alone, under an almost identical title: *The Historiography of Contemporary Science and Technology* (Routledge, 1997). However, the issue of archival access has gained further prominence in a time when numerous American (and Russian) governmental records are being reclassified in the aftermath of 9/11. This issue isn't addressed in the context of the corporate world, a surprising omission, given the fact that the history of "private science" — the pharmaceutical industry, for example — is of growing interest in the profession. This otherwise well-balanced volume demonstrates a healthy self-reflective attitude among historians of recent STM, who will be comforted to learn that others have been facing similar challenges in their research.

BRUNO J. STRASSER

Saul Dubow. *A Commonwealth of Knowledge: Science, Sensibility, and White South Africa, 1820–2000*. xi + 296 pp., figs., bibl., index. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. £60 (cloth).

In the author's words, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge* "examines the intellectual underpinnings of white South African identity and power by foregrounding scientific and social knowledge in the process of national self-understanding" (preface). This sophisticated work extends the scholarship Saul Dubow has articulated in *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa* (Cambridge, 1995) and in his edited volume *Science and Society in South Africa* (Manchester, 2000). This is intellectual history broadly construed, embracing the conceptual worlds of politicians and teachers as much if not more than those of physicists or archaeologists. At its core this book examines a South African sensibility embodied by Jan Smuts, a sometimes-visionary prime min-