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MATING MALES: AN EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE ON MAMMALIAN REPRODUCTION.

By Timothy Glover. *Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.* \$110.00 (hardcover); \$44.99 (paper). xviii + 202 p.; ill.; index. ISBN: 978-1-107-00001-8 (hc); 978-0-521-15957-9 (pb). 2012.

The author, Emeritus Professor of Veterinary Anatomy at the University of Queensland, distills a lifetime of research on male reproductive anatomy into a quirky and delightfully detailed account of the reproductive morphology, physiology, and behavior of male mammals. *Mating Males* is distinctly old-school—a rambling, self-indulgent account complete with personal reminiscences, hand-drawn sketches, and grainy black-and-white photographs of dissected reproductive organs. It is an easy and almost soothing read, with no references cited in the text, and little besides curiosity (and patience) expected of readers.

Glover takes an evolutionary perspective on his subject, and much of the book is devoted to a comparative discourse on penises, scrota, testes, sperm, and mating behaviors in mammals. This is the kind of discussion that will appeal to those who love copious detail and embrace bold hypothesizing. Have you ever considered why some mammals have a pendular scrotum while other mammals keep their testes tight against their body, or even deep inside the abdominal cavity? Why is it that sperm production fails at core body temperature in rats, but continues without a glitch in humans? Are you aware that boars have a corkscrew-shaped penis, while rams have a peculiar urethra extension jutting out from the tip of theirs, like the lure of an anglerfish? Glover's expertise in his subject is palpable on every page, and I for one came away from this book with a much-enhanced appreciation for the many interesting evolutionary questions left to answer about variation in mammalian reproductive anatomy—a subject that, I am ashamed to say, I used to regard as dreadfully boring by comparison with the mind-boggling sexual machinations of insects.

It is unfortunate that this material is sandwiched between introductory and concluding sections that clearly reach well beyond Glover's sphere of competence. The introductory chapter, devoted to basic principles of sexual selection, elementary cytology, and genetics, could have been written in 1950. Readers familiar with evolutionary principles will be taken aback by the author's cheerful assertion that *Antechinus* males die en masse after mating season to avoid excessive matings and make room for the next generation (among many similar statements), while human chromosomes are bizarrely mischaracterized not just in function but even in number. The final chapter, devoted to hu-

man reproduction, devolves into a lengthy, vaguely moralistic lament for the good old days, before birth control and IVF, when sex allegedly meant pair-bonding and reproduction. Most readers would do well to skip straight to the middle chapters on anatomy and physiology, and end there.

Despite its quirks, I found much of this book interesting and informative. It is an example of the in-depth approach to biology—a lifetime's effort devoted to understanding a particular slice of the biological world, akin to an entomologist's lifelong love affair with a particular insect order. Glover knows the male mammal's reproductive system like the back of his hand, and *Mating Males* is a useful introduction to the subject for biologists, students, and even curious general readers.

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TRUSTING WHAT YOU'RE TOLD: HOW CHILDREN LEARN FROM OTHERS.

By Paul L. Harris. *Belknap Press. Cambridge (Massachusetts): Harvard University Press.* \$26.95. vii + 253 p.; ill.; index. ISBN: 978-0-674-06572-7. 2012.

Cultural learning has been identified as a fundamental capacity to explain what makes us human. It allows humans to acquire knowledge and skills from others, rather than individuals having to reinvent the wheel on their own. Much discussion has ensued about the extent to which these capacities are human-unique, enabling cultural transmission at a rate and efficiency not found in even our closest evolutionary relatives. Paul Harris adds a new spin to this debate by pointing to a feature that had been neglected in these deliberations: children ask questions, lots of questions. Harris shows how children take an active role in the process of cultural transmission by seeking answers from others and evaluating what is presented to them. From a surprisingly early age, children weigh new pieces of information against their own experience and the multiple (and often conflicting) answers that different adults provide. For example, four-year-old children can track a person's past accuracy and are thus not lost when two people call a new entity by different names—they will go with who had been proven to be a reliable informant and ignore the person who mislabeled known entities in the past. Moreover, even if an informant appears to be completely certain about something, they ignore that information if a group majority disapproves the individual's claim. The minds of children as formulated by Harris's work are curious, but also inquisitive and critical, allow-