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in the eighteenth century, sex as we know it was invented". The reproductive organs, hitherto examples of displayed hierarchy, became "the foundation of an incommensurable difference". Henceforth, woman was not regarded so universally as an inferior form of man, though this idea lived on in many guises into the present. The idea that female organs were inverted male organs lost ground and new names appeared for them; ovaries were no longer known as male testicles and the vagina, previously unnamed except as an inverted penis, acquired a name. Male and female skeletons and nervous systems were differentiated. Two sexes "were invented as a new foundation for gender". Woman was regarded as passionless yet dominated and controlled by her sexual organs, and sometimes this apparent anomaly was resolved in the idea that she was perhaps better able than man to control her bestiality. The following quotations are typical of thousands. "A woman exists only through her ovaries", "women owe their manner of being to their organs of generation, and especially to the uterus", and "propter solum ovarium mulier est id quod est". Such views abounded long before the biological function of the ovaries was understood.

This change, epitomized in the new slogan "opposites attract", can be looked at in different ways. Epistemologically it is part of the disentanglement of science from religion, fact from fiction, possible from impossible; it is also part of the reduction to a single plane of complex resemblances between bodies, and between bodies and the cosmos, which had previously confirmed a hierarchy now displaced in favour of the "immovable foundation of physical fact: sex". But the context was politics, the endless new struggles for power and position that developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As the pre-existing transcendental order became less plausible, justification for social relations, the battleground of gender roles, shifted to nature or biological sex, but the new ideas were not based on scientific discovery. The nature of sexual difference, says Laqueur, "is not susceptible to empirical testing" and tends to be in "the language of gender". Ironically, the strengthening belief in the dominance of the ovaries over women led, after 1870, to the widespread practice of "female castration", when the ovaries were removed for conditions such as "hysteria", "nymphomania" and other conditions regarded as "failures of femininity". It is noteworthy that this operation was performed extensively, despite a mortality rate of 1 in 3. Laqueur believes it was done because some doctors "took literally the synecdoches they had invented" and actually believed (in Virchow's words) that woman was a pair of ovaries.

The book also discusses the ways in which masturbation and orgasm were constructed against the same background and ends with Freud's "discovery" that there were two locations of female orgasm, one mature and the other immature. Laqueur regards the theory as "a narrative of culture in anatomical disguise", an instrument for making women accept their social role. He says that Freud "must have known that he was inventing vaginal orgasm and that he was at the same time giving a radical new meaning to the clitoris". Laqueur ends with Freud "because he posed the problems so richly" and demonstrated, with so many others discussed in this rich book, that "the content of talk about sexual difference is unfettered by fact, and is as free as mind's play".

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DEAN KEITH SIMONTON, *Psychology, science, & history: an introduction to historiometry*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1991, pp. xi, 291, £20.00, \$32.50 (0-300-04771-1).

Since the mid-1970s Dean Simonton has been the leading figure in the development of "historiometrics" in the USA. This discipline aspires to "exploit history to do science", the science in question being psychology. Simonton carefully differentiates it both from cliometrics (which "applies science to history") and psychohistory (which is idiographic and too dominated by psychoanalysis anyway). Historiometrics aims to exploit nomothetic quantitative methods in elucidating psychological hypotheses about such things as genius, creativity, and leadership, with a view, ultimately, to identifying general laws of human nature,

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“the discovery and confirmation of universals”. The genealogy of this enterprise is from A. Quetelet and Francis Galton to James McKeen Cattell, Lewis M. Terman, and David McLelland. The present book is primarily about the methodological problems involved in applying orthodox statistical and psychometric techniques to data pertaining to “historical individuals”; quantification, sampling, validity, reliability, and regression analysis are all dealt with. However large the samples of philosophers, composers, Presidents, novelists, absolute monarchs, etc., being dealt with, the focus is ultimately on individual psychological characteristics. Psychology, with its individualist focus, is “the premier behavioural science”. How readers react will largely depend on their attitude to the historiometric project as such. Here the reviewer has a fundamental difficulty in that, disclaimers of a priori conceptual assumptions notwithstanding, the implicit premise is that there is some ahistorical subject-matter, “human nature”, the laws governing which it is the psychologist’s scientific task to identify. In conjunction with the assumption that the individual is the appropriate and privileged unit of analysis this clearly places historiometrics beyond the pale for social constructionists and kindred spirits.

From one point of view the whole enterprise is scientism gone mad, and occasional sentences like “There are at least 2,012 thinkers who exerted some influence on Western intellectual history, and at least 2,026 scientists and inventors boast a permanent spot in the annals of science” do not help. They seem as daft in their way as the vague generalizations offered by historians, which rightly arouse Simonton’s impatience. You can also find herein a “trend line for repertoire melodic originality for 15,618 classical themes by 479 composers active from 1500 to 1950”, “standardized scores on personality dimensions for U.S. Presidents” (Reagan second only to Kennedy in “wit”) and “all-time eminence rankings of classical composers” (Sousa 80.5, Elgar 91, J. S. Bach 1). But Simonton is an old hand by now, and not unaware of the conceptual pitfalls; on the contrary, the whole book is about mapping them out. From another point of view Simonton is heroically extending psychology’s sampling, earthing airy historical hypotheses in empirical data, and pressing doggedly on with a faith in the Galtonian vision increasingly rare even within mainstream psychology.

Granted an initial suspension of one’s disbeliefs, the book is full of interesting (often bemusing) information, wise methodological advice, and frequent insights into specific issues, written in an often engaging style. However different from my own the drum to which Simonton is marching, I am happy to keep him in earshot. He might be number 2,027 after all.

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JOE SIM, *Medical power in prisons: the prison medical service in England 1774–1989*, Milton Keynes and Philadelphia, Open University Press, 1990, pp. xii, 212, £32.50 (0–335–15183–3), £10.99 (paperback, 0–335–15182–5).

Joe Sim surveys professional medical involvement in prisons in England from the end of the eighteenth century, challenging the view “that medical care for prisoners has been a journey from barbarism to enlightenment”. Medical historians familiar with the ideas of Foucault and others will scarcely be astonished by his main thesis of a Prison Medical Service (PMS) integrated into the system of authority relations, committed to the ideology of discipline, punishment, and “normalisation”. Many of the details he presents are, however, both unfamiliar and significant, casting illuminating sidelights on a subject often obscured by official secrecy, public indifference, and professional complacency.

It is more of a sociologist’s book than a historian’s and that of a sociologist openly committed to the side of the victims rather than the possessors of medical power. The past is generally interpreted in terms of the present, as in the too-early description of the PMS as a homogeneous professional entity, and an overall tendency to subordinate the available evidence to the book’s thesis. This aim becomes explicit with the allusion to a “usable past” in the Conclusions, illustrated in concepts like “the legacy of ‘less eligibility’” making prisons themselves “prisoners of the past and of history”. One consequence of the approach is that the