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978-0-521-11713-5 - Scientific Genius: A Psychology of Science

Dean Keith Simonton

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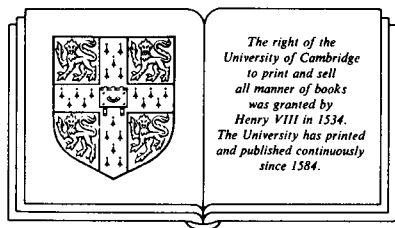
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Scientific genius

A psychology of science

DEAN KEITH SIMONTON

University of California, Davis



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To Dad, Mom, Keith, and Grandma Rena

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Acknowledgments

This book owes its existence to several outside stimuli. The most immediate and important impetus was the invitation to participate in the conference “The Psychology of Science” in the spring of 1986, chaired by William Shadish and sponsored by the Center for Applied Psychology at Memphis State University. It became evident as I prepared my paper for presentation that I had a book-length manuscript inside my head, and therefore I had to resign myself to reading just a preliminary abstract at the conference. Barry Gholson, Arthur Graesser, Arthur Houts, and Robert Neimeyer, all members of the “metascience” group at the Center, offered detailed comments on that draft, which helped improve the current product as well. Moreover, at the conference itself I benefited from my conversations with Donald Campbell, Arthur Miller, and Ron Westrum, as well as the encouraging response of Howard Gruber.

Another motivating force was an earlier conference, “Scientific Excellence: Origins and Assessment,” held at the University of Western Ontario, London, and organized by Douglas Jackson and J. Philippe Rushton. It was at that meeting that I first tried to synthesize my research on the multiples phenomenon. Much of chapter 6 emerges directly from that first attempt, although my thoughts on that subject have developed considerably since then. At that conference, too, I was stimulated by interactions with Janet Bavelas, Eugene Garfield, and Lee Sechrest.

These two conferences encouraged me to consolidate my thinking on a topic that has intrigued me for many years—the scientific genius. Along the way I have gained from the advice, criticism, and miscellaneous reactions of numerous researchers in this area. Many years ago Donald Campbell generously gave me photocopies of various articles relevant to his model of creativity, articles that were otherwise obscure, inaccessible, or outright unavailable. A long if sporadic correspondence with the late Derek de Solla Price encouraged me in the early stages of my empirical work on science, and he was a major factor in helping me publish my first book on genius-grade creativity. Robert K. Merton would send me, from time to time, a brief note that suggested that my ideas were attracting some appreciation. Kenneth Craik, by inviting me to the Institute for Personality

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x *Acknowledgments*

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