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BOOK REVIEW

Matthew Daniel Eddy, *Media and the Mind: Art, Science and Notebooks as Paper Machines, 1700–1830*,

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2023. Pp. 512. ISBN 978-0-226-18386-2. $65.00 (cloth).

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How does our understanding of Enlightenment science change if we shift attention from published texts by celebrated *philosophes* to the notes taken by their students? How can these 'material and visual artifacts' be read, and what do they reveal that would otherwise remain invisible? Matthew Daniel Eddy offers an ambitious study of how Scottish students processed, organized, represented and disseminated knowledge between 1700 and 1830.

At the core of *Media and the Mind* is the claim that notebooks were not passive repositories but thinking tools, indispensable to ordering knowledge and forming rational argument. Eddy analyses dozens of manuscripts produced by male and female students, mostly from middling merchant families, professionals and artisans, whose diverse educational trajectories converged in annotation practices. What unites these cases is the mechanics of work: the material acts of writing, compiling and arranging notes. These were not disembodied forms of knowledge but situated artefacts, made in time and space: 'the skills of reasoning were learned over time within the lives of individuals who were doing things with their minds and bodies in, around, and through notebooks on a daily basis' (p. 30).

Trained as a historian of science, Eddy shows how notetaking, notekeeping and annotating were central to building evidence and ordering the mind: in short, to making knowledge. Crucially, these were not solitary exercises but part of broader 'notekeeping communities' spanning homes, schools, universities and academies. By reconstructing these practices, *Media and the Mind* seeks to contribute to what Eddy calls 'Scotland's popular Enlightenment', shedding light on the intellectual and social contexts of students who were neither elite nor destined for fame. The research is grounded in extensive archival work and is supported by a rich bibliography exceeding sixty pages.

Methodologically, the book participates in the material turn inaugurated by historians of books and print, while also engaging with historians of science on the rise of modern notions of objectivity, probability and observation, and with anthropologists who treat notes as a form of 'thinking through making'. Tim Ingold's notion of 'wayfaring' – 'a dynamic process of learning or enacting the skills required to make the various components that add up to a singular artifact' (p. 13) – is especially pertinent. The notebooks appear here as 'dynamic artifacts' – 'paper machines', in Markus Krajewski's phrase – enabling cognitive processing and functioning as powerful media technologies.

Eddy frames his argument around Locke's metaphor of the *tabula rasa*, understood both as the mind as blank page and as a reference to 'the material culture of foliation, inscription and codection' (p. 31). The effect is to propose an alternative history of the Enlightenment,

one that shifts the focus from professors' lectures and publications to students' notebooks and elaborations. This change of perspective also brings into view female students, who have been largely overlooked.

Thus John Millar, whose student notes on Adam Smith's Glasgow lectures are well known, is placed alongside Margaret Monro, represented through a 386-page codex she composed at the age of twelve under the supervision of her father, the anatomist and university professor Alexander Monro Primus. Here the daughter rather than the celebrated father takes centre stage. Similarly, instead of concentrating on the work of the philosopher James Mill, Eddy turns to the notebooks of his pupil Williamina Belsches, aged seventeen, which contain 'a series of perspicuous essays' (p. 161). The range of cases underpinning the argument is striking: Mary Somerville, daughter of a naval officer, mapping seaborne journeys from her home in Fife; James Fowler in the Highlands learning mathematics by sketching a sundial; or Robert Richardson, whose notes for a mercantile career expose the hybrid character of annotation. Such examples reveal students as active makers of science. Their notebooks show not just what was taught but how knowledge was learned, ordered and systematized: indeed, how it was co-produced.

In a reflexive gesture, the book is structured according to the very practices it studies. Chapters are arranged around modes of classifying and hierarchizing knowledge – writing, codexing, annotating, categorizing, drawing, mapping, systemizing, diagramming, circulating – and culminate in a conclusion on 'rethinking manuscripts' as artefacts. The design itself enacts the principle of 'knowledge in motion'. Richly illustrated with notebooks, tables, paratexts, frontispieces, diagrams, posture guides, instruments, portraits, classroom scenes and schools, the volume makes images an integral part of the argument.

To frame the epistemological terms of his study, Eddy repeatedly draws on the first edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, published in Edinburgh in 1771 in three quarto volumes. The choice is far from neutral, raising questions that might deserve fuller elaboration. Edited and largely compiled by the printer William Smellie – then a little-known figure – *Britannica* positioned itself as a methodological foil to Diderot's and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*. Whereas the French work embraced a fragmentary, dialogic, alphabetical method, which Smellie dismissed as a 'folly' incompatible with 'the very idea of science', the Scottish project privileged systematic organization around major disciplinary treatises. The 'Abridgement' entry, where Smellie extols the art of condensing material with 'a pair of scissors', epitomizes this ethos of useful knowledge, stripped of vain disputes and tedious detail. Whether such a stance is representative of the Enlightenment, Scottish or otherwise, remains open, but it captures Eddy's concern with the material logic of condensation and order.

The book resonates with another recent contribution, Francesca Antonelli's *Scrivere e sperimentare: Marie-Anne Paulze-Lavoisier, segretaria della 'nuova chimica' (1771–1836)* (2022). Here, too, scientific practice emerges through the acts of organizing, notetaking, indexing and drawing undertaken by Marie-Anne Paulze, the young wife of Antoine Lavoisier. Making her role visible requires shifting attention from publication to the moment of inscription and experimental annotation. Read together, Eddy's and Antonelli's studies demonstrate how focusing on the hand that writes – the material labour of notetaking – uncovers new, often female, actors and practices in Enlightenment science. These figures may not replace canonical names such as Lavoisier, Smith or Monro, but they prompt us to see Enlightenment knowledge making as a collaborative and multi-layered process.

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