




BOOK REVIEW

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

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Matthew Daniel Eddy's *Media and the Mind* offers a welcome examination of the notebook as a site of student learning and practice. Drawing primarily on notebooks kept by Scottish students between 1700 and 1830, Eddy examines how the practices of notebook-keeping informed and reflected contemporary understandings of the relationship between writing and thinking. Eddy invokes the metaphor of the tabula rasa, and particularly its use by John Locke, to highlight the instrumental roles of the notebook as a “personalized technology” for Enlightenment audiences (5).

Eddy bounds his study to Scotland (and particularly Scottish universities) between 1700 and 1830, in doing so making possible a richly collections-centered project. His research is particularly welcome in highlighting examples from Scottish collections, particularly those of Edinburgh University Library, the National Library of Scotland, the Edinburgh City Archive, and the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh. Drilling down into particular facets of the use of notebooks, Eddy proposes an overarching thesis in which notebooks inform cognitive practice, acting as instruments through which students learned to systematize their thinking. Individual examples illuminate these instances of practice, offering glimpses into those moments in which Enlightenment writers grappled with the messy, cumbersome practice of acquiring knowledge.

The book takes as its focus those categories of material, cognitive, organizational, and social practice generated by student note-keeping. The work is organized in three parts, loosely based on the metaphor of the tabula rasa. Part one, “Inside the Tabula Rasa,” centers on the core skills of paper-based knowledge: writing; “codexing,” or organizing into paper-based textual units; and annotating. In chapter two, “Writing,” Eddy introduces the contexts in which Scottish students learned to write. He surveys the tools and practices of writing and organizing text on the page, and highlights the importance of copying, both as a means of learning to write and as a mode of formulating the relationship between writer, writing, and text. Chapter three, “Codexing,” focuses on the notebook as an artifact of practice: the folding, gathering, stitching, and assembling by which a writer might draw sheets of paper into the unit of the codex. Chapter four, “Annotating,” addresses the relationships inherent in marginalia. We see the margin as a notetaking space; the annotation as a moment of pedagogical engagement by a tutor or instructor; and annotations as a form of metadata, through the writer's imposition of headings or other paratextual organization. Eddy moves between the spaces and practices of writing to highlight paper's simultaneous performances within the notebook: as writing surface, as quire within organizing structure, as margin or adjacent space, both textual and social.

Part two, “Around the Tabula Rasa,” addresses the visual structures and spaces of the page, focusing on the ways these served to facilitate various cognitive and mnemonic

practices. Chapter five, "Categorizing," takes headings as its focus, examining the heading as an instrument of intellectual and visual organization. Chapter six, "Drawing," turns to practices of technical representation in student notebooks, ranging from drawing and graphic description to measurement, as in the use of paper surveying or astronomical instruments. Chapter seven, "Mapping," highlights the process of tracing, drafting, and other kinesthetic practices underpinning the creation and the use of maps by students.

Part three, "Beyond the Tabula Rasa," moves beyond the individual page or notebook to look at the ways in which note-keeping supported broader cognitive and social practices. Chapter eight, "Systemizing," focuses on the syllabus and the lecture as points in which instructors and students alike participated in a moveable framework of knowledge, one in which temporary or mutable instruments such as headings, slips, and drafts allowed students and instructors to practice more permanent organizing structures. Chapter nine, "Diagramming," examines visual aids, mnemonic devices, and other practices of rendering systems of knowledge as visual objects. Chapter ten, "Circulating," turns to the social communities inhabited by note-keepers, through practices of sharing, copying, borrowing, or editing texts.

Media and the Mind is an archival study: Eddy draws on his extensive study of Scottish notebooks across institutional collections, framing his argument on the evidence of specific examples. The work is at its strongest in these moments, when Eddy shows us writers caught in particular moments of practice in their notebooks, as in the mesmerizing glimpses of Joseph Black as instructor that weave through the volume, sometimes in a portrait of Black with "slips," others in student sketches of Black as authoritative instructor, still others in notes and notebooks kept by Black himself. These occasional celebrity sightings stand alongside the many other note-keepers of the study, and Eddy draws on a tremendous foundation of archival research to frame these individual instances as examples of overarching categories of practice.

This is not a book about the politics of writing. Eddy's focus on student note-keepers tends to preclude questions of identity, the categories of class, race, and gender governing entry into note-keeping in early modern Scotland. *Media and the Mind* instead examines how the practices of writing and note-taking influenced and informed early modern structures of thought. In focusing on the notebook as a form of intellectual apparatus, the work contributes to a field of scholarship in early modern history and media studies formatively shaped by the work of Ann Blair, Anthony Grafton, and Markus Krajewski, among others. One tenet of this school is to ask the extent to which early modern British and European reading and writing practices are reflected in media technologies of the present. In this context, to study "the notebook" (whether the early modern paper codex or the contemporary personal computer) is to some extent to look to paper as the organizing precursor of post-paper information technologies. One of Eddy's achievements in *Media and the Mind* is to bring the archival case study of the Scottish Enlightenment to bear on this discussion.