
Essays on David Hume, Medical Men and the Scottish Enlightenment: 'Industry, Knowledge and Humanity' by Roger L. Emerson

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The Scottish Enlightenment was a period of the 18th-century in which Scotland, driven by utility and rationality, embraced intellectual, social, and scientific developments. This book builds on many years of scholarship by Roger Emerson and is an intriguing collection of revised conference papers and new essays. Emerson intends to involve the reader in a holistic approach to the topic, echoing Hume and the subtitle of the book that 'Industry, Knowledge and Humanity' are forever joined and flourish in times of refinement. Through 10 chapters, Emerson examines the context of the Scottish Enlightenment, the interaction between the Scots and their European neighbors, medical education, and the characters central to the Enlightenment such as David Hume and the third Duke of Argyll.

The first chapter seeks to examine the circumstances of the Scottish Enlightenment by reflecting on the countries that influenced Scotland and the movement towards making Scotland 'culturally respectable'. Emerson makes the point that at the beginning of the 18th-century constraints on travel meant that Scots often associated with the French and the Dutch. Scots traded in continental Europe and the professional classes were frequently educated abroad, as prior to 1726 neither medicine nor law could be studied completely in Scotland. Emerson makes good use of recent research in this field as he describes how Scottish professionals furthered their education in places like Leiden and La Flèche. He is also keen to contradict Roy Porter's suggestion that the Scottish Enlightenment was part of an English one [Porter 2000, xvii–xviii], and argues instead that it was a

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distinctly separate affair. The subsequent chapters defend this position, proving that the expressive and tolerant Enlightenment changed Scottish society so that it could compete in a rapidly evolving world.

Chapter 2 chapter provides detailed insight into Archibald Campbell, third Duke of Argyll, who was a fierce patron of the Scottish Enlightenment. The essay is based on Emerson's forthcoming biography. He suggests that more time should be devoted to researching patrons like Campbell who made the careers of enlightenment figures possible. As little has previously been written about him, this is a welcome chapter which is not only a condensed biography but also describes the Duke's methodology for patronizing certain causes. The Duke's influence was felt in many sectors and he fought to maintain Scottish independence. The extent of his patronage is acknowledged as a major factor in the progress of the Scottish Enlightenment. To reinforce this sentiment, Emerson asks, 'What would Scotland and the Scottish Enlightenment have been without a patron such as Argyll?' [38]. The answer is left for the reader to decide; but from the information put forward, I would suggest it may not have been as far-reaching or as swift.

Recognizing that there were relatively few people involved in the European enlightenments, chapter 3 attempts to estimate the number of Scots that were enlightened. It is a useful exercise, as it points out not only that women were almost excluded but also that the enlightened few were centered around the cities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. After much analysis and some guesswork, Emerson emerges with an effective enlightened community of no more than 1,300 between the three municipalities. He further reduces this figure to about 700 people in 1760 who would be considered the visible enlightened. The social and political elite was well represented in this group. Given that the upper classes feared that the enlightenment could prove socially disruptive, Emerson acknowledges the importance of the social historical aspects in understanding how national enlightenments arose and were adopted.

Chapter 4 provides insight into education as it focuses on what 18th-century Scottish students read at both school and university (college). Emerson explores the changing face of children's literature citing John Locke as the mentor of British writers in the early 18th-century, followed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Books produced by

authors such as Anna Laetitia Barbauld promoted piety and morality as they reflected the religious overtones of the school curriculum. Moving on to what university students read, Emerson gives a number of possible authors. However, it is often difficult to decipher what books were used because professors recommended many books, but infrequently assigned a key publication. To extend their education many students undertook extracurricular reading. By inspecting club libraries and personal collections, Emerson notes that much of this reading can be traced. This chapter provides a useful introduction to the reading habits of 18th-century students, but it is in the footnotes that gems of inspiration can be found.

The next four chapters concern David Hume (formerly Home). By devoting over a third of the book to Hume, Emerson signifies his importance within the Scottish Enlightenment. During his lifetime Hume was primarily known as a historian and philosopher, occupations that most scholars focus on; however, he was also an important political economist. Hume's political economy is the focus of chapter 7 and fills a gap in Hume scholarship. Using extracts from Hume's correspondence, Emerson creates an image of Hume's life and work that is perceptive and recognizes the anxiety which he felt as a younger man. One aspect of chapter 5 that follows nicely from the previous chapter deals with Hume's changing reading habits. Hume had become bored with his law studies and had taken to reading literature and philosophy, becoming something of a Stoic.

Chapter 6 is a response to M. A. Stewart's essay, 'Hume's Intellectual Development 1711–1752' [2005]. Emerson addresses the intellectual development of Hume the historian, recognizing how history had fascinated him from an early age. By speculating on how the topographical features of his boyhood homeland could have fostered interest in local history, Emerson explores the sources of information such as the local kirk that would appeal to an inquisitive young mind. The analysis of what Hume read dovetails quite nicely with the discussion of what 18th-century Scottish students read that concerned chapter 4.

The exploration of Hume's historical writings and political economy is perceptive and thorough. Emerson considers the problems of structure and direction in Hume's work and highlights the religious views and the undercurrent of pessimism that he believes ran

through Hume's work. Given the detailed pictures created throughout the text, images of Hume and the third Duke of Argyll would have provided an additional dimension to the narrative.

The penultimate chapter echoes chapter 3 as it attempts to determine how many Scots were trained in medicine and surgery. Such an exercise is interesting as it not only assists in the history of medical education but also emphasizes the economic and social importance of the trainee medics. During the discussion of how many non-Scottish medics were educated in Scotland, there is no mention of the number of English Dissenters excluded from Oxbridge who crossed the border to train. An investigation into such figures would provide a useful addition to the chapter.

The final chapter examines the utilitarian nature of the movement. Emerson recognizes that since 1985 there has been increased interest in the 18th-century and the Scottish Enlightenment. The resultant scholarship has shed new light on the enlightenment and led to the birth of societies like the 18th Century Scottish Studies Society. However, Emerson remarks that studies are often flawed as little attention is given to the social context of enlightenments, something that his work has addressed.

Throughout the book, Emerson makes references to both primary and secondary sources, which are detailed in both footnotes and listed in an extensive bibliography that includes many forthcoming publications. When transcribing Hume's correspondence, it is good that the original spelling and punctuation has been retained. The numerous footnotes add richness to the narrative of each chapter, often providing intriguing nuances and additional detail. One criticism that I have is that on some pages the spatial arrangement is skewed as the footnotes outweigh the body of the text. However, it is better to have information in footnotes than to turn constantly to the end of the book to retrieve it.

Individually the essays are interesting and insightful, and they force the reader to reflect upon the relationship between intellectual and social developments. Together they form an impressive collection that provides outsiders with a detailed overview of aspects of the Scottish Enlightenment. Owing to the book's composition, it has the potential to feel disjointed. Emerson manages to avoid this, even integrating a chapter on the number of Scottish medics which at

first glance appears out of place towards the end of the book. By locating the count in chapter 9, it builds on the economic and political discussions of previous chapters and avoids the creation of a dense block of statistical analysis that could have disrupted the flow of the narrative. Overall the author's detailed research and clear prose paid off as the book was entertaining and stimulating; it certainly achieves its aim of embracing 'industry, knowledge, and humanity'.

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