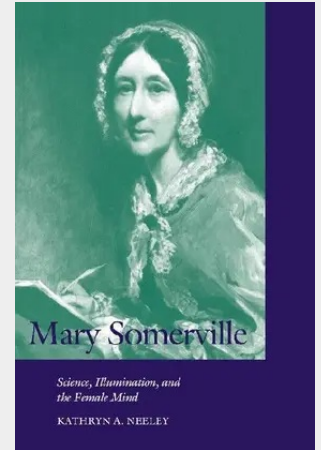


Mary Somerville

Science, Illumination, and the Female Mind

In an era when science was perceived as a male domain, Mary Somerville (1780-1872) became both the leading woman scientist of her day and an integral part of the British scientific community. She achieved this status through careful management of her gender identity and by creating rich, readable, and authoritative accounts of science that were rhetorically compelling, aesthetically satisfying, and valuable to the scientific community in the UK and abroad. This biography offers detailed analysis of the underlying patterns, themes, and rhetorical strategies of her major works and argues that Somerville employed a transcendent feminine style that retained the advantages but transcended the limitations usually associated with women's ways of knowing. The book advocates a new narrative for women's participation in science and demonstrates the many ways that gender relates to science and science functions in culture.

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