

**Christina Lupton, *Reading and the Making of Time in the Eighteenth Century*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018. Pp. 199. £37. ISBN 9781421425764.**

When do we read? How does reading transform our experience of time? Christina Lupton's book engages with the temporality of reading in the eighteenth century to offer a renewed history of the book which draws on a wide array of practices: the book one browses through, the book one buys for future reading, the book one shelves and forgets about, the book one gives, the book one hopes to write one day. Her media-oriented vision of book consumption foregrounds material strategies to 'extract, cut up, reuse, and read novels indexically' (78). The printed codex book thus becomes an invitation to partial, repeated, desultory, or deferred reading, resisting the measured time of clocks and the modern temporal economies of productivity and profitability. Located 'in time opened up by contingency as an awareness of what could have been otherwise, and in the time that has not yet come' (12), the codex becomes an agency in intellectual life by making time, by opening up new and creative patterns of temporality.

Although grounded in book history and material studies, Lupton's analysis is less committed to the social history of reading than to a literary and theoretical approach. She summons readers from various backgrounds, from the book dealer James Lackington to the politician William Wyndham Grenville. Literary figures traditionally known as writers, such as Amelia Opie, William Godwin, and Samuel Johnson, are here studied as readers. Yet, Lupton focuses less on their individual experiences than on a shared phenomenology of book use, on the temporal framework those readers live, work, and read in, or rather, on the temporal zones their reading practices generate. The books themselves are also present, through close-readings of the construction of time in conjunction with patterns of book consumption, in narratives such as Henry Fielding's *Amelia*, Frances Sheridan's *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*, Samuel Richardson's *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*, or Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story*.

The four chapters explore time scales which resist the homogenous time of clocks and calendars. Chapter 1 looks into eighteenth-century readers' perception of their lack of free time to read. It explores the challenge of making time to read, especially for female readers, in a context where books compete with work and social obligations, but also with more immediate and enticing reading material, such as pamphlets, periodicals, or newspapers. The second chapter unfolds on the scale of the lifetime. It studies the practice of returning to books one has already read and explores the temporality of rereading in terms of shifting and renewed interpretations. Chapter 3 turns to the parallel times unfolding within the codex book, which invites practices of nonlinear reading as well as a reflection on 'the sense of contingency that this brings to scenes of its real and imagined reading' (121). Chapter 4 is deeply relevant to scholars and students of Romanticism because of its emphasis on the politics of book reading. For Lupton, the printed book plays a part in the emergence of the revolutionary imagination in Romantic Britain, as it opens vistas onto a more democratic future in which people have the time, leisure and education to read more. Chapter 4 thus contends that the Romantic poetics of prophecy also stems from William Godwin's vision of books as 'oriented in time toward a future in which they already participate' (143).

One of the many strengths of this study is its reflexive take on research methodology, as it questions new forms of scholarship based on data mining and on spatialized representations of intellectual transactions. According to Lupton, digital visualizations of book circulation relying on spatiality leave little room for the temporalities of book reading and its inherent discontinuities, from the unread book to the various paces of reading. More generally, Lupton's study circulates

between the eighteenth century and our own current reading practices as academics, throwing light on their origins in eighteenth-century practices of translation and conversation. This allows her to reflect on the future of the humanities and to advocate for reading as a practice undertaken for its own sake.

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