Publisher’s description: What is time? This is one of the most fundamental questions we can ask. Traditionally, the answer was that time is a product of the human mind, or of the motion of celestial bodies. In the mid-seventeenth century, a new kind of answer emerged: time or eternal duration is ‘absolute’, in the sense that it is independent of human minds and material bodies.

Emily Thomas explores the development of absolute time or eternal duration during one of Britain’s richest and most creative metaphysical periods, from the 1640s to the 1730s. She introduces an interconnected set of main characters – Henry More, Walter Charleton, Isaac Barrow, Isaac Newton, John Locke, Samuel Clarke, and John Jackson – alongside a large and varied supporting cast, whose metaphysical views are all read in their historical context and given a place in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century development of thought about time.

MSC:
01-02 Research exposition (monographs, survey articles) pertaining to history and biography
00A30 Philosophy of mathematics
01A45 History of mathematics in the 17th century
01A50 History of mathematics in the 18th century

Keywords:
absolutism; time; eternity; duration; space; relationism; God; metaphysics

Biographic references:
More, Henry;
Charleton, Walter;
Barrow, Isaac;
Newton, Isaac;
Locke, John;
Clarke, Samuel;
Jackson, John

Full Text: DOI