The English common reader: a social history of the mass reading public, 1800-1900

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The English Common Reader directly inspired the foundation of the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing in 1991. Within six years, SHARP would attract a thousand members in twenty countries! Although book historians are now exploring every link in Darnton’s communications circuit, one could argue that all their researches into authorship, printing, publishing, distribution, and literary property lead ultimately to the reader. No book can play any meaningful role in history until somebody reads it, and we cannot know what influence a given book has unless we can somehow