

NICHOLSON BAKER

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# Double Fold

LIBRARIES

AND THE

ASSAULT ON PAPER



"There's something the serious and intelligent do  
long to do with on the very best with which he always has some  
standing reservation." —*WALTER TRUMAN*

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## Double Fold: Libraries and the Assault on Paper

Nicholson Baker

The ostensible goal of a library is to maintain the broadcast word. yet for 50 years our country's libraries—including the Library of Congress—have been doing simply the opposite, destroying millions of historical newspapers and changing them with microfilm copies which are tricky to read, lack all of the colour and caliber of the unique paper and illustrations, and become worse with age. With meticulous detective paintings and Baker's famous explanatory power, Double Fold finds a mystery background of microfilm lobbyists, former CIA agents, and warehouses the place helpful files are destroyed with a desktop referred to as a guillotine. Baker argues passionately for preservation, even cashing in his personal retirement account to save lots of one vital archive—all twenty a whole lot it. Written the bright narrative type that Nicholson Baker enthusiasts have come to expect, Double Fold is a persuasive and infrequently devastating ebook which may develop into The Jungle of the yankee library system. From the alternate Paperback edition.

Nicholson Baker's Double Fold: Libraries and the attack on Paper is a fiery polemic devoted to the duty of shielding what he sees as certainly one of our nation's most vital resources: our libraries' monstrous stockpile of seldom-used older books and newspapers. As Baker explains, the level of our paper reserves of previous newspapers and infrequently learn outdated books is dwindling, frequently being chopped up and "preserved" (that is, their content, instead of their form, is preserved) in both microform or a electronic format. Baker's place isn't a nuanced one; we have to retailer everything. To do this, libraries have to buy warehouses, warehouses primarily with no end, in order that now not a Sun-Times or musty tome is thrown aside. the first actual sentence within the precis at the again conceal reads "The ostensible function of a library is to maintain the published word" which exhibits Baker can have a simple confusion among the definition of a library and the definition of a repository, yet by no means mind: the purpose is, Baker says, a library neglects its tasks whilst it throws away disused materials. Baker's writing kind is eloquent and engaging; however, the full e-book is ruled through a one-sided and adversarial tone, with his highly uncharitable characterization of his opponents. I imagine the fundamental philosophical trouble in Baker's place are available within the bankruptcy with the name "A speedier Conflagration." Here, Baker totally finds his philosophical place that every one items of written media are worthwhile as person objects. it isn't just enough rarely-used book's contents are preserved somewhere; in basic terms putting off a selected item is itself continually a dereliction of duty. Baker says: "The fact is that each one books are actual artifacts, with no exception, simply as all books are bowls of principles [i.e. textual content]. they're issues and utterances both. And libraries, [Baker's ally] believes, for the reason that they own, whether or not they love it or not, collections of actual artifacts, needs to aspire to the stipulations of museums. All their books are treasures, in a sense..." This is a slightly overstated thesis. a few books and newspapers are necessary basically for his or her personal sake, infrequent books similar to the Gutenberg Bibles, for example. However, it doesn't persist with that each library needs to protect each non-duplicate e-book or newspaper on its shelves, a few of which, resembling pulp novels, are probably disposable as soon as their shelf-life is over. What Baker demands is for libraries to dedicate huge parts in their actual holdings to goods

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that, no longer virtually, yet literally, don't circulate. There are occasions in Double Fold while Baker appears to be like utilizing the sheer self assurance of his vituperation to slide a few questionable common sense earlier the reader. At one element Baker complains that the Library of Congress threw Double Fold: Libraries and the Assault on Paper out ten million cash worthy of public property. However, his criterion for this determine is substitute value. It is a just a little meaningless, virtually sneaky figure. Loads of in a different way valueless issues will be fairly expensive to replace. Being tough to interchange doesn't make whatever useful within Double Fold: Libraries and the Assault on Paper the first place. This isn't say there are usually not a few necessary issues in Double Fold. Baker's proceedings approximately microform are good taken, his demand a countrywide repository much more so. Baker additionally offers the reader with an wonderful and infrequently attention-grabbing heritage of ebook "preservation," together with the disastrous use of large, book-filled, black-goo spurting tanks of explosive gas, previously owned by means of NASA. One other memorable anecdote comprises the construction of paper from Double Fold: Libraries and the Assault on Paper the wrappings of Egyptians mummies. The indisputable fact that Baker's ebook is sort of biased and infrequently infuriating aren't dissuade an clever reader from giving it a shot; however, a few functional wisdom of libraries and a wondering perspective are prescribed.

## **Double Fold Libraries And The Assault On Paper**

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