



Every Book Its Reader: The Power of the Printed Word to Stir the World

Nicholas A. Basbanes

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Inspired by a landmark exhibition mounted by the British Museum in 1963 to celebrate five eventful centuries of the printed word, Nicholas A. Basbanes offers a lively consideration of writings that have "made things happen" in the world, works that have both nudged the course of history and fired the imagination of countless influential people.

In his fifth work to examine a specific aspect of book culture, Basbanes also asks what we can know about such figures as John Milton, Edward Gibbon, John Locke, Isaac Newton, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Adams, Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, Henry James, Thomas Edison, Helen Keller—even the notorious Marquis de Sade and Adolf Hitler—by knowing what they have read. He shows how books that many of these people have consulted, in some cases annotated with their marginal notes, can offer tantalizing clues to the evolution of their character and the development of their thought.

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