



Book Destruction from the Medieval to the Contemporary (New Directions in Book History)

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The book is a common, everyday object, yet its destruction has become overloaded with potent symbolism. 'Book burning' has become a shorthand for barbarism, philistinism and intolerance. But is there another story to be told here, which is lost amid the overheated rhetoric and knee-jerk responses? *Book Destruction*, a collection of essays by scholars and interviews with artists, approaches the fraught topic from a new angle. It sets such dominant attitudes and platitudes alongside an important but occluded counter-narrative, addressing the cutting, burning, pulping, defacing and tearing of books from the medieval period to our own age. What are the motivations and reasons for these acts, and what cultural meanings have been attached to them? How does destruction relate to recycling, reuse, to collage and quotation? When do acts of destruction become moments of creativity? A surprising new picture emerges of a wide range of practices, undertaken in diverse contexts and for different ends.

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