

Swearing A Social History Of Foul Language Oaths And Profanity In English

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Tracing the history of swearing from ancient Anglo-Saxon traditions and those of the Middle Ages, through Shakespeare, the Enlightenment and the Victorians, to the "Lady Chatterley" trial and various current trends, the author explores an irrepresible part of English linguistic heritage.

Swearing: A Social History of Foul Language, Oaths and ...

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Read PDF Swearing: A Social History of Foul Language, Oaths, and Profanity in English E-Books Tracing the history of swearing from ancient Anglo-Saxon traditions and those of the Middle Ages, through Shakespeare, the Enlightenment and the Victorians, to the Lady Chatterley trial and various current trends, Geoffrey Hughes explores a fascinating, little discussed yet irrefutable part of our linguistic heritage.

Swearing: A Social History of Foul Language, Oaths, and ...

'A Social History of Foul Language' is badly overdue, but Hughes sadly fails to provide it. He is at his strongest (and clearly at his happiest) in the early chapters, which provide a useful insight into the imputations of dishonourableness in Anglo-Saxon England and the vastly differing registers of profanity amongst Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims.

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This is the only encyclopedia and social history of swearing and foul language in the English-speaking world. It covers the various social dynamics that generate swearing, foul language, and insults in the entire range of the English language. While the emphasis is on American and British English, the different major global varieties, such as Australian, Canadian, South African, and Caribbean English are also covered. A-Z entries cover the full range of swearing and foul language in English, including fascinating details on the history and origins of each term and the social context in which it found expression. Categories include blasphemy, obscenity, profanity, the categorization of women and races, and modal varieties, such as the ritual insults of Renaissance "flyting" and modern "sounding" or "playing the dozens." Entries cover the historical dimension of the language, from Anglo-Saxon heroic oaths and the surprising power of medieval profanity, to the strict censorship of the Renaissance and the vibrant, modern language of the streets. Social factors, such as stereotyping, xenophobia, and the dynamics of ethnic slurs, as well as age and gender differences in swearing are also addressed, along with the major taboo words and the complex and changing nature of religious, sexual, and racial taboos.

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Almost everyone swears, or worries about not swearing, from the two year-old who has just discovered the power of potty mouth to the grandma who wonders why every other word she hears is obscene. Whether they express anger or exhilaration, are meant to insult or to commend, swear words perform a crucial role in language. But swearing is also a uniquely well-suited lens through which to look at history, offering a fascinating record of what people care about on the deepest levels of a culture--what's divine, what's terrifying, and what's taboo. Holy Sh*t tells the story of two kinds of swearing--obscenities and oaths--from ancient Rome and the Bible to today. With humor and insight, Melissa Mohr takes readers on a journey to discover how "swearing" has come to include both testifying with your hand on the Bible and calling someone a *#\$&!* when they cut you off on the highway. She explores obscenities in ancient Rome--which were remarkably similar to our own--and unearths the history of religious oaths in the Middle Ages, when swearing (or not swearing) an oath was often a matter of life and death. Holy Sh*t also explains the advancement of civility and corresponding censorship of language in the 18th century, considers the rise of racial slurs after World War II, examines the physiological effects of swearing (increased heart rate and greater pain tolerance), and answers a question that preoccupies the FCC, the US Senate, and anyone who has recently overheard little kids at a playground: are we swearing more now than people did in the past? A gem of lexicography and cultural history, Holy Sh*t is a serious exploration of obscenity--and it also just might expand your repertoire of words to choose from the next time you shut your finger in the car door.

From the earliest times swearing has existed in many variegated forms, from the deadliest curse to the most trivial expletives of annoyance. Hedged about with all manner of complex pressures, personal, societal, religious, sexual and other forms of taboo, it remains a phenomenon only imperfectly understood. Geoffrey Hughes traces these two contrasting strands through our linguistic history. His discussion starts with the use of language as magic in 'primitive' society, the binding oath of heroic commitment in Anglo-Saxon warrior society and the emergence of blasphemy in the medieval age of faith. With the Renaissance came a shift from a religious to a secular idiom of swearing, a period combining rich exuberance in language with severe restraint. This oscillation between institutional censorship and individual defiance continues to modern times. Professor Hughes includes in this broad-ranging survey such topics as xenophobia and the racist basis of abuse, graffiti, the sexual and sexist patterns of swearing, the multifarious forms of euphemism and the curious varieties of verbal duelling known as 'flyting' and 'sounding'. His book is a tireless exploration of a little discussed but irrefutable part of our linguistic heritage.

An irreverent and impeccably researched defense of our dirtiest words. We're often told that swearing is outrageous or even offensive, that it's a sign of a stunted vocabulary or a limited intellect. Dictionaries have traditionally omitted it and parents forbid it. But the latest research by neuroscientists, psychologists, sociologists, and others has revealed that swear words, curses, and oaths—when used judiciously—can have surprising benefits. In this sparkling debut work of popular science, Emma Byrne examines the latest research to show how swearing can be good for you. With humor and colorful language, she explores every angle of swearing—why we do it, how we do it, and what it tells us about ourselves. Not only has some form of swearing existed since the earliest humans began to communicate, but it has been shown to reduce physical pain, to lower anxiety, to prevent physical violence, to help trauma victims recover language, and to promote human cooperation. Taking readers on a whirlwind tour through scientific experiments, historical case studies, and cutting-edge research on language in both humans and other primates, Byrne defends cursing and demonstrates how much it can reveal about different cultures, their taboos and their values. Packed with the results of unlikely and often hilarious scientific studies—from the “ice-bucket test” for coping with

pain, to the connection between Tourette's and swearing, to a chimpanzee that curses at her handler in sign language—Swearing Is Good for You presents a lighthearted but convincing case for the foulmouthed.

Swearing in the English language has a long history that encompasses a rich variety of modes, including heroic oaths, sacred undertakings, profane and blasphemous curses, taboo insults charged with sexual and excremental "four-letter" words, competitive foul language, and racist "hate speech." Tracing the history of this intriguing cultural phenomenon from its Anglo-Saxon traditions and those of the Middle Ages, through Shakespeare, the Enlightenment, and the Victorian Era to the Lady Chatterley's Lover trial and various current trends, Geoffrey Hughes explores a fascinating, little-discussed, yet irrepressible part of our linguistic heritage. This edition contains a new Postscript updating various contemporary developments, such as the growth of political correctness.

It may be starred, beeped, and censored -- yet profanity is so appealing that we can't stop using it. In the funniest, clearest study to date, Benjamin Bergen explains why, and what that tells us about our language and brains. Nearly everyone swears—whether it's over a few too many drinks, in reaction to a stubbed toe, or in flagrante delicto. And yet, we sit idly by as words are banned from television and censored in books. We insist that people excise profanity from their vocabularies and we punish children for yelling the very same dirty words that we'll mutter in relief seconds after they fall asleep. Swearing, it seems, is an intimate part of us that we have decided to selectively deny. That's a damn shame. Swearing is useful. It can be funny, cathartic, or emotionally arousing. As linguist and cognitive scientist Benjamin K. Bergen shows us, it also opens a new window onto how our brains process language and why languages vary around the world and over time. In this groundbreaking yet ebullient romp through the linguistic muck, Bergen answers intriguing questions: How can patients left otherwise speechless after a stroke still shout Goddamn! when they get upset? When did a cock grow to be more than merely a rooster? Why is crap vulgar when poo is just childish? Do slurs make you treat people differently? Why is the first word that Samoan children say not mommy but eat shit? And why do we extend a middle finger to flip someone the bird? Smart as hell and funny as fuck, What the F is mandatory reading for anyone who wants to know how and why we swear.

Bugger, rooted, bloody oath... What is it about Australians and swearing? We've got an international reputation for using bad language (Where the bloody hell are ya?) and letting rip with a choice swear word or two has long been a very Aussie thing to do. From the defiant curses of the convicts and bullock drivers to the humour of Kath and Kim, Amanda Laugesen, director of the Australian National Dictionary Centre, takes us on a fascinating journey through the history of Australia's bad language to reveal our preoccupations and our concerns. Bad language has been used in all sort of ways in our history: to defy authority, as a form of liberation and subversion, and as a source of humour and creativity. Bad language has also been used to oppress and punish those who have been denied a claim to using it, notably Indigenous Australians and women. It has also long been subject to various forms of censorship. 'If you've ever wondered why to use bad language in Australia is to 'swear like a bullocky', Amanda Laugesen's Rooted will give you the answer. Taking us on a colourful tour of more than two centuries of bad language that extends from the mildly offensive to the completely filthy, Laugesen tells the story of Australia through those words and phrases that have often been seen as unfit to print. This is an engrossing social history – a bloody beauty – from one of our leading experts on Australian English.' — Frank Bongiorno, Professor of History, The Australian National University

"A pioneering work."--Steven Smith, University of Essex

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