



Damn the Man!: Slang of the Oppressed in America

Tom Dalzell

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Language plays an important role in the culture of dissent, and slang can serve as a means of defiance and liberation. "It is no accident that the liveliest language in America is often the product of the ghetto, *shtetl*, slum, *barrio*, barracks, and prison yards," notes author Tom Dalzell. "Slang becomes for the oppressed an outward and physical manifestation of a subversive refusal to be subservient—a witty, humorous, and effective gesture of resistance."

This fascinating survey examines hundreds of colorful expressions, each accompanied by examples of usage in books, movies, periodicals, and other sources. Vernacular sources include communities of African Americans, immigrant minorities, poor whites, gay men, the armed forces, prisoners, the workplace, and countercultures. Students of language and casual readers alike will savor this lively look at an age-old form of protest.

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