



A History of Cant and Slang Dictionaries, Vol. 4: 1937-1984

Julie Coleman

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The starting date of the fourth volume of Julie Coleman's pioneering history marks the appearance of the most influential slang dictionary of the twentieth century, Eric Partridge's *Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, produced at a time when the Depression had broken down traditional working-class communities; the United States was a still-reluctant world power; and another world war was inevitable. If the First World War unsettled combatants' minds, the second unsettled society. It challenged values around the world and, as the author shows, offered new opportunities for vibrant self-expression. Lexicographers recorded a rich harvest of words and phrases from around the world, reflecting new-found freedoms from convention, increased social mobility, and the continued rise of the mass media. Julie Coleman's account ranges across the English-speaking world. It will fascinate all those interested in slang and its reflections of social and cultural change.

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