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Semantic Antics: How and Why Words Change Meaning

Sol Steinmetz

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"My favorite popular word book of the year"
-William Safire, *NY Times* 6/22/2008

A fun, new approach to examining etymology!

Many common English words started out with an entirely different meaning than the one we know today. For example:

The word ***adamant*** came into English around 855 C.E. as a synonym for 'diamond,' very different from today's meaning of the word: "utterly unyielding in attitude or opinion."

Before the year 1200, the word ***silly*** meant "blessed," and was derived from Old English *saelig*, meaning "happy." This word went through several incarnations before adopting today's meaning: "stupid or foolish."

In *Semantic Antics*, lexicographer Sol Steinmetz takes readers on an in-depth, fascinating journey to learn how hundreds of words have evolved from their first meaning to the meanings used today.

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