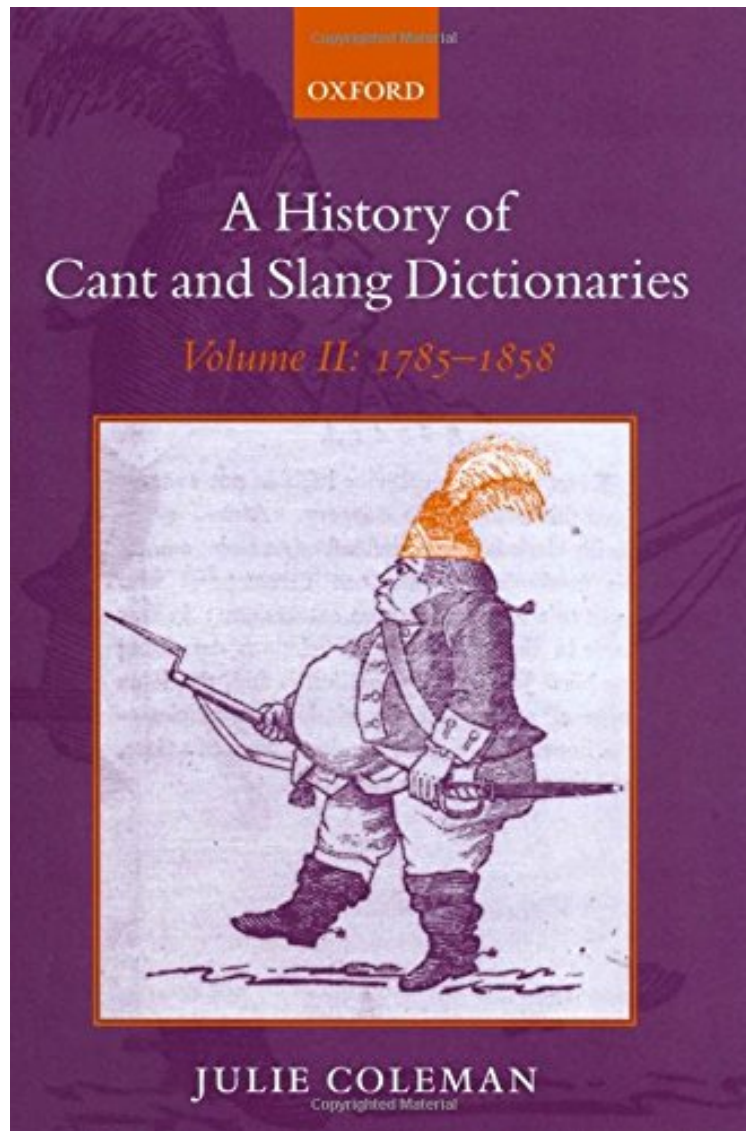


A History of Cant and Slang Dictionaries: Volume II: 1785-1858

Julie Coleman

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The second volume of Julie Coleman's entertaining and revealing history of the recording and uses of slang and

criminal cant takes the story from 1785 to 1858, and explores their manifestations in the United States of America and Australia. During this period glossaries of cant were thrown into the shade by dictionaries of slang, which now covered a broad spectrum of non-standard English, including the language of thieves. Julie Coleman shows how Francis Grose's *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* revolutionized the lexicography of the underworld. She explores the compilation and content of the earliest Australian and American slang glossaries, whose authors included the thrice-transported James Hardy Vaux and the legendary George Matsell, New York City's first chief of police, whose *The Secret Language of Crime: The Rogue's Lexicon* informed the script of Martin Scorsese's film *Gangs of New York*. Cant represented a tangible danger to life and property, but slang threatened to undermine good behaviour and social morality. Julie Coleman shows how and why they were at once repellent and seductive. Her fascinating account casts fresh light on language and life in some of the darker regions of Great Britain and the English-speaking world.

"A fascinating glimpse into a world in which a secret language was at once menacing and thrilling."--*Times Literary Supplement*
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"A fascinating glimpse into a world in which a secret language was at once menacing and thrilling."--*Times Literary Supplement*
About the Author Julie Coleman is Reader in English at the University of Leicester and founder of the International Society for Historical Lexicography and Lexicology. Her research interests lie in the history of the English language, particularly the history of the lexis. She is the author of *A Thesaurus of Love, Sex, and Marriage* (Rodopi 1999). The first two volumes of her history of cant and slang dictionaries, on the periods 1567-1784 and 1785-1858, were published by OUP in 2004. A third volume is being published in 2008 and a fourth volume, taking the history to 1984, is in preparation. She is the joint editor with Anne McDermott of *Historical Lexicography and Lexicology: Papers from the first ICHLL*, which is to be published by Niemeyer in Tbingen.