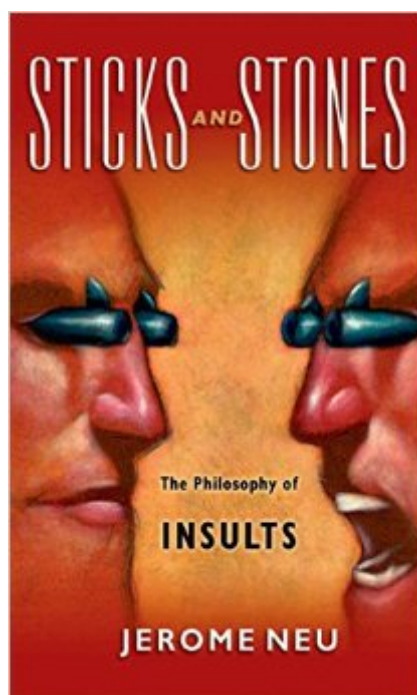


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Sticks And Stones: The Philosophy Of Insults



Synopsis

"Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me." This schoolyard rhyme projects an invulnerability to verbal insults that sounds good but rings false. Indeed, the need for such a verse belies its own claims. For most of us, feeling insulted is a distressing-and distressingly common-experience. In *Sticks and Stones*, philosopher Jerome Neu probes the nature, purpose, and effects of insults, exploring how and why they humiliate, embarrass, infuriate, and wound us so deeply. What kind of injury is an insult? Is it determined by the insulter or the insulted? What does it reveal about the character of both parties as well as the character of society and its conventions? What role does insult play in social and legal life? When is telling the truth an insult? Neu draws upon a wealth of examples and anecdotes-as well as a range of views from Aristotle and Oliver Wendell Holmes to Oscar Wilde, John Wayne, Katherine Hepburn, and many others-to provide surprising answers to these questions. He shows that what we find insulting can reveal much about our ideas of character, honor, gender, the nature of speech acts, and social and legal conventions. He considers how insults, both intentional and unintentional, make themselves felt-in play, Freudian slips, insult humor, rituals, blasphemy, libel, slander, and hate speech. And he investigates the insult's extraordinary power, why it can so quickly destabilize our sense of self and threaten our moral identity, the very center of our self-respect and self-esteem. Entertaining, humorous, and deeply insightful, *Sticks and Stones* unpacks the fascinating dynamics of a phenomenon more often painfully experienced than clearly understood.

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Customer Reviews

Sticks and Stones is spectacular even in the context of Professor Neu's previous fascinating explorations of the emotions. In focusing upon insults, he has chosen a highly topical subject whose complexities of interaction are well-suited to his sharp analytical approach. He attains depth of insight without ever being unexciting; his work often provides the aesthetic pleasure one gets from a novelist plumbing the depths of a character. For me, the chapters on forgiveness and on insult humor happen to be particular favorites, but that in no way diminished my enjoyment of the discussions of dueling, rap battles and defamation law (including the controversial topic of hate speech). Finally, Sticks and Stones also satisfies an important criterion for books on this topic: it provides many new insults to add to the reader's own repertoire.

I received the information about this book online and decided to read it. I am very happy and it was the greatest choice for me. Patrick

This book is a very thorough analysis of the cultural, historical and legal aspects of insults, with a huge amount of citations. Very troubling is the author's deference to Sigmund Freud's work. Sadly the author fell for his quackery and wholeheartedly believes in it. Freud has been exposed as a fraud and con-man by modern science. This book is plagued in large parts by reference to Freud's insane theories. This book could have been a masterpiece if it excluded the references to the proven fraud Freud. If you know how deceiving and wrong Freud was, you may be able to steer clear of the sections referring to Freud and find a lot of other credible information in the remaining part of this book. If you are not aware what a dangerous unscientific liar Freud was, then stay clear of this book.

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