

Potty Mouth

Vulgarity loses impact when it is a common occurrence

BY JEFF WOLFSHOHL
The Battalion

Little Mary went to the movies and saw an R-rated flick with her mother. Her mother wanted to see the movie but was not able to find a babysitter. She decided to go anyway and brought Mary along.

Mary, now an Aggie girl, has forgotten the movie but remembers the profanity, sometimes to a fault.

Lisa Foster, a sophomore English major, said there is a big difference between hearing curse words in movies and experiencing it in real life.

"It jumps out at you when people you know do it," Foster said. "I think it's unnecessary and someone can express themselves in other ways. I usually have to be pretty angry or have hurt myself in some way to reach that point."

Foster said pre-adolescents use vulgarity more often than others.

"They do it because it is forbidden and to be cool," Foster said. "So it's like it's a freedom thing."

Being accepted is something most people want, even if it means undermining parents and mistreatment of siblings.

"My brother doesn't listen to me when I tell him to stop," Foster said. "Cursing is something that you are told not to do by your parents."

Zeke Henely, a junior computer science major, said he finds himself cursing when he is alone.

"I was upset at the recent [A&M] football game, and when I was by myself, I said the [curse] words out loud," he said.

Henely said society is much less aware of the vulgarity than in earlier decades.

"In the culture now, it is common to say a curse word," Henely said. "In the theater, it is expected that there will be cursing."

Henely, a former member of the Corps of Cadets, said all universities are alike in the use of vulgar language, and he has experienced the vulgarity first-hand.

"A&M is not a special place, [and] I think there might be more cursing

out here because of the Corps," Henely said. "There is a lot of pressure on the Corps and school."

"Lower groups and incoming people that are going into [the Corps] will hear cursing."

Henely said that even though society has changed, there are still some situations where profanity is inadvisable.

"If everyone is an adult it's fine, but when there are kids, they should avoid cursing," Henely said. "Kids don't need to be hearing that stuff."

Henely said his friends might spend much of a conversation cursing.

"It doesn't phase me when I'm with my friends and they cuss, even with the ones that do it all the time," he said.

Henely said he, like many typical college students, has become desensitized to foul language because of his experiences.

"I've spent four years in the Army and understand [the intensity]," Henely said. "I've seen and heard it all."

Though it might seem to people that society has become desensitized, some do not agree with the trend.

Tierney Bruce, a senior electrical engineering major, said A&M is a reasonable campus when it comes to profanity.

"Educated people don't tend to cuss as much," she said. "It's not a part of their everyday speech. They find other words to describe their feelings."

Bruce said she thinks resorting to profanity is only necessary in extreme situations.

"If you ran into something with your car or broke something valuable, then I can see someone cursing," Bruce said.

Bruce said that while watching prime-time TV recently, she was unsettled by the vulgar programming dialogue.

"I was watching some show, and they said the word 'b—d,'" Bruce said. "I thought it was inappropriate because a lot of families are watching television at that time."



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY GUY ROGERS AND ROBERT HYNCECK

Abi Glenn, a senior English major, said swearing will never go away and any change toward less profanity will be the result of personal effort.

"I think change is really made individually, and that's the only way to avoid it [profanity]," Glenn said.

Glenn said her constraint and self control not to curse are mainly tested the most in situations with her boyfriend.

"I am tempted to curse at him when he is condescending or selfish, because I want to put him in his place," Glenn said. "I try to take

a deep breath and calm down instead of griping."

Glenn said that being vulgar is a communication factor that can make a problem worse.

"Expressing my rage would not help the situation with my boyfriend," Glenn said. "I might slam the door instead."

Bruce said that though excessive profanity is a problem, profanity is sometimes inevitable.

"For many people, it's an involuntary reaction to something bad," Bruce said. "But with a conscious effort, you can work at avoiding it and stopping."

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