

Ancient words synonymous with evil in English you may not know

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Whether you watch a movie or read the news, you're bound to see villainous or evil behavior, but most of us use a few new words for evil behavior. There are actually plenty of good old words you can use to replace evil. Consider using these old terms the next time you're talking about the deplorable actions of Dr. Doom, Dr. Evil, or the guy down the street who always walks his dog without a leash or muzzle.

Facinous

Its definition in the Oxford English Dictionary is: 'Extremely wicked or immoral; grossly criminal; vile, atrocious, heinous; infamous.' This Latin loanword was popular in the 1700s but has fallen into disuse since then, although it has produced some interesting derivatives. In George Borrow's 1841 book *The Zincali*, he wrote that Constantine the Great 'condemned to death those who should practise such facinousness.'

Mixship

Mixship is a rare, old word for despicable behavior. If mixship seems confusing, that's because it comes from the long-lost Old English meaning of mix: Mix was the word for dung or other filth. So calling something 'mixship' is like saying 'What a load of shit!' or 'What rubbish' today.

Repudiate

Repudious was first used in the mid-1500s as a word for anything worthy of rejection, especially things that were vile and cruel.

Skelm

As early as the 1600s, skelm was a villain or other scoundrel. The word originated from a German term that could refer to a variety of terrible things and creatures, including demons and plagues. By the 1600s, skelm was also being used as an adjective, as in a 1673 reference by the English poet John Dryden to the "English Skellum."

Derf

Derf was an adjective and adverb that first referred to daring around the late 1100s, but by the 1400s it had taken on a meaning of evil. There aren't many words that describe derf in recent years.

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