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The Curses of Science Fiction

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By Thomas Eldredge

Our society censors television and rates movies to protect itself from the civilization-crippling force of curse words. These words carry meanings that imply unnatural taboos such as intercourse and feces. Civilized people do not have sex or defecate, so the use of non-scientific vernacular to describe these despicable acts is an insult to language itself. Despite the selfless efforts of enlightened regulators, malicious writers and producers have found ways to circumvent the common and well-described standards set forth by the FCC.

Science-fiction series give writers a loophole to work with, and they have exploited it with vigor. Because science-fiction writers create a world beyond our own common experience, they may also create languages for those worlds as they please. Clever writers have found ways to subvert common decency by using words similar to curse words that share meaning but are phonetically different enough to allow their use on broadcast and cable television.

Klingons had the decency to curse within the context of their own

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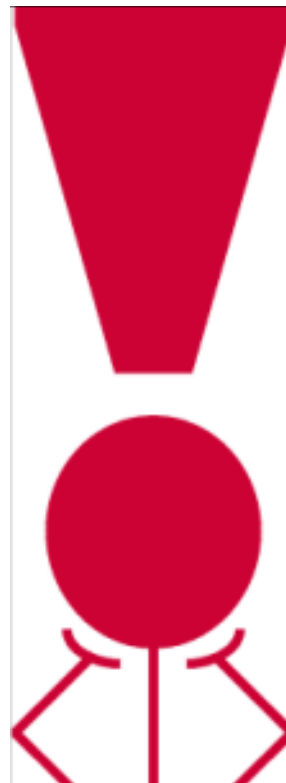


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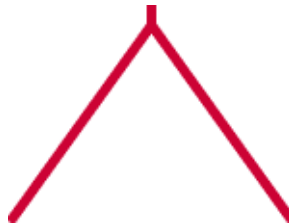


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language. Today, we face fictional creatures that twist the American language into a hyper-dimensional doomsday weapon against us. FOX's series *Firefly* was finally cancelled because of its rampant use of the term "goram," which is an obvious distortion of a damning curse against God Himself. If you spend more time in front of the television than at church, you may remember God as the guy Morgan Freeman played in some movie.



The blasphemous sci-fi series *Farscape* was finally cut because "frell" was used as a derogatory term analogous to intercourse. *Farscape* also had the audacity to invent the word "dren" and use it as a graphic description of alien and human waste.

Battlestar Galactica remains on the air despite the use of the word "frak," which is clearly a distortion of a word referring to sex. This word has been used on the series to describe intimate human-Cylon relations, which is specifically forbidden by the PATRIOT Act.

Our ears, our imaginations, and our eternal souls are under attack. There is no doubt what is meant when a *Galactica* Viper pilot screams across the wireless, "Frak your frakking mother, you frakked-up toasters." The translation is simple: "Have intercourse with your sexually active mother, you sexually deviant toaster." Of course, the translation into specific and concise terms makes this statement entirely innocuous.

If the producers of *Battlestar Galactica* wish to remain on the air, they should refrain from such inflammatory phrases as "Frak a duck with a railroad spike" and stick to more civilized wordings, such as "Penetrate a duck sexually with a railroad spike." Meaning is always less meaningful than delivery.

Language has many nuances and caveats; it is dangerous to use language carelessly. Blaspheming Morgan Freeman and referring to sex and defecation in common and ignorant terms diminishes our humanity. We allow our children to believe that sex and defecation are common and normal human functions, and worse, we weaken their faith in Morgan Freeman.

We must remember that words like frak, frell, dren, goram, and grok are all shameful curses, even if they are cleverly disguised. If you can correct that last sentence, you are as big a nerd as me.

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