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Dirt: A Social History As Seen Through The Uses And Abuses Of Dirt. Dirt, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. It is, Terence McLaughlin suggests, "evidence of the imperfections of life, a constant reminder of change and decay.

Dirt: A Social History As Seen Through The Uses And Abuses ...

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Dirt: a social history as seen through the uses and abuses of dirt.. [Terence McLaughlin] -- Describes men's attitudes toward dirt while examining practices of cleanliness in Western cultures since Roman times.

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Dirt A Social History As Seen Through The Uses & Abuses Of ...

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Describes men's attitudes toward dirt while examining practices of cleanliness in Western cultures since Roman times. From inside the book What people are saying - Write a review We haven't found...

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Describes men's attitudes toward dirt while examining practices of cleanliness in Western cultures since Roman times.

"It is only in our judgments that things are dirty," writes Terence McLaughlin of the human view of various forms of pollution that surround us. With dry wit he explores the psychology and attitudes about materials which we find objectionable. Everyone concerned about the condition of our environment must read this timely classic.

"Terence McLaughlin's delightful study of dirt covers much cultivated-and uncultivated-ground. The historical perspective begins with the Romans' answer to body odor (baths) and the early Christians' rejection of Roman values, including cleanliness. Following mankind down the dusty road of civilization, the author leaves us where we are now: surrounded by what all seem to agree is dirty air, dirty water, dirty landscapes, and dirty cities. Perhaps this history of our past associations with dirt will help us deal with pollution now. Dirt has had-and always will have-its place. Terence McLaughlin helps us understand where that place is." -- Book jacket.

Dirt, soil, call it what you want—it's everywhere we go. It is the root of our existence, supporting our feet, our farms, our cities. This fascinating yet disquieting book finds, however, that we are running out of dirt, and it's no laughing matter. An engaging natural and cultural history of soil that sweeps from ancient civilizations to modern times, *Dirt: The Erosion of Civilizations* explores the compelling idea that we are—and have long been—using up Earth's soil. Once bare of protective vegetation and exposed to wind and rain, cultivated soils erode bit by bit, slowly enough to be ignored in a single lifetime but fast enough over centuries to limit the lifespan of civilizations. A rich mix of history, archaeology and geology, *Dirt* traces the role of soil use and abuse in the history of Mesopotamia, Ancient Greece, the Roman Empire, China, European colonialism, Central America, and the American push westward. We see how soil has shaped us and we have shaped soil—as society after society has risen, prospered, and plowed through a natural endowment of fertile dirt. David R. Montgomery sees in the recent rise of organic and no-till farming the hope for a new agricultural revolution that might help us avoid the fate of previous civilizations.

A spirited chronicle of the West's ambivalent relationship with dirt The question of cleanliness is one every age and culture has answered with confidence. For the first-century Roman, being clean meant a two-hour soak in baths of various temperatures, scraping the body with a miniature rake, and a final application of oil. For the aristocratic Frenchman in the seventeenth century, it meant changing your shirt once a day and perhaps going so far as to dip your hands in some water. Did Napoleon know something we didn't when he wrote Josephine "I will return in five days. Stop washing"? And why is the German term *Warmduscher*—a man who washes in warm or hot water—invariably a slight against his masculinity? Katherine Ashenburg takes on such fascinating questions as these in *Dirt on Clean*, her charming tour of attitudes to hygiene through time. What could be more routine than taking up soap and water and washing yourself? And yet cleanliness, or the lack of it, is intimately connected to ideas as large as spirituality and sexuality, and historical events that include plagues, the Civil War, and the discovery of germs. An engrossing fusion of erudition and anecdote, *Dirt on Clean* considers the bizarre prescriptions of history's doctors, the hygienic peccadilloes of great authors, and the historic twists and turns that have brought us to a place Ashenburg considers hedonistic yet oversanitized.

In *Histories of Dirt* Stephanie Newell traces the ways in which urban spaces and urban dwellers come to be regarded as dirty, as exemplified in colonial and postcolonial Lagos. Newell conceives dirt as an interpretive category that facilitates moral, sanitary, economic, and aesthetic evaluations of other cultures under the rubric of uncleanness. She examines a number of texts ranging from newspaper articles by elite Lagosians to colonial travel writing, public health films, and urban planning to show how understandings of dirt came to structure colonial governance. Seeing Lagosians as sources of contagion and dirt, British colonizers used racist ideologies and discourses of dirt to justify racial segregation and public health policies. Newell also explores possibilities for non-Eurocentric methods for identifying African urbanites' own values and opinions by foregrounding the voices of contemporary Lagosians through interviews and focus groups in which their responses to public health issues reflect local aesthetic tastes and values. In excavating the shifting role of dirt in structuring social and political life in Lagos, Newell provides new understandings of colonial and postcolonial urban history in West Africa.

Americans in the early 19th century were, as one foreign traveller bluntly put it, "filthy, bordering on the beastly"—perfectly at home in dirty, bug-infested, malodorous surroundings. Many a home swarmed with flies, barnyard animals, dust, and dirt; clothes were seldom washed; men hardly ever shaved or bathed. Yet gradually all this changed, and today, Americans are known worldwide for their obsession with cleanliness—for their sophisticated plumbing, daily bathing, shiny hair and teeth, and spotless clothes. In *Chasing Dirt*, Suellen Hoy provides a colorful history of this remarkable transformation from "dreadfully dirty" to "cleaner than clean," ranging from the pre-Civil War era to the 1950s, when American's obsession with cleanliness reached its peak. Hoy offers here a fascinating narrative, filled with vivid portraits of the men and especially the women who helped America come clean. She examines the work of early promoters of cleanliness, such as Catharine Beecher and Sylvester Graham; and describes how the Civil War marked a turning point in our attitudes toward cleanliness, discussing the work of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, headed by Frederick Law Olmsted, and revealing how the efforts of Florence Nightingale in the Crimean War inspired American women—such as Dorothea Dix, Clara Barton, and Louisa May Alcott—to volunteer as nurses during the war. We also read of the postwar efforts of George E. Waring, Jr., a sanitary engineer who constructed sewer systems around the nation and who, as head of New York City's street-cleaning department, transformed the city from the nation's dirtiest to the nation's cleanest in three years. Hoy details the efforts to convince African-Americans and immigrants of the importance of cleanliness, examining the efforts of Booker T. Washington (who preached the "gospel of the toothbrush"), Jane Addams at Hull House, and Lillian Wald at the Henry Street Settlement House. Indeed, we see how cleanliness gradually shifted from a way to prevent disease to a way to assimilate, to become American. And as the book enters the modern era, we learn how advertising for soaps, mouth washes, toothpastes, and deodorants in mass-circulation magazines showed working men and women how to cleanse themselves and become part of the increasingly sweatless, odorless, and successful middle class. Shower for success! By illuminating the historical roots of America's shift from "dreadfully dirty" to "squeaky clean," *Chasing Dirt* adds a new dimension to our understanding of our national culture. And along the way, it provides colorful and often amusing social history as well as insight into what makes Americans the way we are today.

Dirt is a story about the places where we start. From a single-wide trailer in the mountains of rural West Virginia to the halls of Yale Law School, Mary Marantz's story is one of remembering our roots while turning our faces to the sky. From growing up in that trailer, where it rained just as hard inside as out and the smell of mildew hung thick in the air, Mary has known what it is to feel broken and disqualified because of the muddy scars leaving smudged fingerprints across our lives. Generations of her family lived and logged in those hauntingly treacherous woods, risking life and limb just to barely scrape by. And yet that very struggle became the redemption song God used to write a life she never dreamed of. Mixed with warmth, wit, and the bittersweet, sometimes achingly heartbreaking places we go when we dig in instead of give up, *Dirt* is a story of healing. With gut-wrenching honesty and hard-won wisdom, Mary shares her story for anyone who has ever walked into the world and felt like their scars were still on display, showing that you are braver, better, and more empathetic for what you have survived. Because God does his best work in the muddy, messy, and broken—if we'll only learn to dig in.

"Extraordinary." --Stephen King "This book is not simply the great American novel; it's the great novel of las Americas. It's the great world novel! This is the international story of our times. Masterful." --Sandra Cisneros También de este lado hay sueñ os. On this side too, there are dreams. Lydia Quixano Pérez lives in the Mexican city of Acapulco. She runs a bookstore. She has a son, Luca, the love of her life, and a wonderful husband who is a journalist. And while there are cracks beginning to show in Acapulco because of the drug cartels, her life is, by and large, fairly comfortable. Even though she knows they'll never sell, Lydia stocks some of her all-time favorite books in her store. And then one day a man enters the shop to browse and comes up to the register with a few books he would like to buy—two of them her favorites. Javier is erudite. He is charming. And, unbeknownst to Lydia, he is the jefe of the newest drug cartel that has gruesomely taken over the city. When Lydia's husband's tell-all profile of Javier is published, none of their lives will ever be the same. Forced to flee, Lydia and eight-year-old Luca soon find themselves miles and worlds away from their comfortable middle-class existence. Instantly transformed into migrants, Lydia and Luca ride la bestia--trains that make their way north toward the United States, which is the only place Javier's reach doesn't extend. As they join the countless hearts trying to reach el norte, Lydia soon sees that everyone is running from something. But what exactly are they running to? *American Dirt* will leave readers utterly changed. It is a literary achievement filled with poignancy, drama, and humanity on every page. It is one of the most important books for our times. Already being hailed as "a *Grapes of Wrath* for our times" and "a new American classic," Jeanine Cummins's *American Dirt* is a rare exploration into the inner hearts of people willing to sacrifice everything for a glimmer of hope.

Describes how the Navajo worked for the U. S. government unprotected in the uranium mines that fueled the Cold War, and how the abandoned mines remained on the Navajo reservation, causing cancer rates and birth defects to soar.

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