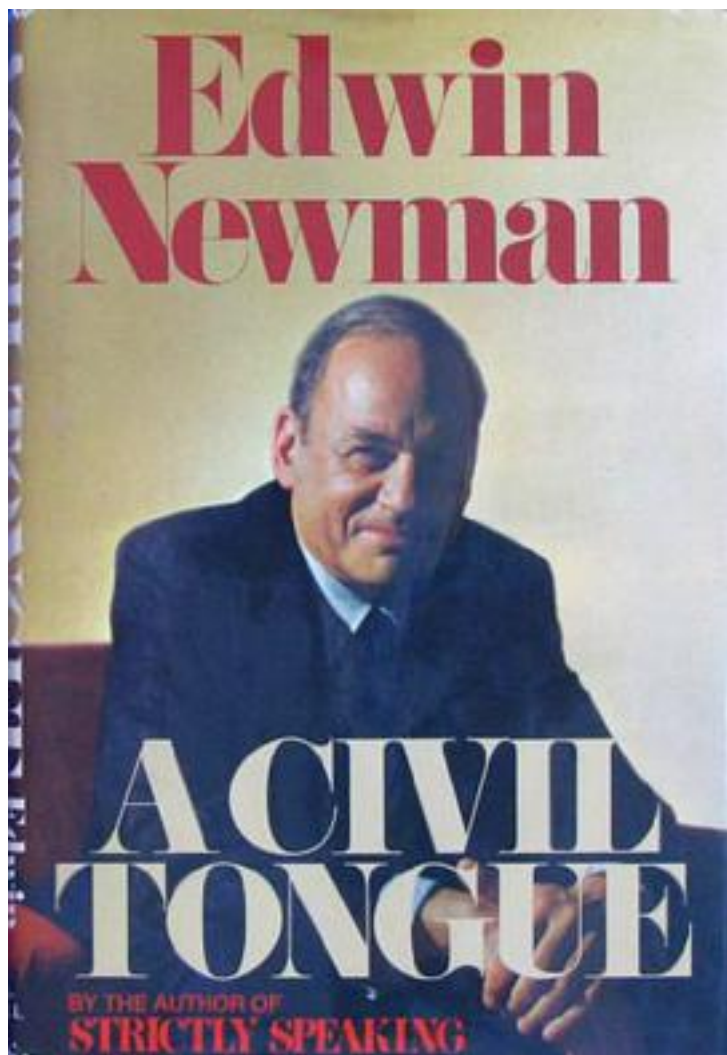


A Civil Tongue



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After the Deluge
hen I was a lad I did not serve a term as office boy to an attorney's firm. It was one of a number of omissions. I did not
however work for a while as a file clerk in a credit agency. Since I was sixteen years old at the time and had been graduated from high school I knew a great deal and had opinions on a variety of subjects that I thought anyone else in the office would consider it a privilege to hear. I also thought I discerned flaws in the way the office was run. One fine day I was advised to keep a civil tongue in my head. That meant "Be respectful to your elders" or less gently interpreted "Shut up? Although I did not know the word at the time (nobody did) I prioritized my interests even as Jimmy Carter many years later suggested that the Democrats prioritize their platform. Having a job was more highly prioritized than not having a job. Shut up I did. I now take a civil tongue to mean much more than that. Mere politeness is part of it though the temptation to place mere before 3

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