



The Devil's Dictionary

By Ambrose Bierce

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The Devil's Dictionary is a satirical reference book written by Ambrose Bierce. The book offers reinterpretations of terms in the English language, lampooning cant, and political doublespeak, as well as other aspects of human foolishness and frailty. A number of the definitions are accompanied by satiric verses, many of which are signed with comic pseudonyms such as Salder Bupp and Orm Pludge; the most frequently appearing contributor is that learned and ingenious cleric, Father Gassalasca Jape, S.J., whose lines bear his initials.

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The Devil's Dictionary By Ambrose Bierce Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

Satiric lexicon by Ambrose Bierce, first compiled as *The Cynic's Word Book* in 1906 and reissued under the author's preferred title five years later. The barbed definitions that Bierce began publishing in the *Wasp*, a weekly journal he edited in San Francisco from 1881 to 1886, brought this 19th-century stock form to a new level of artistry. Employing a terse, aphoristic style, Bierce lampooned social, professional, and religious convention, as in his definitions for bore--"A person who talks when you wish him to listen"; architect--"One who drafts a plan of your house, and plans a draft of your money"; and saint--"A dead sinner revised and edited." Many of the entries include "authenticating" citations from spurious scholarly sources. -- *The Merriam-Webster Encyclopedia of Literature*

Review

Ambrose Bierce was an iconoclastic literary genius and this compilation of definitions (written for a satirical magazine during the 1880s) is a true American classic. Some may find Bierce sexist, nationalist and racist, but most readers will enjoy his malevolent scepticism and underlying rage against hypocrisy. Ralph Steadman's incisive illustrations perfectly complement the text. A typical example: Gold n. A yellow metal greatly prized for its convenience in the various kinds of robbery known as trade. The word was formerly spelled 'God' - the 'l' was inserted to distinguish it from the name of another inferior deity. Only two years after the book was published in 1911, Bierce disappeared after setting off for Mexico to join Pancho Villa's rebels against the corrupt dictatorial regime of Porfirio Diaz. His legacy is memorable.

From the Publisher

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Anita Pfeifer:

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