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The Lexicographer's Dilemma: The Evolution of "Proper" English, from Shakespeare

By Lynch, Jack.

Walker. 1 Cloth(s), 2009. hard. Book Condition: New. In its long history, the English language has had many lawmakers those who have tried to regulate, politicize, or otherwise organize the way we speak. English professor and Samuel Johnson scholar Jack Lynch offers an engaging narrative history of these endeavors, underscoring that what we now regard as the only "correct" way to speak emerged out of specific historical and social conditions over the course of centuries. Grammatical rules are hardly laws, he argues; they're more like rules of etiquette, made by fallible people and subject to change, and Lynch puts today's debates whether about Ebonics in the schools or split infinitives in the New York Times in a rich historical context. Lynch recognizes that grace, clarity, and precision of expression are paramount. His many well-chosen and entertaining examples support his conclusion that prescriptions and pedantry will always give way to change, and that we should stop fretting, relax, and embrace it. "Boston Globe" Lynch writes in funny and engaging prose about the human side of language history and the people who have helped make English so darn complex. From Jonathan Swift's government-sponsored language academy to George Carlin's seven censorious words, Lynch's English has been subjected not only...



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