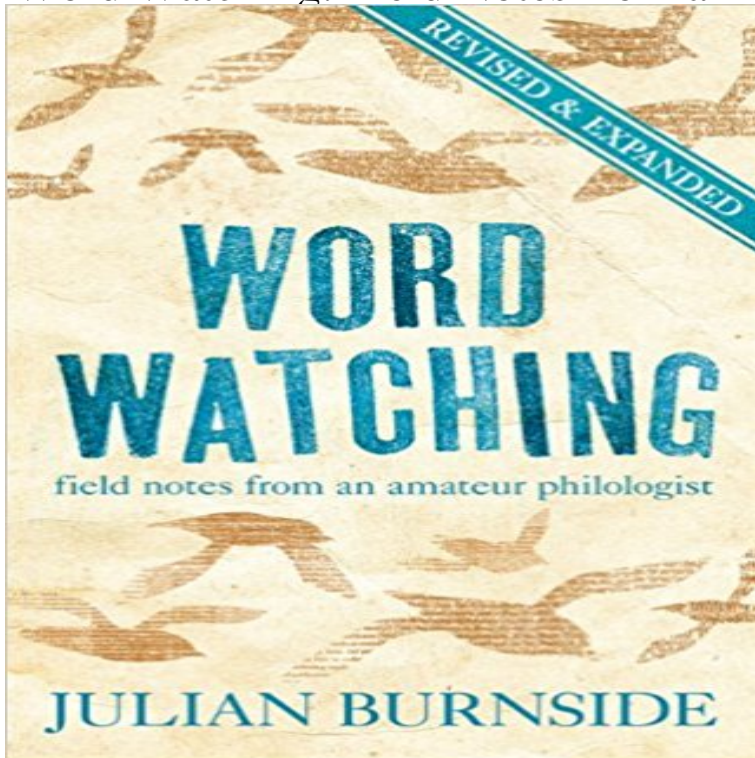


Word Watching: Field Notes from an Amateur Philologist



A bonzer (p. 288) discussion of the strange but dinkum (p. 289) pedigree (p. 224) of the naughty (p. 202), nice (p. 212), and, sometimes, obscene (p. 217) English language. We live in a torrent of words from radio and television, books and newspapers, and now from the internet. But, as Julian Burnside reminds us in this new edition of the bestselling *Wordwatching*, words are a source both of pleasure and power, and can be deployed for good or for ill. Some of these essays explore curiosities in odd corners of the language simply to remind us of the extraordinary richness of the English language. Other pieces use small matters of language to illustrate larger processes of cultural borrowing and change. Burnside's musings remind us that we should not be alarmed at the instability of the language; rather, we should see its wanton borrowings as a source of its strength and vitality. *Wordwatching* also reminds us of the need to be aware of the misuse of language in the service of sinister purposes whether political, ideological, social, or personal. An ear well-tuned to the nuances of vocabulary inoculates the hearer against this epidemic of deception. With nine new essays, dealing with subjects as diverse as deadlines, fancy words, the problems with issue, odd sounds, oxymorons, and the fallacy of wading in, this revised and expanded edition of *Wordwatching* is a fascinating demonstration of the power and the pleasure of the English language.

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