

BOOK REVIEWS

Why do we read what we read? Reading is a curiously random process which nevertheless has an underlying order that we often do not discover until later. We might think we know, but do we? Like life. A thread that weaves its way through many of the books in this issue is that of living with the consequences of choices and actions by oneself and by others. We begin this issue with an extended Essay Review which began life as a review of a single book but then grew into something much longer and more far reaching than a simple book review. Focusing on four separate and rather different books it is a meditation on the area of human experience encompassed by wrong doing, vengeance, remorse and forgiveness.

One of the most powerful and valuable things about existential ideas is that they are reflective of everyday life and as such are present in all areas of human endeavour including mass market fiction. Harry Potter was no stranger to wickedness and forgiveness and the next book is about the way philosophical themes are present in the Harry Potter series.

Although failure is an ever present if not compulsory part of human experience therapists are strangely reluctant to talk about their own failure. Refreshingly, the next book is about just this.

The theme is visited from a Buddhist direction in the next book that ponders a question that stays close to all reflective therapists when they encounter the utter otherness of the other and that is 'what do we think we are up to' and 'how do we know it?'

The theme of how we know what we think we know is of course a central issue in life as well as in research and the next review is of two books on phenomenological research.

Retirement is one of those things that inspires strong feelings, from eager anticipation to despair to denial and everything in between. Which may explain why it is under researched. The next book is about what awaits everyone who gets to the inevitable time of life when they stop work and they have to decide what they want to do with the time remaining.

Martin Adams

Wrong doing, vengeance, remorse and forgiveness

I began what has become a four book review while reading *If You Sit Very Still* by Marion Partington. Her account of surviving the murder of a loved one inspired an exploration of related topics such as wickedness, revenge, wrongdoing, betrayal, regret, and forgiveness; hence the other reviews here