

BOOK REVIEWS

2023 has been a year of diverse experiences, challenges, and revelations that have left deep imprints on our collective consciousness. It has been a uniquely personal journey for each of us, shaped by our individual circumstances and environments. In my own small corner of the world, I marked a significant milestone – a birthday that propelled me into the next chapter of my life. This moment prompted introspection about my path ahead, contemplation on how I wish to shape my life, what I aspire to attain, and what I am prepared to let go. So, I gaze towards the unknown of 2024 and wonder what stories will emerge to challenge and inspire not just me, but all of us. What tales will illuminate the diverse spectrum of the human experience in the coming year?

On the threshold of 2023 and 2024, I invite you to the book review section to embark on an exploration of four remarkable books, each serving as an opening into the human experience. The section starts with *Sexuality Beyond Consent* by Avgi Saketopoulou a thought-provoking and daring take on trauma and its intersection with sexuality. Following this is *Flourishing Love* by Enrico Gnaulati, a book not solely intended for therapists but for anyone navigating relationships. It presents a realistic portrayal of marriage, steering away from the idealised depictions often found on social media.

The last two reviews feature a debut novel and a modern adaptation of a play, both written by poets and inspired by medieval poetic tales. Sian Hughes' *Pearl* marks her inaugural novel, drawing from a fourteenth-century poem of the same name. It describes the profound grief of a man for his lifelong perle/Pearl, in an affecting narrative. Concluding the section is a review of the play *Everyman*, a medieval allegorical play adapted by Carol Ann Duffy. This timeless piece stands as a testament to our enduring search for meaning and purpose.

Once again, I am reaching out to everyone in our existential community who is a reading enthusiast and those who may not consider themselves as such. Over the past twelve months, I have observed a dearth of reviews in our section. I eagerly invite your thoughts, analyses and opinions on the books and films featured on our list, or any other literary gem or art event that you feel is essential for our readership. Your insights are valuable in guiding fellow existentialists in their choices, enhancing our therapeutic and literary dialogue and finally, for those for whom reading may seem like a chore, your contributions could earn you CPD credits.

So please reach out—I eagerly await your invaluable contributions.

Ondine Smulders