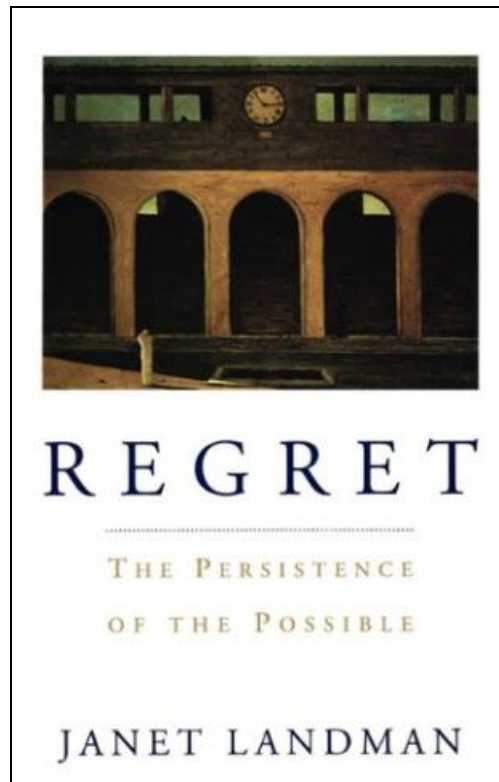


Regret: The Persistence of the Possible



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Reviews

It is an awesome book that we have possibly go through. It is actually written in straightforward words and phrases and not confusing. It is extremely difficult to leave it before concluding, once you begin to read the book.

(Tierra Kunde)

REGRET: THE PERSISTENCE OF THE POSSIBLE



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Oxford University Press. Hardcover. Condition: New. 366 pages. Dimensions: 9.3in. x 6.2in. x 1.4in. We are a people who do not want to keep much of the past in our heads, Lillian Hellman once wrote. It is considered unhealthy in America to remember mistakes, neurotic to think about them, psychotic to dwell upon them. Yet who in their lifetime has never regretted a lost love, a missed opportunity, a path not taken. Indeed, regret is perhaps a universal experience, but while poets and novelists have long explored its complexities, very little has been written from a scholarly perspective that examines this emotion. Now, in *Regret*, Janet Landman takes a lively and perceptive look at this multifaceted phenomenon. Much as Anthony Storr did in his best-selling *Solitude*, Landman here provides an insightful anatomy of an emotion, ranging far and wide to illuminate the nature of regret--what it is, how it changes you, how you experience it. She draws on a breathtaking variety of sources, ranging from psychology, economics, philosophy, and anthropology, to classic works of literature. We learn what people regret most--lack of education comes first, followed by employment, marriage, and children--and how regret differs from other emotions, such as remorse, disappointment, sadness, or guilt. In one of the most fascinating sections, Landman examines four worldviews of regret--the Romantic, the Tragic, the Comic, and the Ironic--as exemplified in four major novels: *Great Expectations*, *Notes From Underground*, *The Ambassadors*, and *Mrs. Dalloway*. In Dostoevsky, for instance, regret is a poison of unfulfilled desires turned inward, destructive, incurable. Though it is common to regard regret as painful and destructive--being stuck in the past or ruled by emotions--Landman reveals some surprising benefits. At best regret is a dynamic changing process--one can transcend regret, and thus transform the self. In Anne Tyler's *Breathing Lessons*, for example,...



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