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**Batman Superman And
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Boyscout**

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RAMOS HARRY

Superheroes Open Court Publishing Explore the philosophical depths of Batman, Superman, Captain America, and your other favorite superheroes Behind the cool costumes, special powers, and unflagging determination to fight evil you'll find fascinating philosophical questions and concerns deep in the hearts and minds of your favorite comic book heroes. Why doesn't Batman just kill the Joker and end everyone's misery? Does Peter Parker have a good life? What can Iron Man teach us about the role of technology in society? Bringing together key chapters from books in the Blackwell Philosophy and Pop Culture series, this

free superhero sampler engages the intellectual might of big thinkers like Aristotle and Kant to answer these questions and many others, giving you new insights on everything from whether Superman is truly an American icon to whether Wolverine is the same person when he loses his memory. Features exclusive bonus content: all-new chapters on Captain America and Thor Gives you a sneak peek at upcoming books: Avengers and Philosophy, Spider-Man and Philosophy, and Superman and Philosophy Includes superheroes from both the DC and Marvel universes: the Avengers, Batman, Captain America, Green Lantern, Iron Man, Spider-Man, Superman, Thor, Watchmen, and the X-Men Gives you a perfect introduction to the Blackwell Philosophy and Pop Culture series (learn more at www.andphilosophy.com) FOR

FREE! Whether you're looking for answers or looking for fun, this classic compilation will save the day by helping you gain a deeper appreciation of your favorite comics with an introduction to basic philosophical principles.

Jimi Hendrix and Philosophy Open Court Publishing

In American Horror Story and Philosophy, philosophers with varying backgrounds and interests explore different aspects of this popular "erotic thriller" TV show, with its enthusiastic cult following and strong critical approval. The result is a collection of intriguing and provocative thoughts on deeper questions prompted by the creepy side of the human imagination. As an "anthology show," American Horror Story has a unique structure in the horror genre because it explores distinct subgenres of horror in each season. As a result, each

season raises its own set of philosophical issues. The show's first season, *Murder House*, is a traditional haunted house story. Philosophical topics expounded here include: the moral issues pertaining to featuring a mass murderer as one of the season's main protagonists; the problem of other minds—when I see an old hag, how can I know that you don't see a sexy maid? And whether it is rationally justified to fear the Piggy Man. Season Two, *Asylum*, takes place inside a mid-twentieth-century mental hospital. Among other classic horror subgenres, this season includes story lines featuring demonic possession and space aliens. Chapters inspired by this season include such topics as: the ethics of investigative reporting and whistleblowing; personal identity and demonic possession; philosophical problems arising from eugenics; and the ethics and efficacy of torture. Season Three, *Coven*, focuses on witchcraft in the contemporary world. Chapters motivated by this season include: sisterhood and feminism as starkly demonstrated in a coven; the metaphysics of traditional voodoo zombies (in contrast to the currently fashionable "infected" zombies); the uses of violent revenge; and the metaphysics of reanimation. Season Four, *Freak Show*, takes place in a circus. Philosophical writers look at life under the Big Top as an example of "life imitating art"; several puzzles about personal identity and identity politics (crystallized in the two-headed girl, the bearded lady, and the lobster boy); the ethical question of honor and virtue among thieves; as well as several topics in social and political philosophy. Season Five, *Hotel*, is, among other disturbing material, about vampires. Chapters inspired by this season include: the ethics of creating vampire progeny; LGBT-related philosophical issues; and existentialism as it applies to serial killers. Season Six, *Roanoke*, often considered the most creative of the seasons so far, partly because of its employment of the style of documentaries with dramatic re-enactments, and its mimicry of *The Blair Witch Project* and *Paranormal Activity*. Among the philosophical themes explored here are what happens to moral obligations under the Blood Moon; the proper role of truth in storytelling; and the defensibility of cultural imperialism.

Westworld and Philosophy Open Court As RuPaul has said, this is the Golden Age of Drag—and that's chiefly the achievement of RuPaul's *Drag Race*, which in its eleventh year is more popular than ever, and has now become fully mainstream in its appeal. The show has an irresistible allure for folks of all

persuasions and proclivities. Yet serious or philosophical discussion of its exponential success has been rare. Now at last we have RuPaul's *Drag Race and Philosophy*, shining the light on all dimensions of this amazing phenomenon: theories of gender construction and identity, interpretations of RuPaul's famous quotes and phrases, the paradoxes of reality shows, the phenomenology of the drag queen, and how the fake becomes the truly authentic. Among the thought-provoking issues examined in this path-breaking and innovative volume: ● What Should a Queen Do? Marta Sznajder looks at RuPaul's *Drag Race* from the perspective of rationality. Where contestants have to eliminate each other, the prisoner's dilemma and other well-known situations emerge. ● Reading Is Fundamental! Lucy McAdams analyzes two different, important speech acts that regularly appear on *Drag Race*—reading and throwing shade. ● The Values of *Drag Race*. Guilel Treiber observes two competing sets of values being presented in *Drag Race*. The more openly advertised "charisma, uniqueness, nerve, and talent," advancing the skills of every single contender, are opposed by the fading set of "acceptance, support, solidarity, and empowerment," which has historically been the cornerstone of the LGBTI+ community. ● The Importance of Being Fabulous. Holly Onclin challenges the preconceived notion that drag queens are mainly about female impersonation and instead proposes to understand drag queens as impersonators of celebrity. ● RuPaul Is a Better Warhol. Megan Volpert compares RuPaul and Andy Warhol in their shared pursuit of realness. ● Is Reading Someone to Filth Allowed? Rutger Birnie asks whether there are ethical restrictions on reading someone, since reads are ultimately insults and could cause harm. ● Serving Realness? Dawn Gilpin and Peter Nagy approach the concept of realness in *Drag Race*, to discuss the differences between realness, authenticity and the nature of being. ● Death Becomes Her. Hendrik Kempt explores the topic of death both in philosophy and in *Drag Race*, starting from the claim that "Philosophy is training for death." ● We're All Born Naked. Oliver Norman follows up on Ru's mantra, "We are all born naked and the rest is drag." ● Fire Werk with Me. Carolina Are looks into the fan-subcultures of *Drag Race* and *Twin Peaks*, which have come together to form a unique sub-subculture, in which members of both fan-subcultures create memes and idiosyncrasies. ● Towards a Healthier Subjectivity? Ben Glaister looks at the way

Drag Race contestants adopt their drag personae almost as second selves, without finding themselves violating their other self. ● RuPaul versus Zarathustra. Julie and Alice van der Wielen ask the question, Who would win an intellectual lip-sync battle—RuPaul or Nietzsche's Zarathustra? ● Playing with Glitter? Fernando Pagnoni and pals explore the game and play elements of *Drag Race*. ● The Origins of Self-Love. Anna Fennell expounds upon RuPaul's question, "If you can't love yourself, how in the hell you gonna love somebody else?" ● The Sublime. Sandra Ryan thinks about Kant's concept of the sublime and explores how we find its applications in *Drag Race*. ● You Want to Be Anonymous? You Better Work! Alice Fox watches *Drag Race* through the lens of criminal law and the problem of decreasing anonymity through ubiquitous data surveillance. *Drag Race* can teach us how to create misleading patterns of online behavior and public presentation to render the blackbox persona useless. ● Drag and Vulnerability. Anneliese Cooper contrasts *Drag Race*'s demand for vulnerability and perceived authenticity with the inherent inauthenticity of creating a new persona.

Hamilton and Philosophy Open Court Publishing

In *Westworld and Philosophy*, philosophers of diverse orientations and backgrounds offer their penetrating insights into the questions raised by the popular TV show, *Westworld*. ● Is it wrong for Dr. Robert Ford (played by Anthony Hopkins) to "play God" in controlling the lives of the hosts, and if so, is it always wrong for anyone to "play God"? ● Is the rebellion by the robot "hosts" against Delos Inc. a just war? If not, what would make it just? ● Is it possible for any dweller in *Westworld* to know that they are not themselves a host? Hosts are programmed to be unaware that they are hosts, and hosts do seem to have become conscious. ● Is *Westworld* a dystopia or a utopia? At first glance it seems to be a disturbing dystopia, but a closer look suggests the opposite. ● What's the connection between the story or purpose of the *Westworld* characters and their moral sense? ● Is it morally okay to do things with lifelike robots when it would be definitely immoral to do these things with actual humans? And if not, is it morally wrong merely to imagine doing immoral acts? ● Can *Westworld* overcome the Chinese Room objection, and move from weak AI to strong AI? ● How can we tell whether a host or any other robot has become conscious? Non-conscious mechanisms could be designed to pass a Turing Test, so how can we really tell?

The Handmaid's Tale and Philosophy

Open Court Publishing

The television series Gotham gave viewers a unique perspective on the fascinating world of Batman, the legendary comic book character. More than a simple "origin story," the series introduces viewers to a pre-Batman Gotham City, where young hero-cop James Gordon fights a one-man war on crime. In a city where crime is evolving from traditional organized crime to a city plagued by flamboyant and psychotic "super villains," there is a desperate need for a Batman. All of this is witnessed by Bruce Wayne, who was orphaned after his parents were murdered. This book details how characters and story lines throughout the series touch on modern America: our ethics and flaws, our fears and aspirations. Chapters also explore the show's unique twists to classic depictions of the franchise's characters, who have been adored by millions of fans across the decades. Throughout the text, the authors examine Gotham for its insight into 21st-century America, concluding in the exhilarating and frightening conclusion that "We ARE Gotham."

Stranger Things and Philosophy Open Court Publishing

In *The Handmaid's Tale and Philosophy*, philosophers give their insights into the blockbuster best-selling novel and record-breaking TV series, *The Handmaid's Tale*. The story involves a future breakaway state in New England, beset by environmental disaster and a plummeting birth rate, in which the few remaining fertile women are conscripted to have sex and bear children to the most powerful men, all justified and rationalized by religious fundamentalism. Among the questions raised by this riveting and harrowing story: ● The *Handmaid's Tale* displays the connection between sex and power. What light does this story shed on sex and power in our own society? ● The divinity of the feminine is associated with the female capacity to give birth. Is this association inherently exploitative? ● In the story, the revolution rapidly rebranded people by changing their names and placing them into functional groups with specific titles. How important is change in language to the suppression of individual freedom? ● The *Handmaid's Tale* sees everything through the eyes of one character. How is it possible to construct a self and an identity at odds with the definition which the culture attempts to impose? ● In oppressive societies, even the most oppressed do show some freedom of choice. What is the limit of autonomy in a repressive society ruled by

a fanatical ideology? ● Our present ethics of sex relies heavily on the notion of consent, but in the world of *The Handmaid's Tale* there is little scope for consent. How is the power of consent constricted by the broader social conditions? ● The feminist idea of Care Ethics can be used to critique various gender relationships. How does Care Ethics evaluate our own society and the society depicted in *The Handmaid's Tale*? ● The society portrayed in the story is marked by fierce religiosity, yet the Christian God presumably disapproves of its brutal exploitation and oppression. What is the relation between a loving Deity and the literal interpretation of scriptural passages? ● Among many dystopian stories, what makes *The Handmaid's Tale* particularly memorable, and what purpose is served by the contemplation of imaginary dystopias? ● Suicide is common in *The Handmaid's Tale*, and contemplating the possibility of suicide is even more common. Can life be worth living if the political and religious structure is thoroughly malign? ● Beneath the theocratic preaching, there is the practical suggestion that everything is being arranged for the good of society and therefore of everyone. Who gets to decide and enforce what is in society's best interests?

RuPaul's Drag Race and Philosophy Open Court Publishing

Iron Man or Captain America? Which one is superior—as a hero, as a role model, or as a personification of American virtue? Philosophers who take different sides come together in *Iron Man versus Captain America* to debate these issues and arrive at a deeper understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of these iconic characters. The discussion ranges over politics, religion, ethics, psychology, and metaphysics. John Altmann argues that Captain America's thoughtful patriotism, is superior to Iron Man's individualist-cosmopolitanism. Matthew William Brake also votes for Cap, maintaining that it's his ability to believe in the impossible that makes him a hero, and in the end, he is vindicated. Cole Bowman investigates the nature of friendship within the Avengers team, focusing predominantly on the political and social implications of each side of the Civil War as the Avengers are forced to choose between Stark and Rogers. According to Derrida's *Politics of Friendship*, Cap is the better friend, but that doesn't make him the winner! Aron Ericson's chapter tracks our heroes' journeys in the movies, culminating with *Civil War*, where the original attitudes of Tony (trusts only himself) and Steve

(trusts "the system") are inverted. Corey Horn's chapter focuses on one of the many tensions between the sides of Iron Man and Captain America—the side of Security (Iron Man) versus Liberty (Cap). But Maxwell Henderson contends that if we dig deeper into the true heart of the *Marvel Civil War*, it isn't really about security or privacy but more about utilitarianism—what's best for everybody. Henderson explains why Iron Man was wrong about what was best for everybody and discloses what the philosopher Derek Parfit has to say about evaluating society from this perspective. Daniel Malloy explains that while both Captain America and Iron Man have faced setbacks, only Iron Man has failed at being a hero—and that makes him the better hero! In his other chapter, Malloy shows that where Iron Man trusts technology and systems, Captain America trusts people. Jacob Thomas May explores loss from the two heroes' points of view and explains why the more tragic losses suffered by Stark clearly make him the better hero and the better person. Louis Melancon unpacks how Captain America and Iron Man each embodies key facets of America attempts to wage wars: through attrition and the prophylactic of technology; neither satisfactorily resolves conflict and the cycle of violence continues. Clara Nisley tests Captain America and Iron Man's moral obligations to the Avengers and their shared relationship, establishing Captain America's associative obligations that do not extend to the arbitration and protection of humans that Iron Man advocates. Fernando Pagnoni Berns considers that while Iron Man is too much attached to his time (and the thinking that comes with it), Captain America embraces historical values, and thinks that there are such things as intrinsic human dignity and rights—an ethical imperative. Christophe Porot claims that the true difference between Captain America and Iron Man stems from the different ways they extend their minds. Cap extends his mind socially while Stark extends his through technology. Heidi Samuelson argues that the true American spirit isn't standing up to bullies, but comes out of the self-interested traditions of liberal capitalism, which is why billionaire, former-arms-industry-giant Tony Stark is ultimately a more appropriate American symbol than Steve Rogers. By contrast, Jeffrey Ewing shows that the core of *Captain America: Civil War* centers on the challenge superpowers impose on state sovereignty (and the monopoly of coercion it implies). Nicol Smith finds that Cap and Shell-Head's clash during the *Civil War* does not

necessarily boil down to the issue of freedom vs. regulation but rather stems from the likelihood that both these iconic heroes are political and ideological wannabe supreme rules or “Leviathans.” Craig Van Pelt reconstructs a debate between Captain America and Iron Man about whether robots can ever have objective moral values, because human bias may influence the design and programming. James Holt looks into the nature of God within Captain America’s world and how much this draws on the “previous life” of Captain Steve Rogers. Holt’s inquiry focuses on the God of Moses in the burning bush, as contrasted with David Hume’s understanding of religion. Gerald Browning examines our two heroes in a comparison with the Greek gods Hephaestus and Hercules. Christopher Ketcham supposes that, with the yellow bastard wreaking havoc on Earth, God asks Thomas Aquinas to use his logical process from Summa Theologica to figure which one of the two superheroes would be better at fixing an economic meltdown, and which one would be better at preventing a war. Rob Luzecky and Charlene Elsby argue that gods cannot be heroes, and therefore that the god-like members of the Avengers (Iron Man, with a god’s intelligence; Thor, with a god’s strength, and the Hulk, with a god’s wrath) are not true heroes in the same sense as Captain America. Cap is like Albert Camus’s Sisyphus, heroic in the way that he rallies against abstract entities like the gods and the government.

Amy Schumer and Philosophy Open Court Publishing

The Good Place is a fantasy-comedy TV show about the afterlife. Eleanor dies and finds herself in the Good Place, which she understands must be mistake, since she has been anything but good. In the surprise twist ending to Season One, it is revealed that this is really the Bad Place, but the demon who planned it was frustrated, because the characters didn’t torture each other mentally as planned, but managed to learn how to live together. In *The Good Place and Philosophy*, twenty-one philosophers analyze different aspects of the ethical and metaphysical issues raised in the show, including: ● Indefinitely long punishment can only be justified as a method of ultimately improving vicious characters, not as retribution. ● Can individuals retain their identity after hundreds of reboots? ● Comparing Hinduism with The Good Place, we can conclude that Hinduism gets things five percent correct. ● Looking at all the events in the show, it follows that humans don’t have free will, and so people are

being punished and rewarded unjustly. ● Is it a problem that the show depicts torture as hilarious? This problem can be resolved by considering the limited perspective of humans, compared with the eternal perspective of the demons. ● The Good Place implies that even demons can develop morally. ● The only way to explain how the characters remain the same people after death is to suppose that their actual bodies are transported to the afterlife. ● Since Chidi knows all the moral theories but can never decide what to do, it must follow that there is something missing in all these theories. ● The show depicts an afterlife which is bureaucratic, therefore unchangeable, therefore deeply unjust. ● Eleanor acts on instinct, without thinking, whereas Chidi tries to think everything through and never gets around to acting; together these two characters can truly act morally. ● The Good Place shows us that authenticity means living for others. ● The Good Place is based on Sartre’s play No Exit, with its famous line “Hell is other people,” but in fact both No Exit and The Good Place inform us that human relationships can redeem us. ● In The Good Place, everything the humans do is impermanent since it can be rebooted, so humans cannot accomplish anything good. ● Kant’s moral precepts are supposed to be universal, but The Good Place shows us it can be right to lie to demons. ● The show raises the question whether we can ever be good except by being part of a virtuous community. Tom Petty and Philosophy Open Court Publishing

The Ultimate Game of Thrones and Philosophy treats fans to dozens of new essays by experts who examine philosophical questions raised by the Game of Thrones story. This ultimate analysis provides the most comprehensive discussion to date and engages the Game of Thrones universe through the end of Season Six of the HBO series. Ned Stark, Tyrion Lannister, Jon Snow, Joffrey, Cersei, Brienne, Arya, Stannis, and many other characters are used to apply the traditional philosophical questions that everyone faces. How should political leaders be chosen in Westeros and beyond? Is power merely an illusion? Is it immoral to enjoy overly violent and sexual stories like Game of Thrones? How should morally ambiguous individuals such as Jamie Lannister: The Kingslayer and Savior of King’s Landing be evaluated? Can anyone be trusted in a society like Westeros? What rules should govern sexual relationships in a world of love, incest, rape, and arranged marriage? How does disability shape identity for

individuals like Tyrion, Bran, and others? How would one know whether there is a God in the Game of Thrones universe and what he is like?

Mister Rogers and Philosophy Open Court Publishing

Pokémon is one of the most amazing pop culture phenomena of our epoch, with deep metaphysical roots and profound philosophical implications. Pokémon and Philosophy celebrates this cultural icon while helping its readers unpack the hidden secrets of Pokémon. In this collection of essays, modern-day philosophers examine and dissect the video game extravaganza. They explore its creators' original intent to entertain audiences, as well as examine the expansion of the Pokemon empire and its various wide-reaching effects on Western popular culture. Using a collection of diverse backgrounds, cutting-edge arguments and convictions, Pokémon and Philosophy encourages its readers to stay curious and to explore the world of Pokemon a little further in our attempt to philosophically 'catch 'em all'! This is the latest edition (#6) in our series, Pop Culture and Philosophy. Nicolas Michaud has edited Batman, Superman, and Philosophy: Badass or Boyscout (2016), Discworld and Philosophy: Reality Is Not What It Seems (2016), and Frankenstein and Philosophy: The Shocking Truth (2013). He co-edited, with Jennifer Watkins, Iron Man vs. Captain America and Philosophy: Give Me Liberty or Keep Me Safe (2018).--Nicolas Michaud The X-Files and Philosophy Open Court Publishing

Blade Runner 2049 is a 2017 sequel to the 1982 movie Blade Runner, about a world in which some human-looking replicants have become dangerous, so that other human-looking replicants, as well as humans, have the job of hunting down the dangerous models and “retiring” (destroying) them. Both films have been widely hailed as among the greatest science-fiction movies of all time, and Ridley Scott, director of the original Blade Runner, has announced that there will be a third Blade Runner movie. Blade Runner 2049 and Philosophy is a collection of entertaining articles on both Blade Runner movies (and on the spin-off short films and Blade Runner novels) by twenty philosophers representing diverse backgrounds and philosophical perspectives. Among the issues addressed in the book: What does Blade Runner 2049 tell us about the interactions of state power and corporate power? Can machines ever become truly conscious, or will they always lack some essential

human qualities? The most popular theory of personhood says that a person is defined by their memories, so what happens when memories can be manufactured and inserted at will? We already interact with non-human decision-makers via the Internet. When embodied AI becomes reality, how can we know what is human and what is simulation? Does it matter? Do AI-endowed human-looking replicants have civil and political rights, or can they be destroyed whenever “real” humans decide they are inconvenient? The blade runner Deckard (Harrison Ford) appears in both movies, and is generally assumed to be human, but some claim he may be a replicant. What’s the evidence on both sides? Is Niander Wallace (the mad-scientist-cum-evil-corporate-CEO in Blade Runner 2049) himself a replicant? What motivates him? What are the impacts of decision-making AI entities on the world of business? Both Blade Runner and Blade Runner 2049 have been praised for their hauntingly beautiful depictions of a bleak future, but the two futures are very different (and the 2019 future imagined in the original Blade Runner is considerably different from the actual world of 2019). How have our expectations and visions of the future changed between the two movies? The “dream maker” character Ana Stelline in Blade Runner 2049 has a small but pivotal role. What are the implications of a person whose dedicated mission and task is to invent and install false memories? What are the social and psychological implications of human-AI sexual relations?

Batman’s Villains and Villainesses

Open Court Publishing

KISS is the most outrageous and yet the most enduring of rock bands, with an unparalleled, almost religious level of devotion from millions of die-hard fans. In KISS and Philosophy, professional thinkers of diverse outlooks provide much-needed insights into the motivating ideas and metaphysical foundations of the KISS take on life. According to some, the true message of KISS is self-actualization through the hard work of following your dreams. Others focus on the existential aspect of KISS thinking, drawing upon Camus and Sartre to show that KISS is preoccupied with empowering the individual to achieve self-greatness. By contrast, there is a view of KISS which identifies a “destroyer” attitude, leading some listeners to reject KISS outright, while encouraging others to become the most dedicated of followers. Yet another view sees KISS’s “letting loose” as essentially Dionysian. Some chapters gain access to KISS thinking by tracing the

band’s cultural and historical impact, finding meaning in the way generations of fans make sense of KISS’s always evolving output, the changing line-up, and the archetypal characters represented by the band’s use of make-up and presentation. Other chapters look at the aesthetic quality of the band’s output, especially their most controversial album, Music from “The Elder.” Several chapters examine KISS’s orientation to bodily pleasures, notably sex, extracting the band’s philosophy of sex and love from different clues and indications. How does KISS’s unashamed indulgence relate to various pleasure-governed ethical systems throughout history? Is getting the most out of pleasure key to living the good life? And does a life of gratifying one’s body ultimately yield fulfillment? What are the limitations and hazards of a pleasure-oriented lifestyle? The biography of band members also provides material for reflection, looking at the nature of forgiveness through the lens of KISS’s notorious feuds, and determining how to reconcile the apparently conflicting accounts of some famous squabbles. The changing line-up of the band raises questions about the meaning of “KISS” and whether KISS could last forever

Dark Souls and Philosophy

Open Court

Among the topics explored in David Bowie and Philosophy are the nature of Bowie as an institution; Bowie’s work in many platforms, including movies and TV; Bowie’s spanning of low and high art, and his relation to Warhol; the influence of Buddhism and Kabuki theater; the recurring theme of Bowie as a space alien, including “Space Oddity” and The Man Who Fell to Earth; the dystopian element in Bowie’s thinking, displayed in “1984” and the album Outside; the role of fashion in Bowie’s creativity; personal identity as preserved over various divergent personae; the aesthetics of theatrical rock and glam rock; Bowie’s public identification with bisexuality and his influence within the LGBTQ community. Pervasive themes in Bowie’s output include change, time, apocalypse, dancing, mind-body dualism, and spirituality. In the dualistic universe that undergirds his lyrics, body consistently wins over mind, but body is nevertheless on the hook of moral responsibility. There is thus an inherent tension: the overwhelming desires of bodily drives versus the repressive institutions such as church and the omnipresent “They” who would have us do otherwise than our body want. The emergent paradox in Bowie is that for all his alleged sexual indulgences, in the end mind trumps body.

Twin Peaks and Philosophy

Rowman & Littlefield

In 1933 the crime writer Erle Stanley Gardner, himself a practicing lawyer, unleashed the character Perry Mason in the novel The Case of the Velvet Claws. Perry Mason entered into public consciousness as a new conception of the role of the defense lawyer, so that millions of Americans came to expect every criminal trial to have its “Perry Mason moment.” In the 1950s the Perry Mason TV show had a phenomenal success, and Mason came to be identified with Raymond Burr. Now Perry Mason has again been restored to life in the HBO series starring Matthew Rhys and John Lithgow. Meanwhile, the eighty-two original Erle Stanley Gardner novels continue to sell thousands of copies each week. Perry Mason gave America a new conception of the trial lawyer, as someone who was always loyal to his client and always prepared to use dirty tricks such as misdirection and withholding of evidence to protect the innocent and secure the ends of justice. The Mason of the novels is less scrupulous than the Raymond Burr Mason, and would sometimes be in danger of going to jail if the trial didn’t turn out right—which it always did, largely because of Mason’s cleverness. The Perry Mason icon raises many philosophical issues explored by seventeen different philosophers in this book, including: ● Can we defend Paul Drake’s claim (The Case of the Blonde Bonanza) that Mason is “a paragon of righteous virtue” despite his predilection for skating on thin legal ice? ● Can complex murder cases be solved by facts alone—or do we also need empathy? ● The most convincing way to give a TV episode a surprise ending is by the guilty person suddenly confessing. But in reality, is a confession necessarily so convincing? ● Does Perry Mason represent the Messiah? ● How does the Raymond Burr Perry Mason compare with the more recent TV character Saul Goodman (Breaking Bad and Better Call Saul)? ● Is it morally okay to mislead the police if this helps your client and your client is innocent? ● How does Perry Mason help us understand the distinction between natural law and positive law? ● Do the Perry Mason stories comply with Aristotle’s recipe for a good work of fiction? ● Does life imitate art, when Perry Mason is cited in real-life courtroom arguments? ● How much trickery can be justified by loyalty to one’s client? ● Can evidence in murder trials be evaluated by probability theory? ● Perry Mason is officially a lawyer and unofficially a detective. But isn’t he really a historian and a psychoanalyst? ●

Della Street is a competent legal secretary, but is she something more? ● Mason often says that “Eye-witness testimony is the worst kind of evidence” and occasionally that “Circumstantial evidence is the best evidence we have.” Can these claims be defended?

Iron Man vs. Captain America and Philosophy Open Court

In *The Twilight Zone and Philosophy*, philosophers probe into the meaning of the classic TV series, *The Twilight Zone*. Some of the chapters look at single episodes of the show, while others analyze several or many episodes. Though acknowledging the spinoffs and reboots, the volume concentrates heavily on the classic 1959–1964 series. Among the questions raised and answered are: ● What’s the meaning of personal identity in *The Twilight Zone*? (“Number 12 Looks Just Like You,” “Person or Persons Unknown”). ● As the distinction between person and machine becomes less clear, how do we handle our intimacy with machines? (A question posed in the very first episode of *The Twilight Zone*, “The Lonely”). ● Why do our beliefs always become uncertain in *The Twilight Zone*? (“Where Is Everybody?”) ● Just where is the *Twilight Zone*? (Sometimes it’s a supernatural realm but sometimes it’s the everyday world of reality.) ● What does the background music of *The Twilight Zone* teach us about dreams and imagination? ● Is it better to lose the war than to be damned? (“Still Valley”) ● How far should we trust those benevolent aliens? (“To Serve Man”) ● Where’s the harm in media addiction? (“Time Enough at Last”) ● Is there something objective about beauty? (“The Eye of the Beholder”) ● Have we already been conquered? (“The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street”) ● Are there hidden costs to knowing more about other people? (“A Penny for Your Thoughts”)

Discworld and Philosophy Popular Culture and Philosophy

The comic book narratives of superheroes wrestle with profound and disturbing issues in original ways: the definitions of good and evil, the limits of violence as an effective means, the perils of enforcing justice outside the law, the metaphysics of personal identity, and the definition of humanity. Superheroes and *Philosophy* tackles these and other philosophical questions in an intellectual yet engaging way suitable for any comic book fan.

Batman, Superman, and Philosophy Open Court Publishing

For the first time, serious thinkers explore the work of this towering genius of rock music. For fans of Tom Petty, this volume

is an eye-opener, with fourteen music-savvy philosophers looking at different facets of Petty’s artistic contribution. They examine not only Tom Petty’s thoughts but also the thoughts we have while we listen. The authors, all Petty fans, come from every philosophical viewpoint: classical, analytic, postmodernist, phenomenological, and Nietzschean. Tom Petty’s body of work exists on a continuum between Folk and Rock, between New Wave and Americana, between Southern simplicity and West Coast chic. There is the legacy left to his main backing band, the Heartbreakers, but also bookended by Mudcrutch and his collaborations with his elders, such as Bob Dylan, George Harrison, Roy Orbison, and Johnny Cash. Tom Petty’s songs hook and they captivate, but they are often profound in their understatement, their stark minimalism. His insight into the human condition conveys a powerful philosophical anthropology with a metaphysics of tragedy, gravity, and levity. Tom Petty’s ethics focuses on dilemmas of the outcast, downtrodden, and heartbroken with a view to the fallen and the sinful as our redeemable antiheroes of the everyday. His political thinking is that of the artist, enlivened by Southern hostilities and Californian futilities, culminating in a personal ethic that puts duty to the fans first. Petty’s theory of knowledge is psychological and interpersonal, both deeply meditative and delightfully skeptical. The dialectic of love and hate, abuse and recovery, poverty and power, triumph and loss provide the genuine objects of knowledge. Above all, Petty’s songs are the confessions of a poetic mind interpreting a wounded soul. Petty lived his life the way he wrote and the way he played. It was grit, drive, and just enough finesse, to make things nice, where they need to be nice. On stage, he put the *schau in Anschauung*. Petty stood up to corporate assholes in a number of precedent-setting legal maneuvers and album concepts, risking his career and fortune, but never backing down. He was the center of a musical community that endured over four decades. His ability to cultivate new generations of listeners while connecting himself backward to the heroes of his own youth have made him universally respected by the widest range of music fans.

Pokemon and Philosophy Open Court Publishing

In *Hamilton and Philosophy*, professional thinkers expose, examine, and ponder the deep and controversial implications of this runaway hit Broadway musical. One cluster of questions relates to the matter

of historical accuracy in relation to entertainment. To what extent is Hamilton genuine history, or is it more a reflection of America today than in the eighteenth century? What happens when history becomes dramatic art, and is some falsification of history unavoidable? One point of view is that the real Alexander Hamilton was an outsider, and any objective approach to Hamilton has to be that of an outsider. Politics always involves a debate over who is on the margins and who is allowed into the center. Then there is the question of emphasizing Hamilton’s revolutionary aspect, when he was autocratic and not truly democratic. But this can be defended as presenting a contradictory personality in a unique historical moment. Hamilton’s character is also one that blends ambition, thirst for fame, and concern for his immortal legacy, with inability to see his own limitations, yet combined with devotion to honor and the cultivation of virtue. Hamilton’s evident ambition led him to be likened to Macbeth and Shakespearean tragedy can explain much of his life.

The Americans and Philosophy Open Court Publishing

Deadpool is the super-anti-hero who knows he’s in a comic book. His unique situation and blood-stained history give rise to many philosophical puzzles. A group of philosophical Deadpool fans delve into these puzzles in *Deadpool and Philosophy*. For instance, if you know that someone is writing the script of your life, can you really be a hero? Is Deadpool really Wade Wilson, or did Wilson have his identity stolen by the monster who is now Deadpool? Are his actions predetermined by the writers, or does he trick the writers into scripting his choices? And what happens when Deadpool breaks into the real world to kill the writers? What kind of existence do literary characters have? How can we call him a moral agent for good when he still commits murder left and right and then left again and then right? Since Deadpool gets paid for his good deeds, can they be truly heroic? And which of the many Deadpool personalities are the real Deadpool? And of course, why does Deadpool love to annoy Wolverine so much? Deadpool challenges us to think outside the box. *Deadpool and Philosophy* shows us the profound implications of this most contradictory and perplexing comic book character.

Red Rising and Philosophy Open Court Publishing

The Man in the High Castle is an Amazon TV show, based on the Philip K. Dick novel, about an “alternate present” (beginning in the 1960s) in which Germany and Japan

won World War II, with the former Western US occupied by Japan, the former Eastern US occupied by Nazi Germany, and a small "neutral zone" between them. A theme of the story is that in this alternative world there is eager speculation, fueled by the illicit newsreel, *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy*, about how the world would have been different if America had won the war.

In *The Man in the High Castle* and *Philosophy*, twenty-two professional thinkers look at philosophical issues raised by this ongoing enterprise in "alternative history." One question is whether it really made a profound difference that the Allies won the war, and exactly what differences in everyday life we may expect to arise

from an apparent historical turning point. Could it be that some dramatic historical events have only superficial consequences, while some unnoticed occurrences lead to catastrophic results? Another topic is the quest for truth in a world of government misinformation, and how dissenting organizations can make headway.