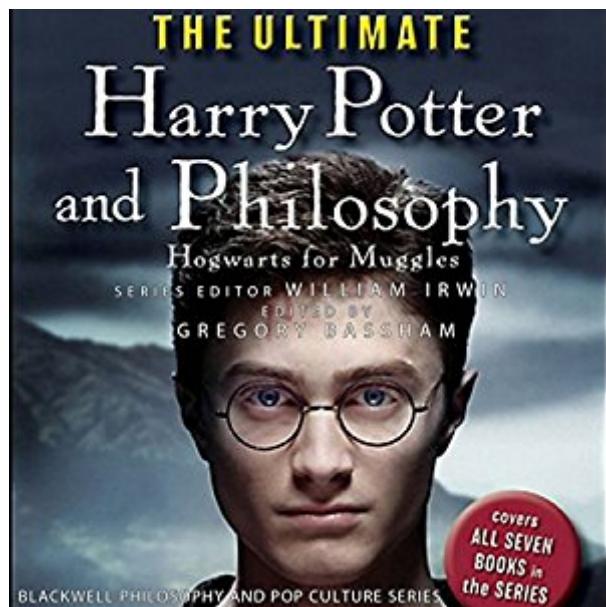


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The Ultimate Harry Potter And Philosophy: Hogwarts For Muggles



Synopsis

A philosophical exploration of the entire seven-book Harry Potter series. Harry Potter has been heralded as one of the most popular book series of all time, and the philosophical nature of Harry, Hermione, and Ron's quest to rid the world of its ultimate evil is one of the many things that make this series special. The Ultimate Harry Potter and Philosophy covers all seven titles in J.K. Rowling's groundbreaking series and takes fans back to Godric's Hollow to discuss life after death, to consider what moral reasoning drove Harry to choose death, and to debate whether Sirius Black is a man or a dog. This book will be the definitive guide for all fans looking to appreciate the series on a deeper level. Covers a range of intriguing topics such as the redemption of Severus Snape, the power of love, and destiny in the wizarding world Gives you a new perspective on Harry Potter characters, plot lines, and themes Makes a perfect companion to the Harry Potter books and movies Packed with interesting ideas and insights, The Ultimate Harry Potter and Philosophy is an ideal companion for anyone interested in unraveling the subtext and exploring the greater issues at work in the story.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 7 hoursÂ andÂ 59 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Audible Studios

Audible.com Release Date: May 14, 2012

Language: English

ASIN: B00836QS8Q

Best Sellers Rank: #36 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Genres & Styles > Children's Literature #53 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Genres & Styles > Science Fiction & Fantasy #59 inÂ Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction > History & Criticism

Customer Reviews

As a longtime fan of the various "Pop Culture and Philosophy" series of book, I had read the original "Harry Potter and Philosophy: If Aristotle Ran Hogwarts" in 2004. At that time there were only 5 books in the series, and the book covered those. With the release of the final two book and the release soon of the first part of the movie adaptation of the final book, it is a good time to revisit the "Boy Who Lived" and what his adventures can tell us about life. Considering that author J.K.

Rowling packed a slew of "big ideas" of life, death, remorse and redemption into these last two volumes, it would be a shame to not mine such a rich vein. Happily, this book does just that. While encompassing all seven volumes of the Harry Potter series, the essays focus on the meat of the final books - the Half-Blood Prince and the Deadly Hallows. Still with the focus on just two books, the writers find different aspects to work with so there is very little overlap of themes, examples or even quotes. The essays are all of high quality - highly readable and accessible to the non-philosopher reader. The philosophical aspects branch out further from the basic stalwarts of philosophy including Aristotle, Plato, Kant and Descartes to look at more modern writings in philosophy and examine topics of gender and feminism, patriotism and house loyalty, libertarianism and what is quality education. The section on politics is very strong and looks at an aspect of the Harry Potter's world that usually garners less attention. Also examined is the nature of reality in regards to the magical world of the books' setting and whether or not Rowling has the ability or the right to add on interpretations to the world after she has penned the last word of Deadly Hallows.

The Ultimate Harry Potter and Philosophy: Hogwarts for Muggles ed by Gregory Bassham is a book in the ongoing Blackwell Philosophy and Pop Culture series and one I've been anticipating for a while, having read the first book of Harry Potter and Philosophy when it came out years ago. At the time, there were only four books in the series published so there was still a lot of information about the characters and their stories left to be told. This will very likely go down in my short list of books I enjoy from this series. I wish I could find the first volume but I apparently am not getting any wiser from reading these books as I keep lending things to my children who, because they don't have the same drive to read things in a timely manner, tend to misplace my books rather than actually read them. But I digress. The essays run the gamut from Plato to Heidegger, from feminist interpretation to political orientation. I was especially looking forward to certain essays, including one on authorial authority, and another on identity and what determines the self. I confess, there is one essay that has a concluding sentence I found so incredibly offensive as to make me put the book down altogether for an entire day. I am genuinely disappointed that the editor did not ask that the conclusion of this one essay be modified to at least remove this one sentence and I would be surprised if I were the only reader who didn't take offense. I am choosing not to identify the essay in question to allow other readers to approach the collection with an open mind. Where this book soars is in its ability to address deep philosophical issues in light of Harry Potter.

I have several books from the Pop Culture and Philosophy series, and have found them worthwhile

overall. Like many fans, I'm usually on the lookout for something more to do with my favorite show/film/book, etc. and these are decidedly better than the commonplace "companion" or "encyclopedia." Harry Potter already has an entry in the series, Harry Potter and Philosophy: If Aristotle Ran Hogwarts. That book was very good and gave a new perspective on Pottermania. As the authors mention in the forward to this book, it was also notable for recognizing just how important the Potter books had become to public consciousness. These weren't just for kids, teens and adults were also hooked. However, that book focused more on the early Potter books. The last few books, especially the conclusion, have darker/edgier themes that are ripe for philosophical reflection (death, destiny, self sacrifice). However, that is a double edged sword. The very adult themes lead some of the authors here to go "too deep." These books aren't meant solely for philosophy professors and college majors; they are supposed to be accessible to the average person (who has never taken a philosophy class). But, some of the essays here are not. I was not surprised to see many reviewers complaining that it was "dry, boring, or painstaking" to read. However, for the die-hard fan looking for something new, this is worth picking up. There is a large variety of themes to the essays including: destiny, patriotism (eg House loyalty), and more than one on death. One essay even tackles the bombshell Rowling dropped that Dumbledore was gay.

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