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The Simpsons and Philosophy: The D'oh! of Homer (Popular Culture and Philosophy)

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This unconventional and lighthearted introduction to the ideas of the major Western philosophers examines The Simpsons — TV's favorite animated family. The authors look beyond the jokes, the crudeness, the attacks on society — and see a clever display of irony, social criticism, and philosophical thought. The writers begin with an examination of the characters. Does Homer actually display Aristotle's virtues of character? In what way does Bart exemplify American pragmatism? The book also examines the ethics and themes of the show, and concludes with discussions of how the series reflects the work of Aristotle, Marx, Camus, Sartre, and other thinkers.



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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

No doubt Aristotle just rolled over in his grave. An essay called "Homer and Aristotle" would appear to be a treatise on two ancient Greek thinkers; in this case, it's a depiction of Homer Simpson's Aristotelian virtues. Raja Halwani's "Homeric" essay is amusing, though, and moreover, it actually ends up being enlightening, especially for those just learning Aristotle's ethics. Bart may be a Nietzschean without knowing it; Mr. Burns is a cipher for unhappiness (except when he eats "so-called iced-cream"); and Ned Flanders raises questions about neighborly love. *The Simpsons and Philosophy* has a lot to say about *The Simpsons*, and even more to say about philosophy.

The book collects 18 essays into an unpretentious, tongue-in-cheek, and surprisingly intelligent look at philosophy through the lens of Matt Groening's vaunted animated series. The editors are quick to point out that they don't think *The Simpsons* "is the equivalent of history's best works of literature ... but it nevertheless is just deep enough, and certainly funny enough, to warrant serious attention." The writers of the book are mostly professional philosophers, and they are appropriately erudite. But what is truly astonishing, even for a confessed *Simpsons* addict, is their breadth of *Simpsons* knowledge, spanning all 12 seasons of the show's history. *The Simpsons and Philosophy* is obviously not intended to be a turning point in modern thought, but it is an excellent introduction to some core elements of philosophy. --Eric de Place

From Publishers Weekly

In Irwin's earlier anthology, *Seinfeld and Philosophy: A Book About Everything and Nothing* (1999), a team of philosophy professors offered an introduction to Plato, Kierkegaard and other major thinkers via the characters and plots of the TV sitcom. Now Irwin and company have regrouped to focus on Matt Groening's popular, long-running animated series, *The Simpsons*. Noting that Groening studied philosophy in college, they hasten to add that this is not an attempt to explore meanings intended by Groening and the show's artists and writers. "Rather, we're highlighting the philosophical significance of *The Simpsons* as we see it," declares the editorial trio. Each essay provides a hilarious but incisive springboard to some aspect of philosophy. Can we learn something about the nature of happiness from the unhappy, miserly Mr. Burns? What are Springfield's sexual politics? What makes Bart Simpson a Heideggerian thinker? Could Bart be the Nietzschean ideal? These are the kind of "meaty philosophical issues" TV viewers can expect to find covered by the 21 contributors to this entertaining book, with interpretations drawn from the works of Sartre, Kant, Karl Marx, Virginia Woolf, Roland Barthes and others. Appendixes include a time line of the major philosophers referred to and a chronological guide of the episode titles and original air dates spanning 11 seasons of *The Simpsons*. (Apr.)Forecast: *Seinfeld and Philosophy* prompted *Entertainment Weekly's* review comment, "Wish we'd had this in college." Fans of *The Simpsons* are certain to find this book to be the perfect rebuttal for those who dismiss the show as a no-brainer.

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From [Booklist](#)

Does Homer Simpson embody the Socratic ideal of virtue? Sadly, no, but in one of 18 essays on the long-running cartoon series, Raja Halwani investigates, from a Socratic perspective, why we all find Homer so humorous and charming. From "Thus Spake Bart," an essay comparing Bart, the bad boy of Springfield, and Nietzsche, philosophy's ultimate bad boy, to explication of the aesthetic philosophy of the allusions the show

is famous for making, the book is consistently successful. Even the impenetrable Immanuel Kant becomes outright hilarious in a rollicking analysis of the virtue of duty in Springfield. *The Simpsons* has received serious attention in the past, most notably David Foster Wallace's analysis of Simpsonian meta-irony in *A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again* (1997). Like Wallace's book, these pieces make erudite concepts accessible by viewing things through the lens of a great cartoon series. Perhaps *The Simpsons'* creators will be inspired by this book to include a philosophy professor with a weakness for brilliantly funny TV shows in Springfield's ever-growing population of eccentrics. *John Green*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Madeline Wayt:

Have you spare time for a day? What do you do when you have more or little spare time? Sure, you can choose the suitable activity intended for spend your time. Any person spent their very own spare time to take a go walking, shopping, or went to the particular Mall. How about open or perhaps read a book allowed The Simpsons and Philosophy: The D'oh! of Homer (Popular Culture and Philosophy)? Maybe it is to become best activity for you. You realize beside you can spend your time together with your favorite's book, you can cleverer than before. Do you agree with it has the opinion or you have different opinion?

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