



Dexter and Philosophy: Mind over Spatter

Richard V. Greene (Editor) , George A. Reisch (Editor) , Rachel Robison (Editor)

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What explains the huge popular following for *Dexter*, currently the most-watched show on cable, which sympathetically depicts a serial killer driven by a cruel compulsion to brutally slay one victim after another? Although Dexter Morgan kills only killers, he is not a vigilante animated by a sense of justice but a charming psychopath animated by a lust to kill, ritualistically and bloodily. However his gory appetite is controlled by “Harry’s Code,” which limits his victims to those who have gotten away with murder, and his job as a blood spatter expert for the Miami police department gives him the inside track on just who those legitimate targets may be.

In *Dexter and Philosophy*, an elite team of philosophers don their rubber gloves and put Dexter’s deeds under the microscope. Since Dexter is driven to ritual murder by his “Dark Passenger,” can he be blamed for killing, especially as he only murders other murderers? Does Dexter fit the profile of the familiar fictional type of the superhero? What part does luck play in making Dexter who he is? How and why are horror and disgust turned into aesthetic pleasure for the TV viewer? How essential is Dexter’s emotional coldness to his lust for slicing people up? Are Dexter’s lies and deceptions any worse than the lies and deceptions of the non-criminals around him? Why does Dexter long to be a normal human being and why can’t he accomplish this apparently simple goal?

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From Reader Review Dexter and Philosophy: Mind over Spatter for online ebook

Michael Feehly says

Can you really write an entire book of pop philosophy about Dexter? Apparently, so. A bit dry and boring, unless you daydream of Dexter. The discussions were repetitive; there are only so many times I can stand the deontological/consequentialist debate in one book. The essays worth reading were chapters 17, 18, 21, and 23: discussions of sexuality, race, virtue, and freedom in Dexter. I found the discussions of Foucault, Aristotle, and Sartre to be intriguing. Foucault as ever needs only a explanation of terminology; Aristotle provides useful categories of moral discipline in the Nicomachean Ethics; Sartre, to me at least, intuitively seems to grasp the nature of things in terms of freedom and responsibility. I guess I truly am an existentialist, despite my aversion to Nietzsche. So it was worth reading but painful to get through. The essays' language painfully combined the lowbrow diction of the mass market with the serpentine and slithering sentence-making of academe. Not a great read, but definitely philosophically illuminating.

Kyle Lloyd says

never finished.

Steve Walker says

Somewhat interesting collection of philosophical essays addressing our fascination and love for this television series featuring a serial killer, Dexter Morgan, as the central figure. Why do we like Dexter? Why do we want him to not get caught? How does he draw us in to see all of who Dexter is and understand, perhaps condone, his addiction to killing. Of course Harry's "code" adds an element of reason we can live with and sometimes cheer him on.

A few of the entries were well done and thought provoking. Some were more of the same, and some I felt were not particularly interesting.

Chris says

Very boring. The writing styles vary chapter to chapter, making it an erratic read.

Tanya says

I am a big fan of this series of books and a big fan of Dexter, so it's hard not to like a book. The only slightly down-side to this one is that pretty much all philosophical discussions surrounding Dexter are ethical ones, and this isn't the case with most books in the series. The most interesting essays for me, were the last few

that dealt with the issue of why we cheer for Dexter, and is it okay to do so.

Indah Threez Lestari says

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Jennie says

So far this has been my least favorite of the pop culture and philosophy books that I've read. The essays within each section felt very repetitive.

Joshua Finnell says

Library Journal Review:

If I identify with a serial killer, what does that say about me? Every fan of Dexter has pondered this rather complex philosophical question. In this latest volume in the "Popular Culture and Philosophy" series, a broad collection of philosophers analyze the morality and ethics of Dexter Morgan. Whereas other subjects in this series require some mental dexterity to connect the two themes (The Red Sox and Philosophy, for example), the popular Showtime program is ripe for philosophical dissection. Greene, George A. Reisch, and Rachel Robison-Greene, who have all edited other volumes in the series, compile essays that apply Mill's Method of Difference in comparing Dexter's emotionless demeanor to that of Star Trek's Spock, Sartre's existentialism in exploring Dexter's Dark Passenger, and the deontological lens to explain Dexter's adherence to Harry's Code. The philosophical canon is aimed squarely at Dexter Morgan. Though certainly interlaced with philosophical insight, each chapter is written by an author who is clearly also a fan of the show.

Verdict Devotees of the television program will find this philosophical examination both illuminating and entertaining.—Joshua Finnell, Denison Univ. Lib., Granville, OH

Aspasia says

A book of multiple essays about America's favorite TV killer. Essays delve into the philosophical and psychological aspect of the show and some of the essays will blow your mind and make your head spin.

Kayla Perry says

In general, I liked it. It should definitely not be read if you have not already seen Seasons 1-5 as it will spoil a great many things (and it doesn't warn you either). Thankfully, I'm very current on my Dexter. Some of the essays felt like I was reading the same thing but by a different person and I can practically quote verbatim some of the lines that came up again and again. There was an interesting one about the invisibility of

whiteness, a commentary on the lack of support the female characters get, and my favorites, the ones by David Ramsay Steele. The blurbs at the end of the book about each contributor are surprisingly funny.

Overall, I enjoyed it, but I kind of felt like it would have been better as a coffee table book (though I can never really do piecemeal reading) in which each essay was read at your leisure instead of straight through.

Jeremy David says

This is more of a collector's item than a good read. I feel like someone is explaining the most obvious things to me. Not that interesting but 20 years from now maybe it'll be worth my time.

David says

Is Dexter an angel of justice, a tortured victim of a trauma from childhood, an amoral psychopath or a tragic superhero? This is one of the many questions philosophers around the country cover in this book. This is a great book for fans of the show and should only be read if you have seen the first four seasons of Dexter. In the end this is another solid book in the Pop Culture and Philosophy book series.

Brenda says

Interesting, but repetitive, and I got bored.
