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AND **KEVIN S. DECKER**

# **STAR WARS** **AND PHILOSOPHY** **STRIKES BACK**

**BLACKWELL PHILOSOPHY AND POP CULTURE SERIES**

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# **STAR WARS AND PHILOSOPHY STRIKES BACK: THIS IS THE WAY**

**Edited by**

**Jason T. Eberl and Kevin S. Decker**

**WILEY** Blackwell

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## The Bad Batch

**Joel Archer** holds a PhD in philosophy from Saint Louis University and is pursuing a PhD in religion at Duke University. His research has appeared in journals such as *Philosophical Studies*, *Religious Studies*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, and *New Testament Studies*. Why two PhDs? Some think he draws inspiration from Ahsoka Tano, who fights evil with two lightsabers instead of one.

**Daniel Banning** is a Field Service Engineer with Marel. He received a BA in history from Franciscan University of Steubenville. He underwent years of informal training in philosophy as a result of having professional philosophers as best friends and roommates, and he has engaged in many deep discussions of both philosophy and *Star Wars*. He has a special interest in the history of the *Star Wars* universe, particularly the Old Republic era. This book marks his first step into the larger world of academic publishing.

**Michael Baur** teaches in both the Philosophy Department and the Law School at Fordham University. He holds a PhD from the University of Toronto, and a JD from Harvard Law School. He has served as general editor of the “Cambridge Hegel Translations” series for Cambridge University Press, and is President of the Metaphysical Society of America for 2023/24. He has published on a variety of thinkers (including Aristotle, Aquinas, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Heidegger, and C.S. Peirce) and on a variety of topics (including metaphysics, ethics, jurisprudence, German Idealism, pragmatism, existentialism, and hermeneutics). They say he has never heard the tragedy of Darth Plagueis the Wise – but perhaps the archives are incomplete.

**Steve Bein** is wondering, why is he here? Associate Professor of Philosophy he is, at the University of Dayton. Deep is his nerdery in science fiction, and often does he contribute to volumes on pop culture and philosophy. Many chapters has he written, on subjects ranging from Wonder Woman to Mr. Rogers. A novelist is he as well, and several black belts has he earned, but he is not a Jedi yet.

**Philipp Berghofer** is a postdoc researcher and lecturer at the University of Graz, Austria. His research focus centers around epistemology, phenomenology, and philosophy of physics, aiming at establishing a phenomenological experience-first epistemology. He is the author of *The Justificatory Force of Experiences*, co-editor of *Phenomenological Approaches to Physics*, and president of the Austrian Society for Phenomenology. Ultimately, he is just a simple man trying to make his way in the universe, one pursuing a complicated profession.

**Lance Belluomini** did his graduate work in philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley; San Francisco State University; and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He's recently published essays on *Tenet* and *The Mandalorian* in *The Palgrave Handbook of Popular Culture as Philosophy* (2021). He's also contributed chapters to *The Philosophy of Christopher Nolan* (2017) and the Wiley-Blackwell volumes on *Inception*, *The Walking Dead*, *Ender's Game*, *The Ultimate Star Wars*, and *Indiana Jones* (forthcoming). Still swept away by *The Mandalorian*, he currently loves to end his sentences with the inscrutable catchphrase "I have spoken."

**Isabel Bishop** is a freelance writer living in St. Louis, Missouri. She has a BA in English from the University of Dallas with an interest in film, art history, and culture. She writes for *The Take* and for *Think Christian*, as well as her own pop culture blog on Medium. Her work explores

feminist, political, and Christian thought in relation to film and television. She is a fervent defender of *The Last Jedi*, her favorite of the sequel series, and much of her work explores the Jedi mind-trick of the patriarchy.

**Jeffrey P. Bishop** is Professor of Philosophy and Professor of Theological Studies at Saint Louis University, where he holds the Tenet Endowed Chair in Bioethics. Bishop is also the founding Director of the Center for Culture, Religion, Ethics, Science, and Technology (CREST) at SLU, which conducts interdisciplinary research on topics at the intersection of science, technology, and culture. His own scholarship explores the historical, political, and philosophical foundations of medicine, science, and technology. His books include, *The Anticipatory Corpse: Medicine, Power, and the Care of the Dying* (2011) and *Biopolitics After Neuroscience: Morality and the Economy of Virtue* (2022), co-authored with M. Therese Lysaught and Andrew A. Michel. Bishop is currently working on a three-volume series at the intersection of philosophical anthropology and philosophy of technology. He can often be found ruminating over a fire, smoking Bantha brisket in his native Texan “low and slow” BBQ style, pondering the technological enframing of humanity represented in the trash compactor scene in *A New Hope*, which he considers the most philosophically rich and important scene in the *Star Wars* canon.

Dear *Star Wars* Powers That Be: My Experimental Clone Force 99 Lego set came without an Omega figure. In addition, the Wrecker figure is the same size as the rest of the other clones. As you know, part of Wrecker’s mutation was greater height than the Fett clone standard 1.83 meters. The Omega figure, as a young girl, “little sister” should be smaller than the rest of the figures at one meter. This is obviously a *Clone Wars* animated series era set, not a *Bad Batch* animated series era set, which should have the

appropriately sized Wrecker and the *Bad Batch* series new figure Omega, including her laser crossbow. Please rectify this by issuing a new Bad Batch set with the correct characters with appropriate dimensions and weaponry.

The Force be With You,

**Dr. Patricia L. Brace**, Professor of Art and Humanities, Southwest Minnesota State University; co-editor with Robert Arp of *The Philosophy of J.J. Abrams*.

**Timothy Challans** identifies with the clone troopers in many ways, not the least of which is his white beard and bald head, which helped him pull off his older (*Rebels*) Captain Rex costume last Halloween. Tim retired from the Army as an infantry lieutenant colonel and has spent over a dozen years as a professor teaching over a thousand military students a range of subjects at a number of military colleges, starting with the teaching of philosophy and military ethics at West Point. He has an award-winning (Choice Award Bronze Medal) academic book, *Awakening Warrior: Revolution in the Ethics of Warfare* (2007). His fascination with clone troopers comes from his empathy for the people transformed into soldiers of an imperial army who could so easily and unwittingly be manipulated by their masters – through discipline, pressure, and propaganda – to cross a “thin red line” into an abyss of immorality, following orders to commit heinous acts of torture, murder, and treason. Given the requisite conditions, any army is capable, unfortunately, of following Order 66.

**Roy T. Cook** is CLA Scholar of the College, Setterberg Fellow of Philosophy, and Professor at the University of Minnesota. He works on the philosophy of mathematics, logic, and the philosophy of art. He has two R2-D2 tattoos, because he realizes that R2-D2 is actually the main character of the Star Wars fictional universe, and the only

character who consistently understands what is really going on.

**Kevin S. Decker** is Professor of Philosophy at Eastern Washington University. He has edited or co-edited more than a dozen anthology books in philosophy and popular culture, including *Dune and Philosophy*, and is the author of *Who is Who? The Philosophy of Doctor Who*. If you look closely in the scenes from *The Force Awakens* when Maz Kanata's castle on Takodana is under assault, you can see him cowering under the second table to the left.

**Jason T. Eberl** is Professor of Health Care Ethics and Philosophy and Director of the Albert Gnaegi Center for Health Care Ethics at Saint Louis University. He teaches and publishes on bioethics, medieval philosophy, and metaphysics. He's the editor of *Battlestar Galactica and Philosophy* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), co-editor (w/Kevin S. Decker) of *The Ultimate Star Trek and Philosophy* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2016) and *The Ultimate Star Wars and Philosophy* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), as well as the original *Star Trek and Philosophy* (2008) and *Star Wars and Philosophy* (2005), and co-editor (w/ George A. Dunn) of *Sons of Anarchy and Philosophy* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013) and *The Philosophy of Christopher Nolan* (2017). He's also contributed to similar books on Stanley Kubrick, J.J. Abrams, Metallica, the Marvel Cinematic Universe, *Harry Potter*, *Terminator*, *The Hunger Games*, *The Big Lebowski*, *Hamilton*, *Westworld*, and *Avatar*. As a bibliophile, the most disturbing moment for him in the entire *Star Wars* saga isn't when Luke gets his hand cut off or makes out with his sister, but when he nearly destroyed the sacred Jedi texts on Ahch-To.

**Noam Ebner** was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Naturally, he became a lawyer. Reprogrammed as successfully as IG-11, he's now a professor of negotiation

and conflict resolution at Creighton University, teaching that wars not make one great. Noam lives in a swamp with his wife and four younglings. He is co-editor of *Star Wars and Conflict Resolution* (forthcoming), and swears by the Maker that everything in this bio is literally true.

**Umut Eldem** is an assistant professor at Doğuş University Sociology Department. He teaches history of philosophy, ethics, philosophy of science, and occasionally the ways of the Force. He has published articles on Kant, Heidegger, Rick & Morty, and now, Yoda. In his spare time he likes to visit swamps to look for buried X-wings.

**Thomas D. Harter** is the director of the Department of Bioethics with Gundersen Health System. After his Jedi-esque training in philosophy at the University of Tennessee he was seduced to the “dark side” of clinical ethics, realizing the great power that comes with helping ill patients and their families overcome challenging ethics questions at the bedside. However, Harter has attempted to remain in balance with the Force, continuing with academic pursuits while battling forces of evil as a knight of the Order of Clinical Ethics. When not in frontline clinical battles, Harter writes about issues at the intersection of medical ethics, business ethics, medical professionalism, and philosophy, and teaches bioethics courses and lectures on bioethics topics with other health professions rebels and teachers of the Jedi-esque health professions.

**A.G. Holdier** is a scruffy-looking nerf-herder doing graduate work in philosophy and public policy at the University of Arkansas (which is probably why he has a bad feeling about this). When he's not researching social and political epistemology or philosophy of language in his local Dex's Diner, you can find him still trying to “do the magic hand thing.”

**David Kyle Johnson** is a professor of philosophy at King's College, in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, who also produces lecture series for The Teaching Company's *The Great Courses*. His specializations include metaphysics, logic, and philosophy of religion and his "Great Courses" include *Sci-Phi: Science Fiction as Philosophy*, *The Big Questions of Philosophy*, and *Exploring Metaphysics*. Kyle is Executive Officer of GCRR (The Global Center for Religion Research), the editor-in-chief of *The Palgrave Handbook of Popular Culture as Philosophy* (forthcoming), and has also edited other volumes for Blackwell-Wiley, including *Black Mirror and Philosophy: Dark Reflections* and *Inception and Philosophy: Because It's Never Just a Dream*. Kyle generally likes his *Star Wars* like the Sheev likes his Empire: Jedi free.

**Russell P. Johnson** is a professor in the Religious Studies program at the University of Chicago, where he teaches "Villains: Evil in Philosophy, Religion, and Film" and "*Star Wars* and Religion." If you haven't visited it, the University of Chicago combines the pleasant weather of Hoth with the wild nightlife of the Jedi Archives. Dr. Johnson's research focuses on the philosophy of communication and nonviolent conflict resolution, so naturally he writes about movies where people solve their problems with laser swords. In addition to his monthly columns for *Sightings*, he wrote a chapter titled "Lifting Rocks: Camus, Sainthood, and the Anti-heroic in *The Last Jedi*" for the upcoming book *Theology and the Star Wars Universe*.

**Joshua Jowitt** is from a small coal-mining town in the North of England and holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in law and the philosophy of law from the Universities of Cambridge, Warwick, and Durham in the United Kingdom. He is currently a lecturer at Newcastle Law School, where he works mainly in legal theory, but has recently gotten obsessed with the idea of what it means to

be a “person” in both philosophy and law. His strong accent means that, when he was younger and had more hair, he was frequently mistaken for Chewbacca. The illusion was quickly shattered, since whenever he was asked to make practical repairs to literally anything, he was about as dexterous as a Bantha.

**Nathan Kellen** is Instructor of Philosophy at Owensboro Community & Technical College. In the time since the publication of the previous *Star Wars and Philosophy* volume, he has passed his trials to become a Jedi Knight, started training his own Padawans, and for some unknown reason finally gotten around to watching the *Star Wars Holiday Special*.

**Aikaterini-Maria Lakka** is currently finishing her PhD in comparative literature at the Sorbonne. Her interest in all kinds of stories began from an early age, so she studied classics in Greece (DUTH) and France (Bordeaux Montaigne), and did graduate studies in French literature at the Sorbonne. One of her main research interests revolves around Foucauldian heterotopias, spaces caught up in between reality and imagination, hence her love for the Star Wars universe. She is also a novelist herself; her debut novel, *Someone Named Galatea*, was published in Modern Greek in 2021. When she was young, she decided to become fluent in over 6 million forms of communication to rival C-3PO, but only managed to become fluent in French, and is currently struggling to speak better Spanish, German, Russian, and Italian. Watching Princess Leia being a badass turned her into a feminist. She dreamed of showing up at the *Star Wars* auditions for Episode VII in London, but ended up losing track of time inside an antique bookshop.

Sheepishly confessing that, unlike Socrates, he has never heard from the Oracle of Delphi, **James Lawler** recently

revealed, nevertheless, that his roommate in college used to call him “Soc.” Perhaps the roommate was an oracle in disguise? Possibly. The reader who wishes to climb the ladder of the love of philosophy can do no better than to begin with Jim’s book, *The God Tube: Uncovering the Hidden Spiritual Message in Pop Culture* (2010). For advanced lovers adapted to more rarified levels, there is *Matter and Spirit: The Battle of Metaphysics in Modern Western Philosophy before Kant* (2006). The next rung is, of course, *The Intelligible World: Metaphysical Revolution in the Genesis of Kant’s Theory of Morality* (2013).

**Terrance MacMullan** is an award-winning educator and author who has loved teaching at Eastern Washington University since 2002. He is the author of *Habits of Whiteness: A Pragmatist Reconstruction* as well as numerous publications on American philosophy and pop culture and philosophy. He has served as the EWU Faculty President, earned the President’s Award for Academic Excellence, and was voted the Faculty of the Year by the Associated Students of EWU. Most importantly, he came in second place at the 2014 Lilac City Comicon Costume Contest as Qui-Gon Jinn, though every day he looks more and more like Episode IV Obi Wan!

**Daniel P. Malloy** teaches philosophy at Aims Community College in Greeley, Colorado. He has published numerous chapters on the intersections of philosophy and popular culture, including chapters on *Terminator*, *Inception*, *The Walking Dead*, *Orphan Black*, and *The X-Files*. He was fired by Figrin D’an and the Modal Nodes for being a bit too scummy and villainous.

**Nick Munn** did his PhD in philosophy at the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics at the University of Melbourne, and currently works as a Bounty Hunter Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at Waikato University in New

Zealand. His philosophical interests are many and varied: democracy, enfranchisement, emerging technologies, virtual worlds, moral evaluation, friendship ... Sometimes he thinks it would be a lot easier to pursue them all if, like the IG-88 series of assassin droids, his consciousness was distributed over multiple bodies.

**James M. Okapal** is Professor of Philosophy at Missouri Western State University, Area Chair for Philosophy and Culture at the Pop Culture Association/American Culture Association National Conference, and the Ethics and Culture Series Editor for McFarland. His research focuses on issues of friendship and moral status in literature and philosophy and he hopes that someday he will be able to count a Wookiee as a close friend. Well, a Wookiee not named Krrsantan.

**Edwardo Pérez** was one of a handful of Padawans who managed to escape the Jedi Temple and survive Order 66. Giving up his Jedi ways (but not his green lightsaber) and settling down with a purple Twi'lek, Edwardo eventually began instructing English students in the ways of the rhetorical force, raising two broom-wielding, force-sensitive children in the Outer Rim, and practicing the Chindinkalu flute in case Max Rebo decides to get the band back together.

**James Rocha**, unable to locate a kyber crystal, gave up his dream of becoming a Sith Lord and instead turned to philosophy, which he teaches at Fresno State. For the past few years, he has practiced being a Mandalorian by never letting anyone see him without a mask, and he has also published three books: *The Ethics of Hooking Up* (2019), *Joss Whedon, Anarchist?* (co-written with Mona Rocha; 2019), and *Philosophical Reflections on Black Mirror* (co-edited with Dan Shaw and Kingsley Marshall; 2022).

**Mona Rocha**, unable to locate a kyber crystal, gave up her dream of becoming a Jedi, and instead turned to history and classics, which she teaches at Fresno State. In between putting together a protocol droid from scrap parts, Mona spends her time writing on history, classics, and popular culture. Her latest books are *The Weatherwomen* (2020) and *Joss Whedon, Anarchist?* (co-written with James Rocha; 2019). She has also written book chapters and articles on TV shows, such as *Psych*, *Veronica Mars*, *Buffy*, *Angel*, *Grimm*, and *Supernatural*.

**Mohammed Shakibnia** is currently a graduate student in public policy at Oregon State University. He studied philosophy and political science in his undergraduate studies, growing to be an admirer of philosophical work aimed at creating a more socially just world. His interests include political and social philosophy, contemporary politics, and popular culture. When he isn't rewatching his favorite *Clone Wars* episodes in Jedi robes and with a purple lightsaber in hand, he's probably reading, playing soccer on the streets of Coruscant, or rearranging his *Star Wars* action figure collection.

**Matthew Shea** is an assistant professor of philosophy at Franciscan University of Steubenville. His research focuses on human flourishing, natural law and virtue ethics, and biomedical ethics. When teaching philosophy to young padawans, he uses as many Star Wars references as possible. One of the highlights of his life is meeting John Williams and being conducted by him while singing in the University Chorale at Boston College.

**Corry Shores** teaches philosophy at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey. He works primarily on Gilles Deleuze and phenomenology, at times in relation to film and painting. He recently authored the book *The Logic of Gilles Deleuze: Basic Principles*. Though he claims

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