

Morten Tolboll

Philosophy and Popular Culture (The Matrix Dictionary)

Popular culture or pop culture is the entirety of attitudes, ideas, images, perspectives, and other phenomena within the mainstream of a given culture, especially Western culture of the early to mid-20th century and the emerging global mainstream of the late 20th and early 21st century. Heavily influenced by mass media, this collection of ideas permeates the everyday lives of the society.

The most common pop culture categories are: entertainment (movies, music, television, games), sports, news (as in people/places in news), politics, fashion/clothes, technology, and slang. Popular culture has a way of influencing an individual's attitudes towards certain topics. People like popular culture; it is the common mythology of our time (just take The Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, etc.).

The goal of The Blackwell Philosophy and Pop Culture Series ([click here](#)) is to get philosophy out of the ivory tower by publishing books about smart popular culture for serious fans. With each volume in this series it seeks to teach philosophy using the themes, characters, and ideas from your favorite TV shows, comic books, movies, music, games, and more. Inspired by this I have created what I call The Pop Culture Files.

The intention with the Pop Culture Files is to bring the reader from pop culture to my teaching Meditation as an Art of Life. And since philosophy is such an important aspect of my teaching, the intention is also to bring pop culture to philosophy. Willie Sutton was a criminal mastermind, a genius of sorts. Once asked, "Willie, why do you rob banks?" he replied straightforwardly, "Because that's where the money is." Why write about pop culture? Because that's where the people are. In these Pop Culture Files, I do therefore not in every instance attempt or purport to convey the intended meaning of the writers and artists responsible for one or the other of the pop culture topics I will be writing about. Rather, I will highlight the philosophical significance of them, seen in relation to my own teaching Meditation as an Art of Life.

(Note that the pop culture files now continues on my [blog](#) in form of shorter texts. See my blog archive here: [Philosophy and Popular Culture](#)).

[The Pop Culture Files](#)

But also my main concept of [The Matrix Conspiracy](#) can be said to be about philosophy and popular culture. I consider the New Age and Self-help industry to be a part of popular culture, and therefore also a mythology of our age. I have especially shown this in my article:

[Self-help and the Mythology of Authenticity](#)

My favorite mythologist is Joseph Campbell. Read about him in my article:

[The Hero's Journey](#)

Pop Culture Files especially dealing with mythology:

[Star Wars](#)

[Dungeons and Dragons](#)

Related:

[The Matrix Dictionary](#)

All articles and books referred to are available in free PDF Versions. Links can be found on my blog: www.MortenTolboll.blogspot.com

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