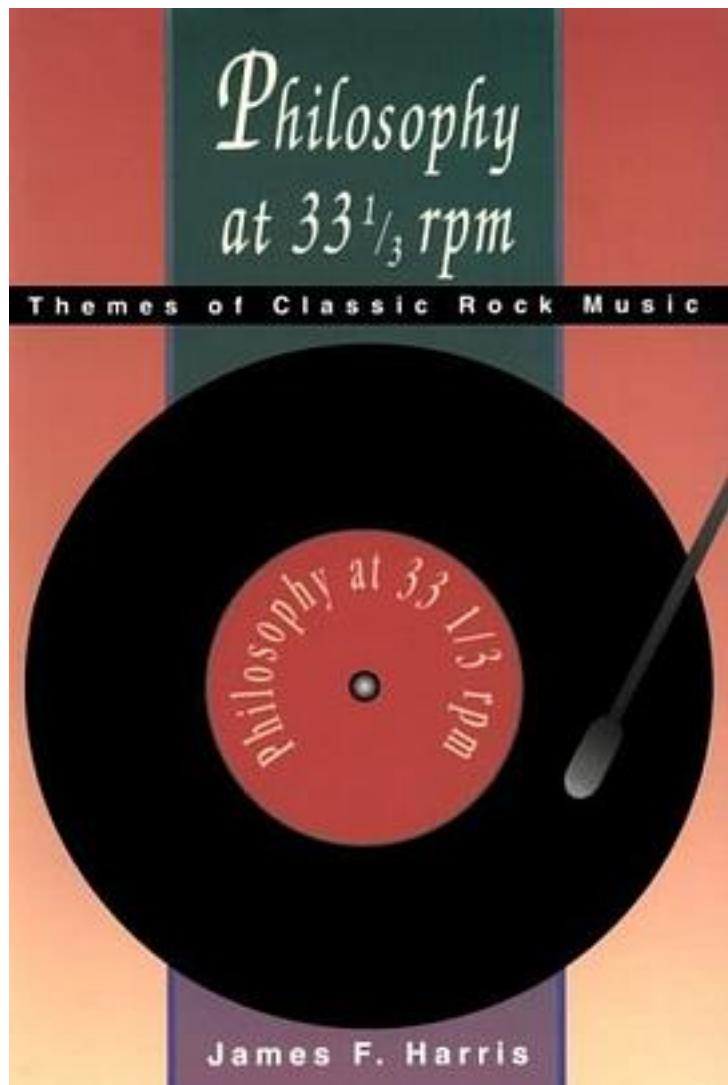


Philosophy at 33 1/3 rpm



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Classic rock of the 1960s and early 1970s broke away from the harmless bubblegum and surfing music of the 1950s to become a vehicle for profound commentary upon the human condition. Theories and motifs from major figures in the history of philosophy, theology and literature were refracted and transfigured in this intelligent new popular art form. Classic rock, argues Professor Harris, should be taken as seriously as the loftiest creations of art and literature. In this book, he lays the groundwork for such an informed appreciation by exhibiting philosophical themes in the greatest rock 'n' roll songs. The writer's examples encompass all the major rock artists of the classic period, including Paul Simon, Elton John, Jefferson Airplane, Janis Joplin, Cat Stevens, Pink Floyd, The Who, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, Chicago, The Moody Blues and Joni Mitchell. His analyses draw upon the ideas of Descartes, Aristotle, Rousseau, Kant, Nietzsche, Marx, Freud, Laing and Camus, to situate the preoccupations of classic rock lyricists in the Western intellectual tradition. Among Professor Harris's detailed exegeses is Joni Mitchell's "Woodstock", which he sees as a defence of Rousseau's view of human nature against that of Hobbes. He argues that Mitchell's "We've got to get ourselves back to the garden" refers to Rousseau's call for a return to simple existence where natural human goodness can flourish. In another exegesis, Pink Floyd's "Dark Side of the Moon", one of the most celebrated of all rock albums, he argues that many listeners fail to understand that it is a systematic exploration of R.D. Laing's radical antipsychiatry concepts, the dark side of the Moon symbolising the authentic self, in contradistinction to the false self, which reflects light from the external source of social convention.

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