



A Philosopher Reads Marvel Comics' Civil War: Exploring the Moral Judgment of Captain America, Iron Man, and Spider-Man

Mark D. White

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Comic book readers and moviegoers love to see superheroes fight, whether to protect innocent people from supervillains or to save the world from invaders from outer space. But superheroes also fight each other, and if we can look past the energy blasts and earth-shattering punches, we can find serious disagreements over principles and ethics. This was certainly the case when Captain America and Iron Man went head-to-head over liberty and security in Marvel Comics' epic *Civil War* storyline, a fictional allegory to post-9/11 America (as well as the basis for the third Captain America film).

In his latest book, Mark D. White, author of *The Virtues of Captain America* and editor of *Iron Man and Philosophy*, carefully leads you through the ethical thinking of the three characters on the front lines of the Civil War:

- **Iron Man**, who has taken charge of the US government's efforts to register and train superheroes to enhance safety and security
- **Captain America**, who leads the resistance against registration in the name of individual liberty and privacy
- **Spider-Man**, who is torn between his two mentors and has a uniquely personal stake in the battle

In his characteristically light and humorous tone, White lays out the basic ethical foundations of each hero's thinking and highlights the moral judgment each must use to put his ethics into action. He also explains how the Civil War affected the three heroes after the battle ended and how the experience continued to test them in very different ways as events in the Marvel Universe continued to unfold. Finally, he uses examples from Civil War to show how conflicting principles such as liberty and security must be balanced in the real world, lest both be lost.

Written in a style that will be easily accessible to those new to philosophy or superhero comics, *A Philosopher Reads Marvel Comics' Civil War* will be a fascinating read for diehard comics fans and philosophy buffs as well.

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