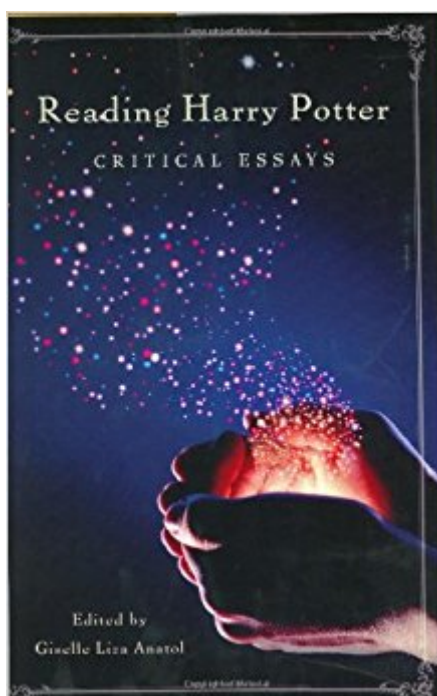


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Reading Harry Potter: Critical Essays (Contributions To The Study Of Popular Culture,)



Synopsis

J. K. Rowling achieved astounding commercial success with her series of novels about Harry Potter, the boy-wizard who finds out about his magical powers on the morning of his eleventh birthday. The books' incredible popularity, and the subsequent likelihood that they are among this generation's most formative narratives, call for critical exploration and study to interpret the works' inherent tropes and themes. The essays in this collection assume that Rowling's works should not be relegated to the categories of pulp fiction or children's trends, which would deny their certain influence on the intellectual, emotional, and psychosocial development of today's children. The variety of contributions allows for a range of approaches and interpretive methods in exploring the novels, and reveals the deeper meanings and attitudes towards justice, education, race, foreign cultures, socioeconomic class, and gender. Following an introductory discussion of the Harry Potter phenomenon are essays considering the psychological and social-developmental experiences of children as mirrored in Rowling's novels. Next, the works' literary and historical contexts are examined, including the European fairy tale tradition, the British abolitionist movement, and the public-school story genre. A third section focuses on the social values underlying the Potter series and on issues such as morality, the rule of law, and constructions of bravery.

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Customer Reviews

"Reading Harry Potter: Critical Essays is an impressive anthology of literary criticism draw from a

variety of learned authors who all of whom regard J.K. Rowling's popular Harry Potter fantasy series as far more than mere popular culture pabulum. Examining the Harry Potter works with regard to theories of child development, literary influences and historical contexts, and morality and social values, Reading Harry Potter is a multifaceted exploration of the Potter books as literature with lasting potential influence on both developing and mature minds today."-Library Bookwatch

"This book is a valuable addition to any library....Recommended. Lower-division undergraduates and above."-Choice

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"Reading Harry Potter adds to the growing analysis of the series by offering essays about the first four novels from child development and moral and social values perspectives in addition to literary and historical treatments....[a]dd provocative ideas to a growing discussion of the series that is underway even as Jo Rowling writes at her desk in Scotland creating the final two installments of Harry's story."-Children's Literature Association Quarterly

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"Here is more proof that almost everybody is wild about Harry--academics as well as the hundreds and thousands of children, parents, teachers, and librarians around the world who have been charmed by this young wizard-in-training. This sampling of scholarly essays will inform a thoughtful adult reader's appreciation of the Harry Potter books as literature and as a publishing phenomenon."-Virginia A. Walter Associate Professor and Chair, UCLA Department of Information Studies

GISELLE LIZA ANATOL is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, where she teaches courses in Caribbean, African-American, multiethnic U.S., and children's literature. She was awarded the Conger-Gabel Teaching Professorship for 2001-2004. She has published on the works of Paule Marshall, Audre Lorde, and Jamaica Kincaid.

I ordered this for high school students doing research on the Harry Potter books, and my students have used a number of essays in the work. The essay by Dr. Rebecca Stephens was illuminating!

I was disappointed that the back cover of this book had very visible scratches on it when it arrived. It was a gift to someone so I felt it didn't reflect the price I had paid for it.

Reading Harry Potter: Critical Essays by Giselle Liza Anatol is a collection of essays that analyze to a greater depth the world of Harry Potter. This collection of essays only covers the first three books of the series. This collection came out before Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire. Reading Harry Potter Again is another series of essays from the same editor that came out after the Harry Potter series was finished. Even though the essay material is from the first three books of the Harry Potter series, Reading Harry Potter proved an excellent read. It was interesting to see the authors speculate on what would happen during the next books, especially having read them all prior to these essays. Some essays of particular interest were "Harry and Hierarchy" by Rebecca Stephens. This essay discussed the controversy of book banning as it relates to the Harry Potter series. The series was compared to the Chronicles of Narnia series in terms of magic and fantasy. The article pointed out that there were not that many differences other than C.S. Lewis, the author of the Chronicles of Narnia, was a pronounced Christian and J.K. Rowling was not. Because of this simple fact, Christians have argued for the banning of the Harry Potter series, when in fact the Chronicles of Narnia is no better. Another interesting essay was "Harry Potter and the Rule of Law" by Susan Hall. "Harry Potter and the Rule of Law" was about how corrupt the government figures are in the wizarding world. It discussed how innocent people are thrown into jail all of the time and sometimes let go with merely an apology. Harry Potter is all about rebellion. Even the teachers at Hogwarts rebel against the government, while the students rebel against the teachers. It's a hierarchy of power. The higher up you are, the more likely you are to be corrupt. Reading Harry Potter: Critical Essays is a great read if you are looking for some textual analysis and different ideas about the world of Harry Potter. Even though the material only comes from the first three books, it is still worth it. Reading Harry Potter Again would be an excellent follow-up to this book.

This book was recommended to me by my Children's Literature professor as a way to further explore the Harry Potter phenomenon. As a start to my reading of literary criticism in general, I absolutely loved this book. The essays were well written and brought many different subjects of

Harry Potter into play that I normally wouldn't think about. It was a wonderful critique of the first 4 books and I can only hope the same authors write more now that the series is finished.

Expertly compiled and deftly edited by Giselle Liza Anatol (Assistant Professor of English, University of Kansas - Lawrence), *Reading Harry Potter: Critical Essays* is an impressive anthology of literary criticism drawn from a variety of learned authors who all of whom regard J. K. Rowling's popular Harry Potter fantasy series as far more than mere popular culture pabulum. Examining the Harry Potter works with regard to theories of child development, literary influences and historical contexts, and morality and social values, *Reading Harry Potter* is a multifaceted exploration of the Potter books as literature with lasting potential influence on both developing and mature minds today.

Quite simply, this is the book I will use as my primary resource to teach Harry Potter from now on. I teach both undergraduate and graduate English Education majors and plan to order this book for all of my Adolescent Literature sections this coming year. Not only are the essays interesting and diverse, they really show how many different ways a reader can think about a text. Most interesting, however, is how these very different essays (and authors) speak to one another. Overall, a really fine group of essays about some very important works.

This book is an amazing anthology of literary criticisms of Harry Potter books 1-4. It brings to the forefront Rowling's social agenda, the fairy tale genre, ambiguity between good and evil, etc. Something that I would like to see in the future are new essays, or these essays rewritten, by the same authors in light of surprising changes to some characters' development particularly with Snape in Book 6. Otherwise, this book is an amazing read and is thoroughly enlightening.

This has to be something straight from the J. Evans Pritchard vault of pseudo lit. Pompous and condescending, it merits no mention and no attention. If you are a HP fan, stay away from this garbage.

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