



# Harry Potter and the personal Experience

## Document Version

Final published version

[Link to publication record in Manchester Research Explorer](#)

## Citation for published version (APA):

Garcia Iglesias, J. (2014). Harry Potter and the personal Experience. In S. Martin Alegre (Ed.), *Addictive and Wonderful: The Experience of reading the Harry Potter Series* (pp. 36-38). Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

## Published in:

Addictive and Wonderful

## Citing this paper

Please note that where the full-text provided on Manchester Research Explorer is the Author Accepted Manuscript or Proof version this may differ from the final Published version. If citing, it is advised that you check and use the publisher's definitive version.

## General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the Research Explorer are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

## Takedown policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please refer to the University of Manchester's Takedown Procedures [<http://man.ac.uk/04Y6Bo>] or contact [uml.scholarlycommunications@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:uml.scholarlycommunications@manchester.ac.uk) providing relevant details, so we can investigate your claim.



DEPARTAMENT  
DE FILOLOGIA  
ANGLÈSA I DE  
GERMANÍSTICA

UNIVERSITAT  
AUTONÒMA DE  
BARCELONA

2014

# ADDICTIVE AND WONDERFUL: THE EXPERIENCE OF READING THE *HARRY POTTER* SERIES

Sara Martín Alegre (ed.)



**ADDICTIVE AND WONDERFUL:  
THE EXPERIENCE OF READING  
THE *HARRY POTTER* SERIES**

**Sara Martín Alegre (ed.)**

**Contents**

Preface: An Unforgettable Teaching Experience.....	1
Chris Arms.....	6
Alba Arnau .....	7
Sara Bello Serrano .....	9
Lara Blasco Solís.....	11
Laura Calvo Zafra .....	13
Rubén Campos Arjona .....	16
Marta Canals Sánchez.....	18
Melissa Caro Lancho .....	20
Laia Castañón Abad .....	23
Isabel Clúa.....	25
Álvaro Delgado Ordás.....	27
Saray Díaz Suárez.....	29
Hristo Donev .....	31
Tania Duarte Montávez .....	33
Jaime García.....	36
Laia García Jordà.....	38
Cristina González Varo.....	40
Silvia González Riopedre.....	42
Dídac Gurguí .....	44
Marta Guzmán Prieto .....	47
Joshua Harper.....	49
Álvaro Juárez López .....	51
Marvin Kolovitsch .....	53
Lara López Lueje .....	56
Laura Luque Brugue.....	58
Montserrat Martín.....	60
Sara Martín Alegre.....	61
Andrew Mikkola.....	64
Alicia Moreno Milrado.....	66

Laura Montaña Tena .....	67
Laia Munné .....	69
Pilar Munné Martínez.....	72
Carmen Nadal Cervera.....	74
Jaime Oliveros.....	76
Kate Pasola .....	78
Kika (Francesca) Pol Payeras .....	80
Montserrat Pons Nusas .....	83
Hongyu Qian .....	85
Mònica Reina Martí .....	87
Kyle Ritchie .....	89
Camila Rojas.....	92
Clara Román .....	94
Fran (Francesc Albert) Ruiz Galera .....	96
Mireia Sánchez Orriols.....	98
Begoña Sánchez Zaballos.....	100
Iulia Schimbatori.....	103
Lottie (Charlotte) Seymour .....	104
Yao Sihang.....	106
Sara Soriano Melgares.....	108
Teodora Toma.....	109
Sandra Tubau Suárez .....	111
Déborah Valero.....	114
Alicia Vázquez Sánchez .....	116
Iris Vila García .....	119
Clàudia Xiberta.....	121
Queralt Yuste .....	122
The <i>Harry Potter</i> Series by J.K. Rowling.....	126
Disclaimer, Creative Commons License, Credits and Participants List.....	127

Rowling's work, so I guess I sort of gave up and moved onto other genres I also enjoyed. Recently, though, I have been trying to get back into fantasy, but I am yet to find the right book that will really capture my attention and make me want to read more of it.

## Jaime García

If someone had asked me what I thought of *Harry Potter* five or six years ago, the answer would have been different from what I would answer now. I have read the saga twice. As a kid, I enjoyed those colourful-covered books as only children and teenagers can do. Now, I do like them, but I see them for what they are: as non-perfect pieces, with a subjacent layer of meaning. I am deeply influenced by my college courses; and, somehow I feel that this more complex perspective is richer and deeper as well as sadder; for I do know that I will never feel that chapter-finishing ecstasy again.

Being a reader who can flick through pages of text without paying any attention whatsoever, it is only normal that my memory of what actually happens in *Harry Potter* is poor. Nonetheless, mark: WHAT HAPPENS is what I forgot, not what it is about; that is very clear to me; and it tends not to coincide with what many scholars assure.

Before writing this text, I glanced at various articles and essays with which I could find many marginal points in common, but at heart, I disagreed. For me, *Harry Potter* is nothing capable of being summarized, nothing 'literary'. *Harry Potter* is, and by rights it ought to be, the afternoons in the park with my friends playing different characters, reading in the back of my mum's car while she went on shopping... It is also the waiting, the desire to know more, to read a further page.

Although I played with my friends enthusiastically I never really expected to receive my acceptance letter; I always knew how to dislocate reality. However, I played on, I read on, I tried to use *Harry Potter* to have something in common with the friends I was so distant from. In 'Harry under the stairs' I saw myself, in the camaraderie of Slytherin I saw the others. As I grew, Harry grew. His problems evolved as mine where supposed to do, as ours as a generation did. Yet, in some way, I grew distant, his love affairs were something I used to skip while reading, his bravery and loyalty far from what I had ever experienced. As I broke away from him, I embraced the serenity and charm of Albus and Minerva.

Professor Minerva McGonagall has always been my favourite character: being able to both remain strict and be tender at moments, she was someone I looked up to. In addition, her 'apparently' chaste life-style was more in tune with my age and mind. Even now, that I know many more things about her, having read her backstory in Pottermore, I cannot feel but sympathy AND empathy. She was the one I liked the most, but if I were to choose the one I enjoyed the most, it would be Albus.

Dumbledore was, at least in the first books, a bigger beacon of reason and ethics than all New England had ever been. He was the one that would appear and solve everything or, at least, seem to solve it. His speech, full of maturity and reason, was by far the most interesting, his ambiguous sentences... and, very important, his humanization.

I did not cry when he died, he simply had to, even though I never got around to specify why. I suppose it has something to do with the fact that he became too prominent, too important, too round: we know his official role, but also his most personal life, his interest in the Muggle world... Maybe the reason why I never questioned his death was because, in obscure times, a person that for me was essentially good had very little opportunity to survive. Maybe that is why I always thought Hagrid had to die.

I mentioned above that I utterly disliked Harry's love affairs, Ron and Hermione's too. I am gay. This may seem out of place here, but for a boy coming to terms with his own sexuality in a town where heteronormativity seems a must and homonormativity is... (well, let's say it implies concepts far beyond scorn) having gay characters to identify with and not necessarily to look up to is essential; and for me, Dumbledore was never gay. He might be in J.K.R.'s mind, but not in the books, not so explicitly at least. He was, I would say, "queer" in the most essential and general sense of the word. He was different, but asexual for me.

As you have already seen, I grew distant from the books to the extent that although I read them all I never got to watch the last two films. The Magic World became too different to be an escape, too illusory to be a mind's wandering: while Harry and me were both bullied and set apart, we shared an intense bond; when he became the sort of hero I never got to be, he was a little reminder of my own failure. Not that I ever hated him, only that I could say I changed from a first person narrator to an editorial one, from reading and thinking, I began only to read. I enjoyed and still enjoy to this day the complex network of historical-social-cultural data impregnating the saga, but now I analyse them more cautiously.

I have *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* in my bathroom. Piled between a *Crash Course into Architecture*, a couple of issues of some architectural magazine my parents are subscribers to and the toilet paper rolls. I do admit it is not the style of bathroom reading one might expect (by the way, I always thought that we should coin a new genre: 'bathroom literature' for those books that are so appropriate for those moments of intimacy and relax) and yet it has proven to be one of the books which stands for more time in the pile. This last book is my favourite in the saga, possibly due to its more adult style. I find some moments of certain poetic quality or, at least, dramatic feeling: Harry becomes Sir Gawain riding towards death when entering the Dark Forest, Snape's secret being revealed, etc. These are, for me, key scenes in the saga, stitches to the many open wounds Rowling scraped for six books.

"I hate the epilogue". So do I, dear Potterheads. I really despise it, but I comprehend it. I now think J.K. was writing for herself and she needed an epilogue to

make sure every character would be as happy as she was (or to avoid them being as miserable as she herself had also been). The epilogue disrupts the mimesis, the diegetic. Whereas *Harry Potter* is an account of a teenager set on different quests, which is the opposite to what most teenagers do, the epilogue hints that those teenagers are mature adults living mature adults lives (may I point, heterosexual standard lives?), which is what most adults do. Furthermore, if the books were aimed to a public that had been growing with the characters... what's the use of an epilogue that compresses, bounds and configures a particular ending rather than allowing each reader to grow and invent, freely, the lives of the characters they were so fond of before? That is why I think that many parts of *Harry Potter* are by and for J.K., which is not essentially 'evil', but just forces criticism to adapt itself.

My second reading of the saga has just begun. I have little time to re-read the seven books and little courage to revisit the days of my childhood, fearing I might 'deconstruct' what I thought was pure and sheer reading pleasure. I fear to discover the weaknesses of Hogwarts: the status of house-elves, the alienation and animalization of Hagrid... yet there is a point I would like to revisit now, with more knowledge, with a more observant eye: how wizards play with their wands (the joke sounded more appropriate in my mind, though).

A proper study of the status of sexuality or even of sex-representations in *Harry Potter* (come on, so many guys in the same building and all are so pure?) would be a challenge I would love to undertake, although I know I lack of time and theory (yet!). There is still room for hope, though. Some of those who read the saga in their "younger and more vulnerable years" are now contesting, answering back, positing alternatives to the standards: Darry (a blending between Harry and Draco) is now a major 'shipping' (i.e. a major fan-fomented love/sexual relation between two fictional characters), enhancement of the rich cultural background of the saga also occurs (some fanfics even introduce Sir Gawain or Merlin within their plots), etc. There is, therefore, hope: hope in fan fiction.

Finally, I would like to say that I still recommend *Harry Potter* to my cousins. After all, is it really more harmful than video-games, text books or TV (if harmful at all)?

## Laia García Jordà

The *Harry Potter* saga had an important impact on me as a reader. I was 9 when I first made contact with the phenomenon, hearing about it on the TV news and seeing it around me in school kids who had weird lines drawn on their foreheads. I had a neighbour, a year younger than me, who had already read the first book and could not stop calling out spells in the car when we were on our way to school. This was a little annoying because I didn't know what she was saying or what all that fuss was about. Later I got to know a little bit about this Harry Potter and a certain Wizarding world.

## Disclaimer, Creative Commons License, Credits and Participants List

### DISCLAIMER

The text in the hands of the reader is derived from work written by the students enrolled in my elective course 'English Cultural Studies: The *Harry Potter* Case' (fourth year, 6 ECTS, BA in 'English Studies', Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spring 2014); also by other students whom I myself invited to contribute. As academic work this volume requires no permission or license from third parties and it is published for the only purpose of disseminating knowledge. Neither my students nor myself will receive any earnings from the online publication of the volume. We are, then, in no way infringing the copyright of either Ms. J.K. Rowling or Warner Bros.

### CREDITS

**Cover illustration:** book sculpture, ©Jodi Harvey-Brown (<http://www.jodiharvey-brown.com/>). Photograph used with permission of the artist.

**Poem 'Llegir':** ©Lola Martín Pons, used with permission of the author. This poem cannot be reproduced without her permission. If required, contact the editor, Sara Martín Alegre ([Sara.Martin@uab.cat](mailto:Sara.Martin@uab.cat)).

### CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSE



Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs (by-nc-nd)

**You are free:** to Share — to copy, distribute and transmit the work under the following conditions:

**Attribution** — You must attribute the work in the manner specified by the author or licensor (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work).

**Non-commercial** — You may not use this work for commercial purposes.

**No Derivative Works** — You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work. You're specifically forbidden to generate academic research and publications based on this volume, though you may quote from it. If you wish to cite it, the correct citation would be:

Martín Alegre, Sara (ed.). *Addictive and Wonderful: The Experience of Reading the Harry Potter Series*. Bellaterra: Departament de Filologia Anglesa i de Germanística, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2014.

**Notice** — For any reuse or distribution, you must make clear to others the license terms of this work. If in doubt, contact the editor, Sara Martín Alegre ([Sara.Martin@uab.cat](mailto:Sara.Martin@uab.cat))

## PARTICIPANTS

Unless otherwise indicated, all contributors to this volume are fourth year students of the 'Licenciatura en Filologia Anglesa' (four-year BA in 'English Philology'), of the 'Grau en Estudis Anglesos' (four-year BA in 'English Studies', replacing the 'Licenciatura') offered by the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. The home universities of the visiting students in my subject 'English Cultural Studies: The *Harry Potter* Case' are here noted. The MA students were enrolled in official UAB master's degrees where I also teach, either 'Advanced English Studies' or 'Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies'. They attended my course as auditors; some were just invited to join in the composition of this volume. Finally, the students from the other Spanish universities (Oviedo, UOC) were also invited to contribute. So was my colleague Isabel Clúa, currently at the Universitat de València, and a guest lecturer in my elective subject.

1. Chris Arms, University of Manchester, UK
2. Alba Arnau
3. Sara Bello Serrano
4. Lara Blasco Solís
5. Laura Calvo Zafra
6. Rubén Campos Arjona
7. Marta Canals Sánchez
8. Melissa Caro Lancho
9. Laia Castañon Abad, MA student
10. Isabel Clúa, Associate teacher, Universitat de València (BA in Literary Theory)
11. Álvaro Delgado Ordás
12. Saray Díaz Suárez
13. Hristo Donev, University of Utrecht, Netherlands
14. Tania Duarte Montávez
15. Jaime García, Universidad de Oviedo (BA in English Studies)
16. Laia García Jordà
17. Cristina González Varo
18. Silvia González Riopedre, Universidad de Oviedo (BA in English Studies)
19. Dídac Gurguí
20. Marta Guzmán Prieto
21. Joshua Harper, University of Montana, USA
22. Álvaro Juárez López
23. Marvin Kolovitsch, University of Viena, Austria
24. Lara López Lueje
25. Laura Luque Brugue
26. Montserrat Martín
27. Sara Martín Alegre
28. Andrew Mikkola, University of Montana, USA
29. Alicia Moreno Milrado
30. Laura Montaña Tena
31. Laia Munné
32. Pilar Munné
33. Carmen Nadal Cervera
34. Jaime Oliveros, MA student
35. Kate Pasola, University of Edinburgh, UK
36. Kika (Francesca) Pol Payeras, MA student
37. Montserrat Pons Nusas
38. Hongyu Qian, Shanghai International Studies University
39. Mònica Reina Martí
40. Kyle Ritchie, Concordia University, Canada
41. Camila Rojas, MA student
42. Clara Román, MA student
43. Fran (Francesc Albert) Ruiz Galera
44. Mireia Sánchez Orriols
45. Begoña Sánchez Zaballos
46. Iulia Schimbatori
47. Lottie (Charlotte) Seymour, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK
48. Yao Sihang, Shanghai International Studies University
49. Sara Soriano Melgares
50. Teodora Toma
51. Sandra Tubau Suárez
52. Déborah Valero, MA student
53. Alicia Vázquez Sánchez
54. Iris Vila García
55. Clàudia Xiberta, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (BA in Humanities)
56. Queralt Yuste