

On Reading Fiction (eg Harry Potter)

Nobody asked but ...

Skyler, your recent comments on the voluntarist lessons from Harry Potter struck a chord. I would be much more likely to recommend the novels of Raymond Chandler, Dashiell Hammett, Ross MacDonald, Lawrence Sanders, and Michael Connelly in the hardboiled genre, and Kurt Vonnegut, Robert Heinlein, Anthony Burgess, John Brunner, and Philip K. Dick in sci fi. Individualism, morality, and objectivism are strong themes of these writers — and they certainly deliver many guilty pleasures as well. I know, however, many highly intelligent people who follow Harry Potter's exploits. But the chord that was struck was actually remembering things that Troy Camplin had written in his blog, *Interdisciplinary World*, about fiction in development of philosophy and desirable actualization such as empathy. Read Troy's *Why I Do Not Like Non-Fiction Stories*. This is the rare case where I will recommend process over content. It seems to me that reading fiction, one's favorite type of fiction, is a common attribute in those who value individualism, voluntarism, and freedom.

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