

“Perpetuating Victorian Hierarchies through Racialized Alcohol Use in J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series”

J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* is often lauded for the apparent diversity that exists within the series. Harry and the other protagonists work to ensure the equality of all wizards, regardless of blood-status. Nonetheless, I extend Giselle Liza Anatol’s argument that the *Harry Potter* series participates in the tradition of “stories of civilizing missions, established hierarchies, and settled truths [that] sit so comfortably with readers that they do not notice the racism that lurks beneath the surface of the stories” (109). Using Anatol’s assertion of underlying racism within the series as a starting point I argue that close reading and historical analysis through intersectional anti-racist critical theory reveal how the text’s Victorian ideologies surrounding alcohol use serve to reinforce the books’ racist tendencies. While the series truly deals with characters of different species, such as half-giants and house-elves, the tradition of Victorian racial ideologies means that an analysis via critical race theory, rather than critical animal studies is more useful. To analyse the racialized usage of alcohol in *Harry Potter* I will examine two pairs of characters, half-giants Rubeus Hagrid and Madame Maxime, and house-elves Winky and Dobby, and their relationships with alcohol in relation to middle-class human-wizards such as the titular Harry Potter. Giants within the series are described similarly to Victorian accounts of Indigenous Peoples and it is only through hiding their true identity that Hagrid and Madame Maxime are able pass as wizards within society. Hagrid’s alcohol use causes him to divulge information to antagonists while intoxicated, something that is attributed to being part of his character, rather than a moral failing. However, when Winky the house-elf is intoxicated and sharing information with Harry Potter, the other house-elves look upon her drinking with disgust and as a moral failing on her part. This analysis suggests that *Harry Potter* carries forth Victorian traditions surrounding race and alcohol use.