

A Magical Salem in Rowling's *Harry Potter*

By

Rasha Muhammad Al-Saied

Supervisor

Prof. Asad Al-Ghalith

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Abstract

In 1997, J. K Rowling published the first volume in her famous series *Harry Potter*, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Although it was marked as a children's book, adults seem to enjoy it as well. Since its publication, the series has become fertile soil for critics to review. J.K Rowling created a very complicated society in her novels in which wizards are judged by the purity of their blood. On the top of the pyramid there are the purebloods (both parents are wizards), half-bloods (one parent is a wizard and the other is a Muggle-born), Squibs (people who are born into Wizarding families but without the ability to perform magic), Mud-bloods or Muggle-born (both parents are Muggles), and at the end of the pyramid there are Muggles (non-magical human).

This thesis will thus discuss two main suppositions: the first one is that J.K Rowling was inspired by real world events to write *Harry Potter* series, especially the Puritan society with the whole witchcraft crisis in Salem. The second one is that Rowling was influenced by Nathaniel Hawthorne's female characters. Although the main theme of this series is the battle between good and evil, racism and prejudice

are strongly presented in Rowling's books. This study will be examining the connection between the Wizarding society created by Rowling and the Puritan society in Salem. Even though it is a magical society, the way the author presents the conflict between different races in her Wizarding World mirrors real life events in the Puritan society.

The aim of this thesis is to connect the Wizarding World with the Puritan society in connection with racism, gender and classism, and to demonstrate that this magical place is not so magical after all. It also strives to present the relation between female characters in *Harry Potter* and female characters in Nathaniel Hawthorne's works.

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