**Harry Potter and the Tweeting TERF**

J.K. Rowling, the author of the beloved Harry Potter books, has repeatedly tweeted and blogged in support of sex essentialism and the position that trans women are men and trans men are women. The Human Rights Campaign pointed out the problem with her view by responding: “Trans women are women. Trans men are men. Non-binary people are non-binary.”

Fans of the books have been outraged at Rowling’s transphobic rhetoric that they believe flies in the face of the values embodied in the books that made her famous. The stars of the Harry Potter movies, including Emma Watson and Daniel Ratcliffe, have denounced Rowling’s views. In a piece published via an organization dedicated to protecting trans youth, Ratcliffe apologized to fans and said: “If you found anything in these stories that resonated with you and helped you at any time in your life—then that is between you and the book that you read, and it is sacred.”

Others have agreed with the sentiment, arguing that the books can be separated from the views of their author. As one fan put it, “I’m a firm believer in separating the art from the artist, and I still think J.K. Rowling’s stories are of great value; whimsical, nostalgic tales of a British boarding school system that never existed, ice-cold baths and savage beatings replaced with chocolate frogs and sexless love potions.” Another fan and fellow author argues: “J.K. Rowling gave us Harry Potter; she gave us this world. But we created the fandom, and we created the magic and community in that fandom. That is ours to keep.”

The difference between the world Rowling created in the Harry Potter books and her real-world positions is jarring for many who interpreted the books as supporting values like “being yourself, loving those who are different from you and sticking up for the underdog.” In stark contrast, her views devalue and erase the trans experience and target an already-vulnerable community.

Because Rowling is using her platform to spread damaging views, many former fans believe that the art simply cannot be separated from the artist under these circumstances. As one former fan wrote, “The argument that we should be able to separate art from the artist and not let the actions of the latter dictate our judgment of the former has been increasingly challenged as our tolerance...

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for acts of violence and expressions of hatred by once-loved artists and creators dissipates... J.K. Rowling’s most recent anti-trans tweets... and increasing alignment with the U.K.’s vitriolic TERF (Trans-exclusive radical feminist) brigade [are] a betrayal of her fans.”7 Or, as another fan succinctly lamented in a reply to Rowling on Twitter, “HP is everything to me and you’re slowly killing everything it represents.”8

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Case from the 2020 Regional Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl.

8 Romano, J.K. Rowling’s latest tweet, supra.