

Harry Potter's Depressing Background: The Truth Behind J. K. Rowling

INFORMATIVE ARTICLE

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What exactly has J. K. Rowling done?

The infamous Harry Potter series author received criticism for her generally divisive opinions on the transgender community in her series of tweets back in 2020. Rowling publicly liked a large amount of transphobic material, some of it going as far as to hint that trans women are sexual predators, along with some that blatantly stated that trans women should not be allowed access to female only bathrooms as they could pose a threat to cis women.

One of her tweets reads, “People who menstruate.’ I’m sure there used to be a word for those people. Someone help me out. Wumben? Wimpund? Woomud?”



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Several people perceived this as being insulting to the transgender community because it was manifestly transphobic. Countless amount of people reacted harshly to it, generating quite the uproar worldwide.

Rowling continued to speak out about her opinions on gender and sex whilst showing her massive support of TERF, which is ‘an acronym for trans-exclusionary radical feminist. First recorded in 2008, the term was originally used to distinguish transgender-inclusive feminists from a group of radical feminists who reject the assertion that trans women are women, the inclusion of trans women in women's spaces, and transgender rights legislation.’

As one can expect, this led to a very unfavourable reaction from the audience, who were deeply disappointed in these radical viewpoints exclaimed by one of the biggest authors of their childhood.

The trans community was adversely impacted by this since it would give others the impression that it is OK to support damaging movements, such as TERF, if

someone with J. K. Rowling's level of influence supported such harsh beliefs.

Many started to speak out against it, some even advising people to avoid buying anything created or authored by Rowling, as supporting someone who promotes this kind of message could be harmful, especially to the younger audience to whom most of her work is catered.

Furthermore, many celebrities went against Rowling's opinions, some of them being the cast members of her incredibly famous book and movie series *Harry Potter*.

Emma Watson, who played Hermione, one of the protagonists, states in a tweet that '[t]rans people are who they say they are and deserve to live their lives without being constantly questioned or told they aren't who they say they are.' She also posts a statement saying: 'I want my trans followers to know that I and so many other

people around the world see you, respect you and love you for who you are.'

This is immensely significant, and it takes a lot for a person like Watson, who basically grew up with Rowling in her life, to speak out against the famous author's beliefs and reaffirm that Rowling's opinions are inaccurate and detrimental.

The actress grew up paying tribute to J. K. Rowling's books as one of the main characters of the *Harry Potter* movie series. Since Watson has known the author from a very young age, it must have been extremely difficult going against someone that you used to look up to.

Daniel Radcliffe was the next Harry Potter star to speak out about the issue, stating in an interview that 'transgender women are women.' The actor argued that his, or anyone else's opinion on the matter of gender or identity is going to be as



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accurate as someone's who has done an immense amount of research and has experience in speaking on the matter. He continued by stating that this is in fact not a fight between him and Rowling and that it is more significant to focus on the wellbeing of the transgender community.

J. K. Rowling did absolutely nothing to help herself in this predicament; in fact, she continues to speak out about her divisive viewpoints and defend them, claiming that '[i]t isn't hate to speak the truth.'

She also wrote a statement to defend her 'freedom of speech' where she states, 'I'm concerned about the huge explosion in young women wishing to transition and also about the increasing numbers who seem to be detransitioning.'

Research, according to Rowling, supports her argument that women who want to be men are frequently only attracted to others of the same gender, and being terrified of homophobia, they want to exchange gender in the seeking of approval.



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Rowling continues to argue that the world had become more misogynistic and difficult for women, and that she wants to keep women safe. She writes, 'I want

trans women to be safe. At the same time, I do not want to make natal girls and women less safe. When you throw open the doors of bathroom and changing rooms to any man who believes or feels he's a woman, then you open the door to any and all men who wish to come inside.'

Her claim that trans women only 'believes' to be women is incredibly patronising and disrespectful toward the transgender community. Simply put, it indicates that she believes transgender women are not actually considered to be female.

For someone who frequently asserts their support for the transgender community, Rowling seems to be disagreeing with them quite a bit. One could conclude that it appears that she is stating that a male simply cannot become a woman.

Promoting the notion that transgender women might pose a threat to cis-gender women dehumanises them and creates the impression that they pose a threat to society, which opens the door to transphobia and bullying, something the community already faces daily.

Many will read this and get the impression that every transgender person may be a threat to them. However, this could be true of any person, trans or not; they could still present harm to anyone. In other words, it has less to do with a person's gender or sexual orientation and more to do with their mental health, wellbeing, and capabilities.

Despite the fact that she has lost millions of admirers who have expressed their dissatisfaction with her opinions, Rowling says that many have reached out and given her a great deal of support throughout the

entire crisis, which further reinforces her belief that her views are accurate.

She didn't seem to care about anything other than the support she got from others with similarly cynical opinions. The threats, backlash and words of disappointment she received from the people who had earlier shown her support through her career did not seem to concern her whatsoever; so long as there are others that agree with her, it didn't matter that she had offended millions of people and put out a message reinforcing that it is okay to be discriminatory toward a community of people who have continuously been fighting for equality.

Rowling later claimed in another tweet that she is 'deeply amused by those telling me I've lost their admiration,' and she followed this by saying that she could not care less about how her fans feel about her opinions, and that it does not bother her if she loses their support. This is highly insensitive and disrespectful to state as she would be nowhere without her fans and their support.

The statement was obviously intended to mitigate some of the damage, but it generally fell short. Many people continue to strongly disagree with Rowling, continue to criticise her, and refuse to continue supporting her work.

Her novels only advocate for love and inclusion, yet she fails to live up to these ideals and instead sends out damaging messages. This is a huge let down to anyone who grew up reading and supporting her work; the person they thought highly of has turned out not to be much of a great or accepting person at all.

Given that Rowling still adamantly defends her opinions, it's unclear whether her career can ever fully recover from this stain. It is sad to realise that the author, who served as an inspiration to many children, teaching them to never give up through the Harry Potter series, has somehow turned into one of the generation's most despised writers.

Although I strongly disagree with Rowling's egregiously insulting views, my opinion of the *Harry Potter* books hasn't changed since I was a child. Instead, I prefer to keep the artist's work and her personal beliefs apart. Having said that, I won't be purchasing any of her future work or giving her any other kind of support because I believe it is harmful to give such a toxic individual a platform.

Others are attempting to take Rowling's ownership of *Harry Potter* away in an effort to entirely distance her from the franchise. Although it is generally believed that someone who holds her beliefs should not be connected to it in any way, this has not yet happened. Still, it will be interesting to see what the future holds for J.K Rowling and her upcoming projects.



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