

J. K. Rowling, Burn The Witch!

Could 2020 possibly get more strange? J. K. Rowling, creator of Harry Potter, has been canceled. That's right. The author beloved by millennials everywhere, a generation who came of age alongside the boy wizard, has now been called out by their younger, more woke, siblings. Her crime, ironically enough, is to deny the power of magic. Rowling thinks it takes more than uttering a few special words for a man to transform into a woman.

And now – plot twist! – Harry Potter himself, aka actor [Daniel Radcliffe](#), has weighed in on the debate. Not content with mansplaining to Rowling what it means to be a woman, he has given readers his blessing to interpret Rowling's characters however they see fit. Which is fine. Obviously. But all seven Harry Potter books come from Rowling's imagination. They began life as she struggled to earn a living as a single mother. What's more, if it hadn't been for Rowling's creation, we are very unlikely to have even heard of Daniel Radcliffe.

Keeping up with the world today can often make your head spin. One day, you might be shamed for not staying home and helping stem the spread of coronavirus. The next, you're labeled a racist for not joining thousands of others on a Black Lives Matter protest. One day, mansplaining is a sexist microaggression; the next it's transphobic for a young man not to correct a woman at length and in public.

How did we get here? Let's begin at the beginning. In March last year, researcher [Maya Forstater](#) lost her job at a London-based think tank for having expressed the view that people cannot change their biological sex. When the case came to court in December, the judge upheld her dismissal and described her views on sex and gender as “absolutist” and

“incompatible with human dignity and the fundamental rights of others.”

It's incredible that a woman can lose her livelihood simply for stating biological facts. Yet hardly anyone challenged this unprecedented attack on Forstater's freedom of speech and freedom of conscience. [J. K. Rowling](#) was one of the few to speak out. The author tweeted: “Dress however you please. Call yourself whatever you like. Sleep with any consenting adult who'll have you. Live your best life in peace and security. But force women out of their jobs for stating that sex is real? #IStandWithMaya #ThisIsNotADrill.”

This one tweet, this one small act of sisterly solidarity with a newly out-of-work woman, sparked a Twitter meltdown. Rowling was labelled a “TERF” – Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminist – the go-to insult hurled at women who transgress new social norms established primarily by men. Not that long ago, it was considered grossly offensive to insult women by calling them derogatory names. Now, the hierarchy of victimhood has been transformed, and women – females – can be subjected to no end of abuse if it's for the greater good of protecting males who, complete with penis, chest hair, and stubble, demand the world acknowledges they are women.

Thankfully, J. K. Rowling is made of stronger stuff and she was not cowed by the bullies. This week she has stepped into the fray again in response to [a new campaign](#) by an international development organization to create “a more equal post-COVID-19 world for people who menstruate.” People who menstruate? As [Rowling tweeted](#): “I'm sure there used to be a word for those people. Someone help me out. Wumben? Wimpund? Woomud?”

It's shocking that we live in a world where the word “woman” can be so casually erased. A person who menstruates, has breasts, a womb, and ovaries is a woman and it should not be a thought-crime to say so. Of course, women are far more than

just their body parts. Women's bodies come in all shapes and sizes, and women don't stop being women because something is anatomically wrong or they reach the menopause.

I'm not a feminist but turning the word "woman" into an unutterable curse-word turns back over a century of women's hard-won rights. To add insult to injury, whereas in the past it was a sexist patriarchy that conspired to keep women out of public life, today it is trendy young folk who fancy themselves as progressive and radical.

So, three cheers to J.K Rowling for standing up for women, right? Not quite. Instead of being celebrated, Rowling has been grossly insulted all over again. Nothing is off-limits when it comes to taking down this modern-day heretic. Grown men tweet obscenities and teenagers join in the chorus from their bedrooms. Let's name this for what it is: misogynistic abuse.

Finally, in walks Daniel Radcliffe. In a lengthy essay on the website of [The Trevor Project](#), an organization providing mental health support to LGBTQ young people, he takes Rowling to task with the well-worn mantra: "Trans women are women." "Expelliarmus!" he might as well have declared. In 2020, women are expected to know their place: erased from public record until required as a target for abuse. We must not put up with this. #IStandWithJKRowling.

[\[Update: Rowling issued lengthy statement Wednesday on the author's "Reasons for Speaking out on Sex and Gender Issues"\]](#)

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