**Registered Charity No. 1070500**

Barbara Hayes

Chief Executive

Authors Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS)

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31 January 2023

Dear Barbara Hayes,

We are writing to you to express our concern about two books that the ALCS has shortlisted for its Educational Writers’ Award.

It is stated that this award is for creative educational writing for children and young people aged 11-18. However, two of the books on the list are highly inappropriate for children as young as 11 and it is questionable whether books that contain a high level of indoctrination should be read by teenagers generally.

The first book is *The Art of Drag* by Jake Hall. Jake Hall describes himself as ‘freelance writer on all things sexy, weird & queer’. The main topics he writes about are ‘queer culture, drag history, sex work’. When not writing he describes himself as ‘partying topless in drag clubs’. We would suggest that such a person is not a good role model for children and young people.

It should be noted that drag shows are adults-only entertainment and not suitable for school age children. When we expose children to sexual material, we blur the boundaries between adults and children, exposing them to adult sexual concepts and we risk normalising the sexualisation of children. Drag is not an appropriate subject for an 11 year old’s reading. Additionally, if an eleven year old were to read *The Art of Drag* and look up some of the acts mentioned they might come across some of the imagery and/or videos shown at the following two links:

<https://www.visualsweat.com/film>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yl3ZnADOqi8>

We hope you would agree that such material is not suitable for children so young.

The second book is *What’s the T?* by transgender activist Juno Dawson. This book describes itself as offering ‘uncensored’ advice to children about coming out as trans. Since nobody can obtain legal recognition as the opposite gender before they reach the age of 18, this book certainly represents the most premature exposure.

Other books by Dawson feature teenagers using illegal drugs and engaging in drug-fuelled sexual activity. They are littered with sexual swear words and sexually explicit descriptions. They have also portrayed taking hormone blockers as relatively harmless. This is misleading and dangerous. Puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones permanently change a young person’s body. Most children and young people who experience gender dysphoria do not persist with it in to adulthood. The tragic case of Keira Bell illustrates the damage that can be done when a young person’s claims of dysphoria are accepted at face value. Permanent damage was done to Keira Bell’s body. She stated: *I don't know if I will ever really look like a woman again... and I don't think anyone knows what will happen to my body in the future’*. It is grossly irresponsible to expose those as young as 11 to the idea that these treatments are in some way harmless.

These books are not educational but are indoctrination in the agenda of a small minority. We would urge you to withdraw them from the award shortlist.

We hope you will engage with us on this issue and we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Piers Shepherd
Senior Researcher