

Work While They Debate

“Are you a writer?” That’s a status question and it’s a distraction.

Some people will say your writer status is legit, but others will never concede the point because of your credentials or your style or your genre or whatever else they’re using as the ultimate metric.

The real question is “Do you have something to say and are you going to step up and say it?” If you can say “yes” to that question, nothing else matters. While people are busy debating over your status as a writer, you’ll be able to point to an actual body of work and say “I have written.”

Is J.K. Rowling a “real” writer? It depends on who you ask, but here’s what’s not up for debate: J.K. Rowling has accomplished her goal of telling the stories she wants to tell and making the points she wants to make. And she didn’t need anyone’s permission to get started with that. No amount of disgruntled or jealous literature majors will ever be able to argue her results out of existence. Her work has been done and her impact has been made.

The same is true of being an expert, or being an entrepreneur, or being an influencer, or whatever other socially celebrated title you’re chasing.

Instead of asking yourself “Am I an X?”, ask yourself “What kind of work would I be doing right now if I believed myself to be an X?” Then go do it.

The substance of real world effort and value-creation will always take you further than fancy titles and fake accolades. Stick to the real thing: it’s called work.