The Woman Who Lived:
J.K. Rowling’s Online Persona as a Literary Celebrity

Laura Martens
s4486129
English Language and Culture
BA Thesis English Literature
Supervisor: Dr. Usha Wilbers
June 15, 2018
Abstract

As technology continues to develop, authors and readers are forced to renegotiate their relationship to both each other and the literature they write and consume. This thesis will focus on how authors navigate through the digital age by looking at J.K. Rowling as a case study and seeks to analyse how her public position negotiates issues such as celebrity, authenticity, and authorship. It is argued in this thesis that the rise of social media offers literary celebrities new ways to promote their projects and communicate with their fans, and that there are significant differences between how authors use and brand themselves on an author’s official website versus on a social media account.

Keywords: J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter, literary celebrity, authorship, branding, digital, social media, Twitter
# Table of Contents

Abstract ...................................................................................................................................... 3  
Introduction ................................................................................................................................ 5  
Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework ............................................................................................ 8  
  1.1 Posture .............................................................................................................................. 8  
  1.2 Cultural production .......................................................................................................... 9  
  1.3 (Literary) celebrity ......................................................................................................... 10  
  1.4 Branding ......................................................................................................................... 13  
  1.5 Authenticity .................................................................................................................... 14  
Chapter 2: Analysing J.K. Rowling’s Official Website ........................................................... 17  
  2.1 Homepage....................................................................................................................... 19  
    2.1.1 Visual ...................................................................................................................... 19  
    2.1.2 Text ........................................................................................................................ 21  
    2.1.3 Other ........................................................................................................................ 21  
  2.2 About .............................................................................................................................. 22  
    2.2.1 Visual ...................................................................................................................... 22  
    2.2.2 Text ........................................................................................................................ 22  
  2.3 Answers .......................................................................................................................... 24  
    2.3.1 Visual ...................................................................................................................... 24  
    2.3.2 Text ........................................................................................................................ 24  
  2.4 Writing & News ............................................................................................................. 25  
  2.5 Results ............................................................................................................................. 26  
Chapter 3: Analysing J.K. Rowling’s Twitter Account ........................................................... 27  
  3.1 Account .......................................................................................................................... 29  
  3.2 Promotion ....................................................................................................................... 29  
  3.3 Communication .............................................................................................................. 31  
  3.4 Politics ............................................................................................................................ 34  
  3.5 Authorship ...................................................................................................................... 36  
  3.6 Results ............................................................................................................................. 38  
Conclusion ............................................................................................................................... 40  
Works Cited ............................................................................................................................. 43
J.K. Rowling’s first novel, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* (1997), brought the author instant fame. She is not simply a successful novelist; she is a celebrity novelist, or a literary celebrity, whose personality has “become object of special fascination and intense scrutiny, effectively dominating the reception of [her] work” (English and Frow 39). Research on literary celebrities started in the twentieth century, but the phenomenon of literary celebrities dates back to the eighteenth century, involving authors such as Johnson, Sterne and Burney (40). Odile Heynders, the author of *Writers as Public Intellectuals*, describes how authors can use their status and their work to critique the state of affairs and interfere in the public sphere (ix). In this study, she mainly focuses on the political influence that authors can have, but in *Celebrity Authorship and Afterlives in English and American Literature* (Franssen and Honings) she discusses the public and private posture of author Zadie Smith. Smith rose to the status of celebrity author during the same period as Rowling did. Heynders points out that Smith develops a posture by being conscious of her cultural capital and her multicultural middle-class background. Likewise, Rowling seems highly conscious of her background as a lower-class single mother, as will appear from the analysis of her website.

In his essay “The Author as Star”, Hugh Look details several types of star authors and discusses the implications of this star system. Despite being written in 1999, in the very early days of the internet, the essay does focus largely on the online world and its effects. Look argues that the internet “provides a means for star authors to reach their public without the intermediation of their publisher” (12). James English and John Frow similarly examine the implications of the star system, even highlighting Rowling and the phenomenon of the literary celebrity, but they do not discuss specific ways of (online) branding oneself. Since English and Frow’s study was published in 2006 it makes sense that they do not focus on online branding, as most social media either did not exist yet or was not used by the masses yet. However, it is important to look at ways of branding oneself, especially online, as the online world increasingly offers ways to do that. Because the internet is at users’ fingertips, which goes for both authors and their readers, contact is easily made and seems more intimate and direct. So, while research has been done on celebrity authors, there is a gap in research on celebrity authors in the digital age. The research that does exist focuses mainly on interviews, but there is a significant lack of research centred around author’s websites, and especially their social media.
I thus intend to contribute to the research around celebrity authors with this thesis and offer a snapshot into literary celebrities in the early twenty-first century.

J.K. Rowling rose to fame due to her *Harry Potter* series. She conceived the idea of the series in 1990 and after many years of writing and receiving many rejection letters, the first book was published by Bloomsbury Children’s Books in 1997. The series of fantasy novels chronicle the life of a young wizard and his friends attending a wizardry school, and the main story arc concerns Harry Potter’s fight against a dark wizard. Since the release of the first novel, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* (1997), the books have found enormous popularity, critical acclaim, and commercial success. This success, of both the books and the subsequent films, allowed the *Harry Potter* franchise to expand. As of 2018, there is a digital platform based on the series (*Pottermore*), a studio tour, a travelling exhibition, several theme parks, a theatre show and a series of spin-off films. Rowling’s books are considered by some to be the cornerstones of contemporary young adult literature; the size of its success being without precedent in twentieth-century British children’s literature (Allsobrook). No author before had managed “to prove so instantly acceptable both to critics and to a vast international child and adult readership” (Tucker 221). This launched J.K. Rowling into instant celebrity author status, and that status has only expanded over the two decades since the publication of her first book.

Celebrity authors have become brands, and all the extensions of the brand (i.e. interviews, social media, other books, movies, campaigns, etc.) are carefully managed. However, sometimes tensions can exist in the form of what Janice Radway and Joan Rubin have called “scandals of the middlebrow”, revolving around inauthenticity or the “selling out on the part of an author whose too complete or comfortable popularity is thought incommensurate with true literary genius” (English and Frow 48). This can be linked to J.K. Rowling, as there has been much criticism on, for example, the *Fantastic Beasts* films which some people see as selling out. These films are a kind of spin-off of the *Harry Potter* series and set in the same ‘wizarding world’. That accusation stems from the ostensible stream of (old and new) *Harry Potter* spin-offs and side-projects, and it is understandable why, to some, that starts to look like money-grabbing and a diversion from authenticity. The discussion around inauthenticity also comes into play when looking at the extratextual revelations - information released after the books were published - made on social media, Rowling’s website and *Pottermore*. That is perhaps what is central to Rowling’s case; she blurs the lines of authenticity and controls her brand herself, a vast change compared to post-war Britain up until the digital age. English and Frow point out that what has changed in that time might be that the concept of ‘scandal’ (the word ‘scandal’ used loosely here, it could range from criticism on the books
to people seeing other films as selling-out) has detached itself from works of art but rather attaches itself firmly to the person in the 21st century (50). In other words, they argue that what might have changed over time is that criticism regarding the art attaches itself more clearly to a person, such as J.K. Rowling, now, such as J.K. Rowling, instead of her staying separated from that criticism.

Thus, my thesis will answer the following research question: How do celebrity authors negotiate their role in the digital age, in particular regarding status, authorship and authenticity? To gain a better understanding of this and reach a conclusion, this thesis will look at J.K. Rowling as a case study by analysing her website and social media. The choice for Rowling as a case study was quickly made, as she is possibly the biggest literary celebrity of the twenty-first century and has a huge online presence. I hypothesise that authors, particularly Rowling, aim to be seen as authentic as possible and that she profiles herself as an author rather than celebrity author. While we will see her aiming to leave the notion of celebrity in the background on social media, this is less the case on her website. Hence, we will see that she conjures up different profiles and postures online. Celebrity authors take on different roles in different digital areas.

The thesis starts with a chapter on the theoretical background and methodology of the research. It discusses Jerôme Meizoz’s concept of posture, which is built on Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of ‘habitus’, as well as his concept of cultural capital and his field theory. The concept of posture is central to this thesis because it shows how people can negotiate their role and adapt their image where and when necessary. To place Rowling in the literary field, the chapter will discuss the concept of literary celebrity. Branding and authenticity will also be explained as they link closely to Meizoz’s notion of posture and celebrities. The thesis will then move on to the case study of J.K. Rowling. Chapter two focuses on her website. The aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with a better understanding of how a literary celebrity can brand and posture themselves by choosing what is allowed to be connected to their brand. This chapter contains an examination of the text and images explicitly chosen to be put on Rowling’s website, suggesting how she wants to be profiled online, as a website is carefully maintained. Different sections of the website are analysed concerning the portrayal of the author and to determine what things are allowed to be part of her brand. Chapter three focuses on Rowling’s Twitter account. This chapter will comprise of an analysis of Rowling’s use of social media and discusses several ways in which the author profiles herself. Several examples are highlighted to show that her posture on social media slightly differs from that on her website, suggesting that different digital areas require different roles.
Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

To answer the question of ‘How do celebrity authors negotiate their role in the digital age, in particular regarding status, authorship and authenticity?’ effectively and to fully comprehend the research, this chapter will focus on providing an overview of several concepts. First, it will look at posture and cultural capital, before delving into the concept of a (literary) celebrity. Then, the concepts of authenticity and branding are explained. This will form an appropriate theoretical framework.

1.1 Posture
The term ‘posture’ was first used by French sociologist Jerôme Meizoz. He defined posture as “a dynamic self-representative frame in which their work and behaviour should be understood” (Franssen and Honings 182). But one cannot effectively discuss Meizoz without discussing the theory it was built on, Pierre Bourdieu’s cultural capital. One needs Bourdieu’s terms of ‘position-taking’ and the ‘literary field’ to properly define posture. According to Bourdieu, one should view the phenomena of ‘culture’ as a ‘field’ of power structures, dominant views that determine the laws of that field and actors that move under the influence of these laws:

The space of literary or artistic position-takings, i.e. the structured set of the manifestations of the social agents involved in' the field [...] is inseparable from the space of literary or artistic positions defined by possession of a determinate quantity of specific capital (recognition) and, at the same time, by occupation of a determinate position in the structure of the distribution of this specific capital. The literary or artistic field is a field of forces, but it is also a field of struggles tending to transform or conserve this field of forces. (Bourdieu, “Rules of Art” 30)

This means that actors (in the field, i.e. a writer, model, musician, etc.) need to possess “a determinate quantity of specific capital” to validate their presence and take up the position in ‘the structure of the distribution” of that. Every actor benefits from a good objective position and will strive to enlarge their symbolic or economic capital. Meizoz attempted to construct a link between the institutional and discursive approach of literature in his interpretation of Bourdieu’s ideas. In this interpretation one still looks at the context of the creation, but also looks at the artist (in this thesis the author) and its work. Meizoz described the position-taking in the literary field using his term ‘posture’:
La “posture” est la manière singulière d’occuper une “position” dans le champ littéraire. Connaissant celle-ci, on peut décrire comment une “posture” la rejoue ou la déjoue. Qui fait imprimer un ouvrage (un disque, une gravure, etc.) impose une image de soi qui dépasse les coordonnées d’identité du citoyen. (Meizoz, “Postures Littéraires” 18)

Both the work (“ouvrage”), as well as the relationship to the collective, as seen here, are part of the position-taking. An author will naturally follow a similar career path as on their predecessors, so the public will recognise them as a specific kind of artist. Even though the artist presents themselves in a singular and thus unique way, according to Meizoz, they will still compare themselves to already existing postures. Meizoz thinks in terms of categories of which the quantity can de- or increase in a limited manner. He sees these categories as a frame of reference for authors: without that anchor, they could not profile themselves (“Postures Littéraires” 18).

Rowling’s novels address conventions of youth culture and celebrity culture, but her involvement with these phenomena lie beyond her novels: it is also expressed by her personal behaviour and public self-representation. To adequately analyse Rowling’s posture, one must extend Meizoz’s concept of posture to include Ervin Goffman’s definition of performance. Here, performance can refer to “all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers” (32). This definition then enables us to observe the effects of various performances such as giving interviews, writing articles, posing for photos and using social media to interact with and be recognised by an audience. Using this definition, Odile Heynders suggests that these practices can support certain postures and address several audiences, endlessly adapting and altering the author’s self-representation (191). We can then link posture to persona. The term “persona”, according to David Marshall, “identifies what we all engage in as we publicize, perform, and present versions of ourselves” (“Celebrity and Power” xxxv).

1.2 Cultural production
To examine the subject of posture further, we need to look at Bourdieu’s work on cultural production, which includes “cultural capital” and “fields”. Bourdieu intends a very broad understanding of culture when discussing cultural production, including science, law, and religion, but his work focuses largely on literature and art (Hesmondhalgh 212). The concept of cultural capital refers to a form of cultural power (value) that can be built on both the production side as well as consumption side of the art world (Brillenburg and Rigney 416).
Capital holds a variety of resources, both material and immaterial. It is through these resources that a writer or artist can fulfil their artistic goals and reach success (whatever that is to them personally) in their field. Material capital can be money, but also things such as a laptop or camera, while immaterial capital can be a number of book sales, sold out performances, honours, awards, etc. (Bourdieu, “Rules of Art” 38). An author’s cultural capital will determine the need for certain postures, especially on the consumption side.

One could say that cultural capital holds most value in the artist’s own field. According to Bourdieu in his theory of cultural production, a “field” is a zone of activity in which creators, or artists, aim to create a certain cultural product (167), such as the literary field, cinematic field, intellectual field, etc. It is important to note that this product, whether it be a book, play or film, is defined not only by the creator but also by the expectations and values of the audience. Therefore, each field is not just defined by the creators, but equally by critics, the audience, or the marketplace (Hesmondhalgh 216). There is a constant struggle between dominant and popular culture, seemingly distant from economic and technological decisions (219-20). “Seemingly” is used here, because often these decisions (such as grants, printing techniques, 3D) can influence what a field looks like. This thesis touches on several fields, as, even though J.K. Rowling originated as an author (thus was placed in the literary field), her cultural capital has catapulted her into other artistic fields, such as the cinematic field.

Habitus is perhaps one of Bourdieu’s concepts that is most directly used as inspiration for Meizoz’s concept of posture. Habitus, in turn, was inspired by Marcel Mauss’ notion of body technique. Essentially, habitus can be defined as a system of dispositions, that is to say, a permanent way of seeing things, thoughts and actions (Bourdieu, “Rules of Art” 54). An example of this on a physical level might be “muscle memory”. On an individual’s level then, it would be a certain behaviour. One can even apply it to the concept of fields and see habitus as a certain set of rules or way a field functions. Habitus is an interesting concept for this thesis if we use the latter two interpretations since the individual level is very similar to posture, and the field level because the internet might be changing the field’s system of dispositions.

1.3 (Literary) celebrity
Celebrities are embedded in the field of popular culture and rely heavily on media and consumers to give them a voice and power. Hugh Look defines “full stardom”, or in other words, reaching celebrity status, as something that only happens when a certain “star quality” is recognised by the audience and in turn rewarded by attention and consumption (13). The relationship between consumers and celebrities has changed significantly in the twenty-first
The instantaneity of celebrity images due to the internet means that celebrities occupy a social position that is closer to consumers than they ever were before (Marshall, “Celebrity and Power” xi). Marshall calls this a “new public intimacy” (“Celebrity and Power” xii). Through technology – first radio and television, but in the twenty-first century most importantly the internet – the individual has become an important part of the formation of contemporary culture (“Celebrity and Power” xxxiv). Online culture causes the presentational culture to become increasingly relevant since merely a few clicks are necessary to find accounts on several platforms, often in addition to extra material such as photographs and connections. Presentational culture is especially relevant to celebrities because those few social accounts they possess are some of the only places they have control over how they are presented. There is most likely added pressure to present themselves in a particular way as well since celebrities attract masses of followers on their social accounts. This presentational culture is thus becoming more central to the links between significance and power (“Celebrity and Power” xxxiv). It is not surprising to find many celebrities online (whether that be a website or social media) given its ease (in use, compared to writing a new book or filming a new movie) and reach.

While providing an in-depth look into celebrities, Marshall does not deal extensively with literary or intellectual celebrities. This is not surprising, as he focuses more on organized structures within the culture of celebrity instead of individuality. Rather, he looks at the modern culture industries of film, music, and television. In these industries, the individual behind the celebrity persona is less relevant (Glass 3). Alternatively, writers have kept an “ethos of individual creative production” against the rise of those modern culture industries in which they still have had to take part (4). Although this may be true, literary celebrities are still controversial figures due to their position between art and money (Moran, “Star Authors” 17). As Joe Moran observes in Star Authors, there’s a growing tendency to assimilate literary production into the media industry (22). This leads to authors being promoted as celebrity personalities. The literary celebrity is in effect a mixture of cultural capital, market and media demands, public performance, and the social context (Heynders 180). The difference between being viewed as an author and being viewed as a literary celebrity, Rebecca Braun and Emily Spiers argue, is one of scale. The celebrity status that is reached “when one individual’s achievement is sufficiently recognized both coheres around the individual with whom the literary text is most strongly identified (almost always: the author)” (Braun and Spiers 461). In other words, an author can become a literary celebrity once they have accumulated enough cultural capital and are recognized for that. With the celebrity status comes an assumed agency,
with the author’s literary achievements being celebrated as completely their own and better than those of their contemporaries, even if they are not necessarily (462).

Loren Glass details how literary work has a mostly fictitious value. According to her, it is fictitious because it has nothing to do with its authorial source and everything with its public circulation. This circulation then creates the authorial source, which Glass names “the famous writer”, who occupies the body of the original author (92). “Celebrity makes authorship a corporate affair”, she argues (qtd. in English and Frow 41). One must wonder, then, if literary celebrity is a title to aim for as an author. The phenomenon seems to increasingly have to do with intellectual property rights, media conglomeration, and massification (brand extensions) to increase capital, rather than it does with the actual literary value and act of writing. Look argues that the most significant sign that an author might be a celebrity is when the audience buys their books on the author’s name alone, never mind the subject matter, reviews, cover or title (14).

In due course, the image of the celebrity might not be as much of interest itself, but what will be useful is what it can tell us about changes in literary value. Heynders points out that the “emergence of a new relationship between the aesthetics of the signature and the aesthetics of the brand” (53) can lead to new ways for the status of celebrity to be used. The aesthetics or value of the signature means authorial presence. This “new relationship” then points out how the brand, while more explicitly commercial than the signature, is openly concerned with the value of the signature (Frow 63). Celebrity status brings power, and one might say that a literary celebrity possesses intellectual (literary) capital, which they can then turn into, for example, political power. Of course, it should be noted that this power is symbolic rather than material (e.g. money), hence is determined by different kinds of value that can change at any moment, such as good reviews, awards, bestseller status, academic status, etc. Essentially, the higher the value of the brand is, the higher the value of the signature. That signature then possesses power and can be used in, for example, political ways (e.g. by supporting a political party or a certain cause).

It should be noted that there is a difference between famous authors and celebrity authors, according to Braun and Spiers. Famous authors are often “those ‘great’ writers who populate university syllabi and lists of ‘world classics’”, and there is a general consensus regarding their literary skills (454). Celebrity authors, on the other hand, often break the mould, either by wanting to break out of the “great hall of literature” or by pleading to be let in. Authors may fall into both categories, depending on what the public asks of them and the significance that is assigned to them. Braun and Spiers point out that they “force reflection on the institution
of literature: how it is constituted, why it matters and how it might be otherwise” (454). We will see this tension with J.K. Rowling as well. They force us to reconsider what it means to be a (celebrity) author.

1.4 Branding
Branding arose as a process that tries to integrate and boost the qualities encompassing and connected in brands in valuable ways (Pike 5). The term brand has enjoyed a rapid growth in use and sophistication (Murphy 4) but with that also a flood of definitions. Andy Pike discusses branding and brands in *Origination: The Geographies of Brands and Branding*, and even though he focuses mainly on brands that are or belong to companies rather than celebrities, the term can be applied to individuals as well. Pike discusses how the basic elements that become a brand’s value comprise of both tangible and intangible properties. First, he mentions associations (e.g. with particular people and places), identities (e.g. image, look, style) and values (e.g. reputation) (25). Other elements that Pike mentions are origins and qualities, but these are more so applicable to objects, not people. If one sees the brand as the object, then branding can be viewed as the process of adding (if done well) value to the object by providing meaning (McCracken, qtd. in Pike 26). As John Allen puts it: branding involves “the non-material, creative side to production [that] relies heavily upon the input of signs and symbols to differentiate products and make them meaningful” (qtd. in Pike 26). The same can be applied to celebrities instead of products. Brands create meaningful differences between celebrities. According to Choi and Rifon, celebrity brands, perhaps more so than other brands, provide more than just entertainment, as they also influence consumers’ decisions, values, behaviour and perceptions (qtd. in Illicic and Webster 410). Therefore, celebrity brands have to be handled carefully as they have a substantial amount of power.

Contemporary authors, according to Heynders, must brand themselves, in order to reinforce their value and credentials, so as to establish the freedom to write and publish (184). However, many authors and many celebrities for that matter are new “brands” lacking heritage and a long history, unlike, for example, famous families. Therefore, these individuals seem to experience a rise to fame practically overnight. Their celebrity status is often achieved through recognition of their talents and accomplishments, or through acknowledgement by the media (Rojek 4). Thus, this becomes part of their brand.

It is also necessary to look at why it is deemed important to have a brand as an author. When creating an individual brand, the author naturally has to acknowledge the importance of the media and the market. Heynders puts it as follows: “self-representation as branding
foregrounds the tensions inherent to literary production in the context of the modern market society: the fiction author has the creative freedom to invent his or her own world, but, paradoxically, this freedom can only be attained by catching the attention of others and engaging the readers” (184). In other words, in order to have the freedom to invent whatever fictional world and share that, the author has to simultaneously invent themselves as a brand.

According to Leslie de Chernatony and Malcolm McDonald, branding aims to gain consumer trust through building positive associations in the brand that will positively influence consumer’s decisions (27). These positive associations can be regarding style, quality, but perhaps most important to consumers: authenticity.

1.5 Authenticity
Authenticity, rather than an inherent trait held by an individual person, is a socially constructed interpretation or evaluation, constructed by consumers based on their observations and experiences. Celebrity authenticity ensues when consumers accept what the celebrities portray (Peterson 1087). Both Charles Fairchild (360) and Julie Moulard et al. argue that the creation of a persona and the consistency of this persona is what makes a celebrity authentic (qtd. in Illicic and Webster 411). Richard Dyer, one of the central academics in star studies, argues that perceived authenticity secures fame (134). In addition, Joshua Gamson relates how “growing knowledge about the construction of celebrity led to greater demands for “authentic” material such as tabloid and paparazzi coverage” (qtd. in Ellcessor, “Celebrity Activism” 257). Consumers often pursue meaningful relationships with celebrities and see them as authentic when they believe the public image of the celebrity to be true (Tolson 456). The word ‘relationship’ used here should be seen as a connection that can differ in strength from both sides (consumer and celebrity). Such a relationship can be meaningful when it has a positive influence on both parties. However, as Jasmina Illicic and Cynthia Webster point out, this relationship or the intention of forming one, does not inherently mean those celebrities are seen as authentic. Rather, authenticity highlights the behaviours performed by a celebrity and the consumer’s observations of the relationships that the celebrity has with others (412). They mention that the key factor in the observations of celebrity (brand) authenticity is a celebrity’s positive attitude in and towards relations or interactions with consumers (418). Since the rise of social media, observing relations or interactions between consumers and celebrities has become easier, thus, provided the interactions are positive, a celebrity’s authenticity should rise. However, this transparency can of course merely reflect a persona that the celebrity ‘puts on’. The absence of gatekeepers and possibilities for “live” interactions make it easy for
consumers to assume that celebrities’ social media are “unmediated”, controlled only by the celebrity themselves, thus offering direct access (Elleessor, “Celebrity Activism” 257).

Authenticity, or ‘being real’, encompasses more than just a steady and positive persona though. Results from Illicic and Webster’s study involving focus groups pointed out that those celebrities that embraced the freedom to behave in a way that reflected their values in interactions were seen as the most authentic. Their findings suggest that consumers observe an authentic celebrity when the celebrity possesses two qualities in particular: autonomous behaviour and self-determination in relationships. An authentic celebrity must, according to the focus groups, encourage a sense of freedom (autonomy) and relatedness with others (418). The participants also mentioned wanting to see celebrity’s weaknesses and failures next to their strengths and achievements, arguing that this makes celebrities more “real”, hence more human (413).

The negotiation of the celebrity image, constantly involving the illusion of intimacy and quest for truth that create authenticity, is thus central to the ideological power of the celebrity. This negotiation is not easy, but a complex and often contradictory process. A celebrity image presented in an interview, or their website, or social media, is not necessarily the same image available in paparazzi footage or an autobiography. However, this is not to say that one image is inherently more authentic than the other. Instead, all those different images are spaces of negotiation (Meyers 905) through which the audience can use a celebrity’s persona to provide “a sense and coherence to a culture” (Marshall, “Celebrity and Power” x). Although we can never really know the truth about a celebrity since it is a decidedly constructed image, the search for that true authenticity permits consumers to comprehend themselves and others around them.

These concepts are necessary to examine J.K. Rowling’s brand and different postures online. Her cultural capital has enabled her to create and maintain a certain brand, supposedly aiming for authenticity. Whether this is true, and the question of whether Rowling is a literary celebrity and how, will be discussed in the following two chapters. The next chapter focuses on Rowling’s personal website, a carefully maintained part of her brand. The methodology employed in this thesis is a close reading of the website and Twitter account of J.K. Rowling, followed by an analysis where I will draw on the concepts explained in this theoretical framework, which were mostly generated from star studies and authenticity studies, in combination with an internet studies approach to critically examining technology as being socially constructed through its users and uses. The next chapter, about Rowling’s website, is divided into subcategories based on the sections on her website. The chapter about Rowling’s
Twitter account is divided into subcategories based on the uses that come forward most: promotion, communication, politics and authorship.
Chapter 2: Analysing J.K. Rowling’s Official Website

The internet offers an abundance of what in print- and broadcast dominated eras was often called “book talk”. This includes book review websites, online book retailers, recorded celebrity author readings, author websites and more (Murray 312). Simone Murray proposes the term “digital literary sphere”, which I will be using from now onwards. It encompasses the several ‘book talk’ examples, as well as the broad range of “book-themed websites and other digital content whose focus is contemporary literature and its production, circulation and consumption, however blurry that tripartite distinction has been rendered in an era of Web 2.0 and social media” (Murray 313). This and the following chapter will analyse how J.K. Rowling, the case study in this thesis, navigates and postures herself in this digital literary sphere. In this chapter, different sections of the website, jkrowling.co.uk, are analysed in order to discern the portrayal of the author and to understand what things Rowling allows to be part of her brand.

J.K. Rowling’s official website launched in 2004 and contained a large amount of information on the Harry Potter universe, news, rumours and a detailed biography of Rowling (see fig. 1).


J.K. Rowling’s official website launched in 2004 and contained a large amount of information on the Harry Potter universe, news, rumours and a detailed biography of Rowling (see fig. 1).
The website was relaunched in 2012 with a new design and including an announcement of her first post-Potter book, *The Casual Vacancy*, a *Harry Potter* section, and a biography (see fig. 2). The current version was launched in December 2016. In her first post after refurbishing her official website, Rowling wrote that the reason she decided to do the makeover was that she “wanted to bring [her] website back to what it used to be: something real and personal” (“Welcome to my new website!”). This suggests that she wants to be seen as authentic and that she felt that her website did not reflect this before. She appeared to want to change her posture in order to present a different, more personal image of herself. According to Andrew Tolson, this tactic is “not simply a revelation of an essential ‘real person’, it is nevertheless a disclosure of a way of being a celebrity, a way of coping with its pressures, by mapping out and following through a self-conscious personal project” (449). Of course, there will be more objectives for having an official website for a celebrity this big than merely being a personal project but, as Rowling’s post reveals, one of her reasons to relaunch was to make the website more personal again. This echoes what the digital literary sphere provides for literary authors, especially celebrity authors. It offers direct communication to their readers, seemingly unrestricted by publisher’s publicity departments or journalists aiming for a particular profile. Official websites, though, are often quite “standoffish”, purely used for news, professionally designed, and the communication stream is one-way (Murray 322). This grants complete control of the environment, which is in line with Rebecca Braun and Emily Spiers’s definition of celebrity: “celebrity is about creating an environment in which celebration of a particular person can take place, using whatever self-sustaining promotional technologies are available” (452).

Pierre Bourdieu’s field theory is perhaps especially applicable to the online environment in which production takes place, with its many agents and participants all
contributing to a literary sphere. In this field of online production, David Marshall identifies three ways of looking at the online production of the public version of the private self. The first one is the “public self”, which he calls the “industrial model of the individual” (“Presentational Media” 44). The announcing of release dates, biographical profiles, etc. belong to this, and he argues that official websites produce this effect: “For high-profile celebrities, these kinds of [web]sites are managed by their public assistants and work to maintain the public persona as a valued cultural commodity” (“Presentational Media” 44). This public self is produced by and for the industry and one might say that this is the most polished version. The other two ways that Marshall names, the public-private self and the transgressive-intimate self, will be discussed in chapter three.

In her study, Murray identifies several processes that take place on an author’s website: performing authorship, “selling” literature, curating the public life of literature and entering literary discussion (320). These processes will be linked to the sections of J.K. Rowling’s website that will be analysed here. The main focus will be on the homepage, “About” and “Answers” sections. The “Writing” and “News” will only briefly be covered as they are straightforward and provide less useful information regarding Rowling’s posture.

2.1 Homepage

![Figure 3: the homepage of J.K. Rowling’s official website, jkrowling.com, 2018. Retrieved 6 June 2018, from https://www.jkrowling.com/. Screenshot by author.](image)

2.1.1. Visual

At first glance, one sees a wooden surface covered with a lot of objects (see fig. 3). The most prominent object is an iPad showing Rowling’s twitter account. More specifically, every time she tweets, the screenshot shown on the iPad is updated to show the newest tweet(s). This
suggests that she highly values her social media and ability to express herself there due to the
sense of urgency it provides. In her first post after revamping the website, she actually writes
that she shows her twitter feed because “Twitter has become for me a nice way of interacting
with readers in the website-free years. It also slakes my thirst for pictures of dogs and otters,
political arguments and random connections with strangers” (“Welcome to my new website!”).
Directly underneath we find a metal badge showing a mermaid and the words “tout prest”
engraved on it. This is the crest of the Scottish Murray Clan, presumably a subtle link to
Rowling’s husband, doctor Neil Murray. The only other item visible without scrolling down
the homepage is an open notebook displaying character notes for The Cuckoo’s Calling,
Rowling’s first novel written under the pseudonym Robert Galbraith. The part of the homepage
that one sees at once suggests that interactions with fans, family, and her writing are perhaps
most important to her. In that first post after the make-over, Rowling explains the homepage
background:

This is a faithful representation of my writing desk, except that I haven’t put on the bits
of stale popcorn and biscuit crumbs that usually litter the surface. Everything looks a
bit tidier and cleaner than it really is, but after all, it’s only polite to make an effort for
guests. The various objects littered around really do live in my writing room; some of
them have sentimental value, some are practical and others have found their way in via
friends and family members. (“Welcome to my new website!”)

This shows her careful consideration concerning the objects she displays on her website, but
also how actively engaged she is with her own authenticity. By showing these objects that she
supposedly actually owns, Rowling gives us a glimpse of her private-self. By showing “The
setting of the private against (or within) the public”, Rowling “articulates her authenticity (…) by using private information and autobiographical facts” (Heynders 192; 194). Her decision to
include the objects suggest that the mixed “performance of private and public identity is not
unintentional or artificial, but a self-conscious posture, situated in a specific time and space”
(194). She admits that it is slightly tidier than in reality, but that admission adds to her
authenticity and honesty as well.

When one scrolls down the homepage, more objects become visible. There is a pair of
glasses, flowers, a candle, books, cream, two knitted owls, a bracelet, and a Pokémon pin. Some
of the items bearing more significance are a stack of Polaroid pictures, the top one of her dog,
and the Fantastic Beasts script. The only book of hers that is shown on this page is also the
Fantastic Beasts screenplay, which is her most recent project. The other objects that hint to her
persona are the VIP key card for the “Brian Wilson Pet Sounds 50th Anniversary Tour” and an iPod, suggesting she has a love for music, and an Eiffel tower keychain, signifying she likes to travel and/or has a special love for Paris as it is the only destination on this background.

2.1.2 Text
At the top of the page, the first piece of text that one sees is Rowling’s autograph. As discussed in the theoretical framework, a signature/autograph’s value is determined by the brand. The autograph is placed at the top of the homepage. This suggests that it has value because if it is not valuable it would distract from or decrease the brand’s value. This also connects this website directly to Rowling in a way where she confidently claims it and makes it represent her brand because she has essentially put a stamp on it. Moreover, this might result in the website being perceived as more authentic. Conversely, according to Jacques Derrida, the signature proves to be a paradoxical sign. It is paradoxical because a signature is marked by its singularity, as it belongs to one individual, but must also be repeatable in order to be convincing. Derrida explains that because of the iterability, which is the deconstruction of a sign (by alteration or modification of the same), a signature gets detached from the presence of the signer. A signature thus indicates someone’s “having-been present in a past now or present”, so it implies the “non-presence of the signer” (Derrida 20). If we apply this to the signature on Rowling’s homepage, however, the question is if that signature can actually imply the non-presence. In this case, one could say that it cannot get detached from the signer’s presence since the image of the signature cannot be altered on the website.

Several headlines concerning news stories and an “answers” column follow as one scrolls down. As new ones are published, these will be ‘pushed down’.

2.1.3 Other
At the bottom of the homepage, there are various links to pages with information regarding the business side of the brand. “Terms of Use”, “Privacy and Cookies Policy”, “Links”, and “Legal” are some of them. Here, one can also find “Enquiries”, containing the subsections “Publishers”, “Fanmail”, and “Press and Publicity”. The latter once again refers to Rowling’s social media, as it tells the reader they can “get in touch with any press or publicity enquiries, but please note that J.K. Rowling very rarely gives media interviews or comment, preferring to make any public comment via Twitter”. The “Media Kit” contains a biography similar to the one on the “About” page and an official portrait. If a journalist, for example, wants to write about one of Rowling’s new books and briefly discuss the author, they will likely use information that is readily available and easy to find. Here again, we see the control over a narrative and persona an official website can offer. This echoes Ervin Goffman’s idea of the
presentation of the self, where “performance of the self was a conscious act of the individual and required careful staging to maintain the self – a composed and norm-driven construction of character and performance” (qtd. in Marshall, “Presentational Media” 39). The biography offers a composed construction of character, and the portrait then is a composed performance, aiming to emit the ideal authorial self-presentation.

Lastly, the bottom section of the page contains links to Rowling’s official Twitter and Facebook pages, then her autograph again, finishing with several trademarks that she owns.

2.2 About

2.2.1 Visual

While the background on the homepage consists entirely of a photograph, the “About” page only shows a similar image at the top and the very bottom of the page. The rest of the background, with the text on top, is a light grey colour. The top bar once again shows an image of a wooden surface, but the objects that are shown differ from the ones on the homepage. Here, we find another notebook, cookies, hair ties, two wooden mice, printed out (unidentifiable) text, and linking to her Britishness, some tea with milk in it (see fig. 4).

This section also includes an official photograph of J.K. Rowling, sitting in a semi-nonchalant pose. There is an enormous bouquet of flowers behind her and the room in which she sits looks very ornamental. Both the flowers and the room emit a certain elegance and feeling of wealth. This is particularly interesting because there seems to be a disconnect between this image of Rowling and her stories of growing up poor. On the other hand, one could argue that this picture depicts Rowling’s success story, climbing from lower-class up to this level of wealth.

2.2.2 Text

This page contains a short biography written in the third person and starts off with some information regarding where Rowling was born and where she grew up. There are several scholarly significant things about this biography, but the most striking is how strongly it enforces the ‘climbing up the ladder’ narrative, whether that is accurate or not. We see this
when it is described how she got married and had a daughter in Portugal, where the marriage also ended after which she moved back to the United Kingdom with her daughter and no job lined up. The only thing Rowling had was the first three chapters of *Philosopher’s Stone*, and only one agent wrote back to see the full manuscript. The rest of the biography, however, mainly focuses on her successes. It describes, for example, how she “worked in series of jobs”, but the only one highlighted is the role of researcher at Amnesty International.

This page also highlights her love for literature and reinforces her image as a literary celebrity, as she is said to have grown “up surrounded by books” and wrote her first novel at age eleven. She went on to go to university in Exeter studying French and Classics, “where she read so widely outside her syllabus”. This, quite clearly so, brands her as an intellectual but one who can still be seen as authentic and relatable since she had a similar youth to so many other children, at least as far as reading goes. As Marshall puts it: “The descriptions of the connections between celebrities’ “real” lives and their working lives are what configure the celebrity status” (“Presentational Media” 58). Relatability is vital here, and this history and love for literature are part of Rowling’s “real” life, thus enabling readers to relate to Rowling whilst simultaneously looking up to her.

The biography then continues talking about record-breaking success and lists the film adaptations, Rowling’s other books, Pottermore.com, the *Cursed Child* play, and her role as a screenwriter for *Fantastic Beasts*. That record-breaking success lead to material capital (money), a resource which in turn lead to Rowling being able to do or connect those other projects to her brand. Below that, all of her honours and awards are listed, that interestingly appear above the charities and trusts she has worked for and/or supports. Of course, there might very well not be a reason for this order, but it is noteworthy. Those honours and awards, as discussed in chapter one, are part of Rowling’s immaterial capital (Bourdieu, “Rules of Art” 38). The literary field has created this symbolic immaterial capital; thus, they only hold value as long as the rules in the literary field determine they do. Rowling contributes to this as she has put them on this page, hence assigning the awards and honours meaning and importance. The main charities that she has set up are provided with a link to their official websites, so it seems that these are dear to her heart as they are part of her biography.

This “About” section generates an image of Rowling as a successful and educated woman who has experienced many struggles in her life, possibly resulting in her using her wealth and celebrity status for philanthropic means.
2.3 Answers

2.3.1 Visual


Similar to the “About” page, the “Answers” section has a layout with a neutral background for the text. The top bar on this page shows a stack of books from the Loeb classical library, one of the many things hinting at Rowling’s intellectualism on the website. A tin figure of a Roman soldier is positioned on top of the books. We can also see a notebook, a pair of glasses, paper and a pinecone. The several articles featured on this page are each accompanied by a picture, two of which are pictures of Rowling herself.

2.3.2 Text

This page appears to give Rowling the chance to freely write what she wants, at least more so than the rest of the website. There is a total of six articles. Three of them are columns, one is an album review, one is a recording of a speech Rowling made, and the other one is a recording of a podcast she took part in. The page highlights the newest opinion piece, which, as of writing this thesis, concerns the Grindelwald casting in the Fantastic Beasts series. Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them is a 2016 fantasy film, directed by David Yates, and produced and written by J.K. Rowling in her screenwriting debut. The first installment in the Fantastic Beasts film series garnered worldwide success (Tartaglione). In late 2017, news broke that Johnny Depp would keep the role of Grindelwald, the main villain in the series, despite the fact that he had committed domestic violence (Carroll), and Rowling received a large amount of backlash (Kang). The next chapter will delve into the backlash more extensively. This backlash grew even bigger after publishing this opinion piece on her website, in which she endorses the casting choice and says to be “genuinely happy” with him. While this is honest and will certainly have been appreciated by some, it mostly resulted in a lot of disappointment and anger. We should presume that Rowling and her team knew this to be a likely outcome based on previous reactions to the news, yet she still published it. This can suggest several things. One possibility is that Rowling does not care for portraying different postures and rather does whatever she wants. This, however, seems unlikely, based on what is seen on the rest of the website. Another possibility is that she attempted putting on multiple personas here, aiming to
relate to ‘both sides’ of the issue, as she did mention understanding the confusion and anger towards the casting. Nonetheless, her behaviour and self-representation here remain confusing and out of line with the rest of the website. If one has to identify one of Murray’s processes here, it would be (an attempt to) curating the public life of literature, since Rowling’s voice is powerful as the author (320).

The other opinion pieces are not highlighted and appear smaller, but these too say something about what Rowling deems important enough to be directly connected to her on her official website. Two out of six articles on this page concern feminism, a topic dear to her heart. Her political side appears as well, albeit more UK-centred this time, as she published an opinion piece about Brexit. The next chapter will focus more on Rowling’s political behaviour, as it will highlight several of her outspoken tweets regarding politics and Brexit.

2.4 Writing & News
These pages are less relevant for us to identify any postures, although one could say that they add to Rowling’s identity as a literary celebrity. The “Writing” section includes pictures of all of Rowling’s books and links to a retailer to buy them. At the top, we can see all of the Harry Potter books under a subtitle called “J.K. Rowling’s Wizarding World”. These are presumably at the top as these are the books Rowling is mostly known for. Underneath these we find the novels written under the pseudonym Robert Galbraith, having reached moderate success with these. At the bottom her two other novels appear, one, a short story written for her charity Lumos, and the other the first novel Rowling wrote after finishing the Potter series. Naturally, we can apply Murray’s process of selling literature to this page (320), especially since all of the images include a hyperlink to an online store. If we then employ Bourdieu’s theory of the relation between art and money, we can see that there is a fine line between his view of economic self-interest and idealisation of literature: “the opposition between art and money (the ‘commercial’) is the generative principle of most of the judgements that, with respect to the theatre, cinema, painting and literature, claim to establish the frontier between what is art and what is not, between ‘bourgeois’ art and ‘intellectual’ art” (Bourdieu, “Rules of Art” 162).

The “News” section, like some of the other pages, highlights the latest news. It is then followed by three miniature links, but this page also gives visitors the option to filter news between “all”, “charity”, “Robert Galbraith”, “Wizarding World”, and “Writing”. It is not clear whether these have been chosen by Rowling or her team, or are based on search results from search engines, so it is hard to connect this selection to any particular posture.
2.5 Results

As we come back to the question of how celebrity authors negotiate their role in the digital literary sphere, several directions can be identified when we use Rowling as a case study and focus on her website. Marshall’s concept of the public self, involving producing release dates, announcements, a biography etc., (“Presentational Media” 44) is most obviously linked to Rowling’s celebrity status, as these things are about the literary and cinematic empire that she has built. The website does not shy away from depicting this celebrity status but, rather, embraces it.

Authorship is very present on the website as well, but one could argue that Rowling’s foremost posture on her official website is fixed more around the celebrity aspect of a literary celebrity, than authorship necessarily. This confirms Loren Glass’s argument about how celebrity makes authorship a business matter, especially as the one page dedicated purely to J.K. Rowling’s writings is meant to sell her books, presumably because Rowling’s status attracts enough views on the website for that page to be economically beneficial.

We can establish that Rowling’s posture is quite formal and detached on her website. This appears to be chiefly because the only things explicitly written by her are her opinion pieces on the “Answers” page, which is only one out of five sections on the website. So, whereas that page may be seen as authentic, the rest of the website falls short. That is not to say that the other pages are inauthentic, merely that they do not add much to Rowling’s authenticity. What we can see on the website overall is a familiar dichotomy, as Tolson puts it, between frontstage and backstage, or public and private. Even though Tolson examines television and film stars, his findings can be applied to (celebrity) authors as well. “The persona is the point at which the private life becomes public” (448), he argues, and we see Rowling balancing between the private and public. Frontstage we see a formal and authorial Rowling, but by showing us personal items in the background and writing opinion pieces, we get the impression of getting a look backstage, into the private-self of Rowling. This balancing act shows the audience “authenticity in the connection between the persona and the ‘real person’” (Gledhill, qtd. in Tolson 452). One can confidently argue that the website is predominantly meant to maintain the brand as it is very carefully balanced and controlled.
Chapter 3: Analysing J.K. Rowling’s Twitter Account

‘New’ social media sustains the increasingly interactive nature of relationships, in particular, Twitter (Braun and Spiers 450). This offers new ways for literary celebrities to engage with and grow their fan bases, sometimes without fans even engaging with the author’s literature. Through social media, the public self is presented in a way that comes across much more (inter)personal than what one could achieve with representational media in the past. The change away from representational media is articulated by celebrities’ use of social media (Marshall, “Presentational Media” 41), be it in the way they campaign for things important to them, produce followers, and build connections. Hence, J.K. Rowling proves to be an interesting case study as she has been actively using social media for years for various purposes. This chapter thus focuses on Rowling’s Twitter account. Rowling’s social media activity will be analysed concerning the portrayal of the author and we will look at what she allows to be part of her brand.

Social networks offer two scopes: a form of cultural production, and a form of public engagement and exchange. These scopes are what make social networks a media and communication form. They are both about linking to other media and online sources, as they are about an “organic production of the self” (Marshall, “Presentational Media” 39). That self-production and self-presentation are at the core of celebrity activity. Celebrities’ presence on online media, such as Twitter, is often very refined as it is essentially an investment in a public self. The activities that take place on social media prove to be extensions of the public self, and thus fundamental to preserving one’s identity (“Presentational Media” 42). What is central to the construction of the self, and what holds social media together, is communication. David Marshall argues that this connectivity, having a network of connections, is central to an individual’s identity and therefore necessary to sustain the life of an online persona (“Presentational Media” 42). Correspondingly, Eleanor Ellcessor claims that, in order to study Twitter, one has to attempt to understand the culture of the site and understand connections (whether those be social (followers), thematic (hashtags) geographical, etc.) rather than merely focus on individual status updates. Through this one can identify the uses and possibilities of Twitter (“Online Social Media” 49-50). This chapter attempts to identify these for literary celebrities, and J.K. Rowling in particular.

During the broadcast-dominated era, between 1952 and the mid-1980s (Uricchio), authors often phased in and out of public consciousness when a new book was released, and a
new publicity cycle began. However, the digital-era author can aim for consistent relevance and active reader-writer relationships on social media, because of the possibility of ‘live’ and constant updates and direct replies to readers (Murray 323). The author is constantly engaged with their audience, whether that is one-to-many or one-to-one, for various reasons. Authors can provide “updates on the progress of writing projects, plugging future in-store or media appearances, intervening in current political and cultural debates, passing judgement on the work of other writers (whether established or novice), and selectively endorsing, correcting or mediating reader discussions of their work (323). We will see Rowling engage with all of these.

Where official websites portrayed the ‘industrial’ public self, Twitter has become the medium for many celebrities to maintain a “public-private self”, the second level of online production of the public version of the private self (Marshall, “Presentational Self” 44-5). This public-private self is a version of the self that a celebrity appears to be especially on social networks. It is ascribed to the new notion of a public self that suggests a deeper and more honest look into the celebrity’s life. Additionally, there is a third self that Marshall identifies, which he calls the “transgressive-intimate self” (“Presentational Media” 45). This level belongs more to the representative media culture and entertainment industry reporting on celebrities because this self appears when celebrities’ (and other people’s) true nature is “exposed” (“Presentational Media” 45). Elcerror discusses this phenomenon of ‘exposing’ too but notes that “when an online identity is revealed as “inauthentic” through behavior that fails to conform to the online self-presentation, those who felt emotional connections to the initial persona can become outraged at the perceived betrayal” (“Online Social Media” 52). We will see the transgressive-intimate self of Rowling in this chapter.
3.1 Account

Every Twitter profile contains a profile picture and header image, which the individual can change freely. J.K. Rowling changes hers regularly, but her profile picture is always one of herself (see fig. 6). She also changes the header image frequently, but the images she picks here are more significant, as she has admitted that her headers are related to things she is writing (Rowling 11-05-2016, 9:19 a.m.).

Her biography directs people to her website in case they need contact details. The rest of her profile details her location (Scotland), a link to her website, the date she joined Twitter, and her birthday (see fig. 7). Twitter profiles also provide the number of people someone follows and the number of followers one has. This gives us more of an idea of how many people want to get updates from Rowling, something that one can merely guess at on her website as no page views are provided. As of May 2018, Rowling has more than fourteen million followers and follows nearly six hundred accounts herself, so it is practically impossible to analyse all of these connections. That is why this chapter will instead focus on her tweets itself, as these provide more context.

3.2 Promotion

One of the ways in which social media can be used is for promotion, of products, creations and, of course, people. Twitter
is highly suitable for this as it is easy to reach a lot of people using a small number of words. Rowling, for example, uses Twitter to promote a TV show based on her *Cormoran Strike* books:

@jk_rowling For those asking 🔄 RT: @HBOPR #CBStrike, based on the bestselling crime novels by @jk_rowling, debuts Friday, June 1 at 10PM on @Cinemax: https://itsh.bo/CBStrikeDebut

The status update begins with “@jk_rowling” – this is Rowling’s Twitter handle, which directs one to her account. “RT” stands for “retweet”, specifying that it includes someone else’s original tweet. The handle after the RT, in this case “@HBOPR” indicates the account of the original poster. The term “#CBStrike” is an example of a “hashtag”, a word that is searchable and is often used to mark trending topics. Then, the information appears. It is safe to say that this is a kind of self-promotion, as the tweet promotes a show that is based on Rowling’s own books. The tweet tells the reader that the television show based on Rowling’s novels will premiere in the US. By retweeting this announcement to her followers, currently more than 14.4 million, Rowling promotes her work and the things connected to her creative empire. By writing “For those asking”, Rowling builds a connection to her followers that have been asking or wondering about the air date, resulting in them feeling heard. This is an example of a relationship between the celebrity and the consumers, which supposedly has a positive influence on both parties. The consumers feel heard and have received an answer, and Rowling attracts more fans towards the series. Because of the positive observation, Rowling might consequently be perceived as authentically and genuinely connected to her audience. Ellcessor confirms this, saying that “social connections are of particular importance in facilitating perceptions of intimacy and authenticity” (“Celebrity Activism” 264). It should be pointed out, on the other hand, that it is also possible that there was no high demand for information, or that Rowling’s tweet was a planned promotional tweet, possibly even tweeted out by her team. The latter does not necessarily affect her perceived authenticity though, as long as the public remains ignorant of that.

One can also look at Rowling’s Twitter feed structurally, rather than socially (Ellcessor, “Online Social Media” 50). By frequently using social media for promotional ends, she incorporates many of her projects and causes within the same ‘stream’ (either by actually linking tweets together, or them just appearing on the same feed), which creates a structural pattern that facilitates movement between these texts (“Online Social Media” 56). This means
that people may like one of her projects or tweets and therefore decide to follow her or look at her account, resulting in them possibly finding other projects that were not directly promoted to them. If we apply this to Rowling, one may argue that people follow her Twitter account because they liked previous projects or enjoy her insights that she shares on Twitter, and through this, they discover, for example, Lumos, one of Rowling’s non-profit organisations, which she often retweets.

Through forming connections, whether those are structural, “textual, industrial or personal connections through the use of online social media, the [celebrity] can be used to shape or reinforce a star’s multimodal image, to promote creative labors” (Ellecessor, “Online Social Media” 48) and offer them a way to discover who and where their readers are and to communicate with them (Heynders 174). Twitter then seems to be a platform for the intersection between promotion and communication, since Rowling cannot promote something on twitter without receiving feedback, and promotion inherently means to communicate something to an audience.

3.3 Communication
Being an avid Twitter user, Rowling uses the platform not only for one-sided promotional purposes but also to communicate directly with her audience. The spontaneity of the platform is the main source of its appeal to celebrities and fans, according to Nick Muntean and Anne Helen Petersen, as celebrities use it to disclose a ‘genuine’ version of themselves that reinforces their persona (3). However, this spontaneity can also have adverse effects.

As mentioned in chapter one, a celebrity’s perceived authenticity is linked to observing or taking part in interactions with celebrities, provided they are positive. Naturally then, authenticity lessens when interactions are perceived negatively. Such thing occurred when the aforementioned casting of Johnny Depp as the titular villain of the Fantastic Beasts sequel, The Crimes of Grindelwald, was revealed. Many people were outraged (Delbyck) and one fan tweeted their concern to Rowling:
@hobbitlindsay So if I understand correctly the actor who played Crabbe, a minor character, was fired from Harry Potter for doing drugs. Yet Johnny Depp, who abused his wife, gets a major role in your movies? Correct me if I’m wrong @jk_rowling.

The fan did not receive a reply but tweeted a day later that J.K. Rowling had appeared to block her on Twitter. This resulted in more outrage, this time aimed at Rowling directly, when the fan’s tweet of concern and blocking claim garnered attention (Rearick). At this time Rowling had not addressed the casting issue on her website yet, so an action like this was the only form of communication with fans that occurred on this topic. While it is impossible to tally and identify all the backlash she got as a result of this, an assumption can be made here that her authenticity took a dent. One should wonder if those people that got angry found her authentic before, as it is not possible to know for sure. However, the backlash signifies disappointment and anger, which happens if a celebrity does something ‘out of character’ hence is perceived as behaving inauthentically. On December 7, 2017, J.K. Rowling published an opinion piece on her website concerning “Twitter blocking”. In the statement, she explains why she blocked one of her fans on Twitter, claiming that she has “one simple rule when I block people on Twitter, which I do very rarely. I block when my personal line has been crossed in terms of aggressive or insulting language” (“Twitter blocking”). She then goes on to say that “contrary to the fan in question’s assertion, they were not blocked because they asked a question about
Johnny Depp playing Grindelwald”, and that “The question about Grindelwald was not one of those tweets and I didn’t see it until the person in question began claiming that that was why they had been blocked” (“Twitter blocking”).

Hence, we should revisit the notion of authenticity and the value of Rowling’s brand. The fan seemed to have misunderstood which tweet led to Rowling blocking her, but her tweet ‘exposing’ Rowling (see fig. 8) managed to gather thousands of retweets and likes. As of May 2018, it has gathered nearly 60,000 retweets and 144,000 likes in total. This is even more significant because Rowling did not share the opinion piece on Twitter to her millions of followers, so it took several days until the statement was widely circulated when a popular fan account tweeted it (Shamsian). One can only wonder why Rowling did not feel the need to tweet out her explanation, as this might have suppressed any rumours more quickly. On the other hand, one could say that if she had tweeted about it, many of her millions of followers that were, perhaps, previously unaware of the issue would now be alarmed, and it would thus have a higher impact on her image. Nonetheless, this situation is a key example of the transgressive-intimate self (Marshall, “Presentational Media” 45), because Rowling seemingly was ‘exposed’, leading to some of her fans becoming angry at a “perceived betrayal” (Ellcessor, “Online Social Media” 52).

Unsurprisingly, communication between the celebrity and the audience can also turn out positively. The star and their audience can connect through “shared experiences of the blurring between production and consumption in a way that online social media allows” (“Online Social Media” 60), in addition to portraying a perceived authentic self-representation. This form of connection appears in the following interaction:

@jk_rowling Certainly not flawlessly, but I did it. Never wait in expectation of perfection or you’ll wait forever. Do the best you can with what you’ve got and be one of those who dared rather than those who merely dream. And thank you x RT: @AlexHodges @jk_rowling On tough days at work ill remind myself of the bandwidth it took to write the entire HP series, and that you did it flawlessly! Thank you 🏆🔥

Here, Rowling replies to a fan who has consumed her novels with encouraging words regarding the production of them. The barrier that would usually stand between the celebrity and fan is not very defined here, as the consumer expressed their gratitude and managed to receive a reply. Rowling’s reply also shows a sense of vulnerability, confessing that she did not write “flawlessly” but that her perseverance got her through. In other words, she shows her weaknesses or vulnerable side as well as her strength and does not back away from claiming
her achievement (writing the entire series), which Jasmina Illicic and Cynthia Webster have argued makes celebrities more “real”, thus more authentic (413).

We can see that J.K. Rowling has both positive and negative interactions on Twitter, with different outcomes regarding her brand authenticity. Whilst she has dealt with backlash, she has not necessarily been subject to violent (online) attacks. Her often candid and funny tweets (i.e. commenting on all of the acts in the Eurovision finale) have made her the most followed children’s author on Twitter (Wyatt) and have landed her in the top 200 most followed people globally.

3.4 Politics

So far, we have seen that Rowling does not shy away from giving her opinion. It is then perhaps no surprise that she is very politically active on Twitter. Her intellectual posture and capital appear very strongly, as will be proven by the many political and social statements. She seems to be “aware of the utility of social media regarding information exchange, debating and support purposes” (Heynders 172), for example, support of a political party or politician. When a Twitter user tweeted complaining that Rowling should stay out of politics because she is a grown woman writing about “a nerd who turns people into frogs” (@OMFGNN), she responded saying that “In – Free – Countries – Anyone – Can – Talk – About – Politics.” (@jk_rowling).

J.K. Rowling is one of the UK’s most famous, and most passionate left-wing voices. As was mentioned in chapter two, she has published an opinion piece about Brexit on her website, but she took her views to Twitter as well, being an outspoken opponent of Britain’s vote to leave the European Union. Shortly after the referendum results, Rowling replied to a Twitter user via retweet, so all of Rowling’s followers could see it:

@jk_rowling I don’t think I’ve ever wanted magic more. RT @jotiele do something.

In this tweet, she subtly references her connection to her fictional magical world in the Harry Potter series, while expressing a sadness and sense of helplessness. Here, one could argue that Rowling’s careful branding and managed postures briefly weakened, because this tweet showed a more emotional reaction than Rowling shows online otherwise. It was also tweeted immediately after the final results; therefore, it came across as a genuine reaction rather than a planned one. She does delicately reference to her authorship, but it mostly conveys that she is a UK citizen undergoing the same results as all other UK citizens, thus her relatability to her audience here is high. Subsequently, Rowling did not suddenly stop expressing her opinions regarding the issue. Several months after the results, she shared a thread about someone’s
concerns and experiences living in the UK as an EU citizen. A thread is a series of connected
tweets, written by one account, often informational or used to share a story. She tweeted:

@jk_rowling The pain & anxiety #Brexit is causing Brit/EU families & people who
make a massive contribution to this country needs to be heard. Thread 👇.

Looking at this tweet from a structural point of view, we can see that this topic is very important
to her as she used the hashtag “#Brexit”, making sure that the thread would reach people outside
of her follower circle. This urge to share and educate people using her Twitter account is also
seen when looking at the numerous political articles from various sources that she shares on
the platform.

However, Brexit is not the only political issue that Rowling has been vocal about. Many
of her tweets hint or even explicitly mention her support for the UK Labour party. Despite this,
she has strongly opposed the Labour party leader, Jeremy Corbyn. She did this so actively on
Twitter that numerous news articles were written about several of her political tweets
(Beauchamp; Saul). While these articles are based on tweets that Rowling tweeted on her own
accord and this, therefore, does not show the “transgressive-intimate self” (Marshall,
“Presentational Media” 45), presentational culture does play a role. She has to be aware of the
fact that anything she tweets can be newsworthy, and that these articles will represent her values
and identity, even if they might change later on.

Rowling and a number of other British liberals believed that Corbyn’s leftism would
be Labour’s final downfall, tweeting, for example:

@jk_rowling How is he going to help anyone when the electorate doesn’t want him as
PM? (Evidence: literally all polls) RT: @mitchmusic @jk_rowling @kazjohnson what
complete nonsense, Corbyn helps the working and middle classes out of the hell of
austerity thanks.

The author replied to user “@mitchmusic” by retweeting their tweet, which in turn was a reply
to a previous Rowling tweet and another user. The discussion went on, with Rowling
retweeting other people and providing arguments (Saul). It is noteworthy that her arguments
reference her personal working-class past:

@jk_rowling Ever gone hungry to feed your kid, Nick? I have. Last Labour government
helped many like me. RT: communick The left don’t hate your “decadence”, we hate
your loathing of working class people and working class politics […]
@jk_rowling Utterly deluded. I want a Labour govt, to help people trapped where I was once trapped. Corbyn helps only Tories. RT: @newkindpolitics @jk_rowling For too long, wealthy individuals have been able to splash the cash then expects payback. Corbyn threatens this. #JezWeCanAgain

These tweets show that she knows of and uses Twitter’s utility when it comes to debating. Some tweets may provide few facts, but Rowling seems to be aware of the power she has as a celebrity on the platform and thus debates via retweets, letting millions of followers know how she feels. Even though it is not possible to know if and how many people she may have convinced with her tweets, one should nonetheless acknowledge that Rowling’s reach and possible political influence is large and that she may steer public opinion one way or the other.

3.5 Authorship

Of course, we also need to focus on the ‘literary’ part of literary celebrity. Author Joanna Trollope has criticised writers like J.K. Rowling to “have this insatiable need and desire to be out there all the time, and that’s entirely driven by their ego” (Khomami), commenting on artists’ activities online. The growing trend of communicating with fans on social media, according to Trollope, is posing a threat to the literary industry, because “it’s so depressing to think that aspiring authors will look at famous writers with millions of followers and think that that is how you have to operate (…) it’s not, and actually, it’s the opposite” (Khomami). This statement raises several questions. First, we must question why communicating with fans would pose a threat to the literary industry. This statement is aimed at Rowling in particular, so does she harm the industry by being active online? As there is no hard evidence one can only speculate about this, but it can be argued that she actually attracts more people towards the industry by being as vocal as she is directly to fans. Not only does Rowling promote her own writing, she also promotes other novels she enjoys and discusses writing tips with fans. Trollope’s statement does seem to confirm Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, as discussed in chapter one. It appears that, according to her, there is a certain way to operate as an author, and that Rowling does the opposite. Trollope thus assumes there to be a certain set of rules in the literary field, that determines how an author should apparently behave. It also raises the question of who gets to decide these rules. Trollope argues that Rowling operates “the opposite” of how an author should operate but does not explain what the ‘correct’ way would be, nor why she is the one that gets to decide this. The question then is why one writer should have more say over this than another, and if there is even one way that a writer should behave.
This thesis, for example, does not focus on Rowling because she is ‘the chosen one’ nor will she give us all of the answers about how celebrity authors negotiate their way online. It merely focuses on Rowling because she is one of the most active literary celebrities that participate in the digital sphere, but it should be noted that Rowling’s posture online is merely one way to ‘be’ an author online, something critics like Trollope should remember.

Some of the ways that Rowling manages to keep her name in the news or trending on Twitter are by responding to fan theories or by revealing new information, often to do with the wizarding world. With a phenomenon like *Harry Potter*, one can assume that a lot of fans were left wanting more information about plot and characters, especially after the release of the final book (*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*) in 2007. Pieces of new information released outside of the main books are called extratextual revelations (Merriam-Webster). One of these revelations that Rowling revealed on Twitter was the birthday of a particular character in the *Harry Potter* series. She provided this information after she tweeted:

```
@jk_rowling Off to Newcastle for #SAMvSCO and if lots of you tweet #AsOne to support Scotland, you can have Sirius’s birthday! #RugbyWorldCup
```

Fans were rewarded for tweeting their support, thus Rowling bribed her fans to support her favourite team in exchange for *Harry Potter* information. Many of Rowling’s fans possibly tweeted support not necessarily because they were loyal to the Scottish team, but because they craved any new information or are perhaps loyal to Rowling as they look up to her. In this situation, Rowling asserted her role as a literary celebrity. With her being the author of the books, fans can only look in her direction if they long for ‘official’ extratextual revelations, and that in turn gives Rowling power.

Now, this tweet presumably will not heavily influence a reader’s experience of the novels. But Rowling has definitely used Twitter to put out more influential facts, such as the following, when she went on a small rant after fans were discussing the ambiguous character of Snape, from the *Harry Potter* series:

```
@jk_rowling Snape is all grey. You can’t make him a saint: he was vindictive & bullying. You can’t make him a devil: he died to save the wizarding world

@jk_rowling In honouring Snape, Harry hoped in his heart that he too would be forgiven. The deaths at the Battle of Hogwarts would haunt Harry forever.

@jk_rowling Harry chose to perpetuate the names of the two who had nobody in their families to do so. RT: @hogwartslife “he died to save the wizarding world” WHAT
```
ABOUT REMUS, BLACK, DUMBLEDORE, TONKS, FRED, MRS WEASLEY RON HERMIONE???

While not everyone might be in favour of these extratextual revelations, it is up to Rowling herself if and what to reveal, as she is the author. Twitter and the digital literary sphere in general, enable her to correct inaccuracies created by readers who wrongly interpret the series. On the other hand, one could argue that they limit a reader’s ability to imagine for themselves what happens before or after what the books describe, and to deliberate the meaning behind different characters.

3.6 Results
It is safe to say that Twitter can and does play a significant role in celebrity authors’ negotiation of their role in the digital age. “Live” media, such as Twitter, offers one the ability to control one’s own image (Ellcessor, “Online Social Media” 52), and this, in turn, offers unique opportunities to validate a person’s status and authenticity. We have seen that Rowling’s seeming accessibility and knowledge give her a power online that few if any authors have ever had: the chance to shape and control her creation, and maybe more importantly, her legacy. Rowling, therefore, deconstructs Bourdieu’s concept of position-taking, considering that she does not necessarily follow a similar path as her predecessors. This might, of course, be because social media is relatively new compared to traditional media (television, radio and print). Rowling’s presence on Twitter mixes the intellectual and emphatical, as well as employing humour. The latter might be to attract a bigger audience and grow her brand, but it also positively promotes her authenticity and relatedness (Illicic and Webster 418). In this chapter, we have found an intersection between promotion, interaction, politics and authorship. Most of Rowling’s activity on Twitter includes several of these at once. It is, therefore, harder to define specific postures, especially if one looks at individual tweets. More relevant to this thesis is the general posture that Rowling emits on Twitter, which is in line with Illicic and Webster’s findings suggesting that a celebrity is deemed most authentic when they possess autonomous behaviour and self-determination and relatedness (418). Rowling shows highly autonomous behaviour on Twitter, especially when it comes to her more political tweets. Her self-determination and relatedness come forward in her interactions with her followers. She may be emphatic at times but may also choose to engage in a debate, and this emits a sense of freedom.

However, it is necessary to be aware that new media forms, such as Twitter, encourage the idea that they are authentic and instantaneous. One needs to bear in mind that a celebrity can hire someone to manage their online self-presentation, whereas this is not possible offline
(e.g. in-person interviews). This, in turn, may affect authenticity and Marshall’s concept of the transgressive-intimate self could come into play. The ‘liveness’ of the medium can affect authenticity as well. Liveness is expressed through, for example, automatic updates of the Twitter feed and direct address through the use of “you” in tweets, encouraging viewers to respond instantly rather than question what they read (Ellcessor, “Online Social Media” 53). It could be argued that this encourages ignorance of the online media creation process, including ignorance of the construction of postures. The illusion of liveness on Twitter also seems crucial to the construction of a celebrity’s authenticity as the viewer assumes it to be uncontrolled and ongoing, such as when Rowling replies to or debates her followers. The (illusions of) liveness, accessibility and interaction are then perhaps the principal differences between Rowling’s website and her Twitter account.
Conclusion

When analysing J.K. Rowling’s official website and her Twitter account, it becomes clear that both of these online mediums show and provide different postures. These postures differ in the way they contribute to status, authorship and authenticity. J.K. Rowling’s website shows a distinctly formal posture. We can identify the “industrial model of the individual”, as David Marshall called the “public self” (“Presentational Media” 44). The main purpose of an official author website seems to be business-oriented, meant to present a carefully written biography and news updates, as well as to promote and sell their books. This remains the primary impression one gets visiting Rowling’s website as well, despite her wish “to bring [her] website back to what it used to be: something real and personal” (“Welcome to my new website!”). The opinion pieces that she writes and publishes on the website on top of the visual backgrounds on every page come closest to a sense of authenticity and the private-self of Rowling. It is noteworthy that she promotes her Twitter account on the homepage, as this signifies that the website and social media go hand in hand, but clearly serve different purposes. For a closer look and direct way of contacting Rowling, the visitor is directed to use social media, as this is where the ‘real’ author resides.

The J.K. Rowling brand is maintained on both ends of the digital literary sphere. However, whereas there is a clear distinction between public and private, or frontstage and backstage (Tolson 448) on the official website, this distinction is less noticeable on Twitter. Tweets can show a mix of public and private, such as promoting a new book or project while also showing emotions or relating a personal experience. It is also less obvious on Twitter who actually writes the tweets, and when. Because Rowling’s Twitter profile does not suggest that any tweets are not written by her, the audience assumes that she has personally written every tweet. This adds to the feeling of intimacy and liveness that the medium gives off and is therefore also different from Rowling’s official website. There is hardly an illusion of liveness and intimacy on the website, so it would be difficult to ‘expose’ Rowling for not having written every piece of text on there. Marshall’s concept of the “transgressive-intimate self” (“Presentational Media” 45) then cannot really come into play on the website like it does on social media. It seems then that social media, at least Twitter, offers more opportunity to appear authentic, but there is also a higher risk of hurting that authenticity. The liveness and direct access that make Twitter what it is create a fine line that the author should be careful around.
It has been shown that it is easy to go a step too far, whether intentional or not (e.g. when Rowling blocked a critical fan), and it is difficult to foresee the consequences.

We have seen that Rowling deconstructs Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of position-taking on Twitter, as she behaves and uses social media differently than other literary celebrities. Her status and subsequent following, in combination with the social medium, offers her the chance to shape her legacy and control her creation. She can do this, for example, by correcting people or releasing extratextual information regarding her books. She also defies the norm by being as politically outspoken as she is. Rowling’s use of Twitter then causes her to not necessarily fit in the literary field, which according to Bourdieu is an area of activity in which creators aim to create a certain cultural product (“Rules of Art” 167), and if we see Bourdieu’s concept of habitus as a set of rules or way a field functions, it appears that Rowling behaves differently, as we saw with Trollope’s commentary. In contrast, J.K. Rowling’s website exhibits a persona that is much more similar to other authors, so it could be said that that she does ‘fit in’ there and be easily recognized as an author. This also means that Rowling’s posture is less identifiable on Twitter than on her website. She shows high autonomous behaviour and relatedness on social media, which according to Jasmina Illicic and Cynthia Webster’s results of their study are requisites for being deemed authentic (418). She appears authorial on both fronts, but in different ways. A more polished and controlled version of the author is seen on the website, whereas Twitter displays a more intimate but highly knowledgeable and active author that is constantly connected, not only to her books, but also her audience. That difference in communication and intimacy causes the celebrity posture to shine through on Rowling’s website, and not so much on Twitter. This is in line with the hypothesis posed at the beginning of this thesis, where it was predicted that Rowling aims to leave the notion of celebrity in the background on social media, more so than on her website. It was also predicted that she conjures up different images of herself and changes her posture around the digital literary sphere.

Since there is still a significant gap in research on literary celebrities in the digital age, there are many subjects that require further research. Some studies mention authors like Zadie Smith, John Green and Margaret Atwood, but none that is explicitly focused on one in particular. There are many more authors online that could be worth looking into. John Green, for example, is highly active on Youtube.com, a video-sharing website, next to social media. This no doubt widens his fanbase and could lead to different results when it comes to communication and promotional use. It would also be interesting to look into aspects other than status, authorship and authenticity, such as celebrity advocacy or the influence on readers’
experiences reading the author’s books. Of course, the internet will keep changing, so
supposedly the digital literary sphere will as well. Eventually, an updated study should be done
in order to see how the sphere has changed and what effect that has had. It would also be
scholarly relevant to compare how literary celebrities negotiate their role offline versus online,
in order to make it easier for them to navigate either throughout their career.

Combining evidence from both the website and social media leads to the argument that
there is a significant difference between the way Rowling negotiates her role in the digital age
and that she seems to use both mediums for vastly different ends. It is impossible to say that
there is one way to be a celebrity author online, and it should be mentioned that J.K. Rowling
is not necessarily the be-all and end-all that an author should aspire to be. It is merely one way,
and it is up to (celebrity) authors themselves to decide how to negotiate their role and how they
want to appear online. We have learnt that social media offers celebrity authors the opportunity
to communicate with their fans without barriers, and to grow their audience and promote their
work in a way that an official author’s website cannot as it does not have a similar reach or
liveness. One could conclude that it is, therefore, worth it for literary celebrities to take on
different roles in different digital areas, in order to increase their status and authenticity, and
thus their brand.
Works Cited

@hobbitlindsay. “So if I understand correctly the actor who played Crabbe, a minor character, was fired from Harry Potter for doing drugs. Yet Johnny Depp, who abused his wife, gets a major role in your movies? Correct me if I’m wrong @jk_rowling.” Twitter, 28 Nov 2017, 5:16 p.m., https://twitter.com/hobbitlindsey/status/935542871247253504.

@jk_rowling. “All my headers relate to things I'm writing, but you shouldn't take them too literally (no flamingos in Strike 4).” Twitter, 11 May 2016, 9:19 a.m., https://twitter.com/jk_rowling/status/730296194824601600.

@jk_rowling. “For those asking 🧐 RT: @HBOPR #CBStrike, based on the bestselling crime novels by @jk_rowling, debuts Friday, June 1 at 10PM on @Cinemax: https://itsh.bo/CBStrikeDebut.” Twitter, 26 April 2018, 12:42 p.m., https://twitter.com/jk_rowling/status/989454590352543744.

@jk_rowling. “I don’t think I’ve ever wanted magic more. RT @jotiele do something” Twitter, 24 June 2016, 6:07 a.m., https://twitter.com/jk_rowling/status/746192965568077824.

@jk_rowling. “The pain & anxiety #Brexit is causing Brit/EU families & people who make a massive contribution to this country needs to be heard. Thread 🧐” Twitter, 6 Sept 2017, 8:02 a.m., https://twitter.com/jk_rowling/status/905310324827406336.

@jk_rowling. “How is he going to help anyone when the electorate doesn’t want him as PM? (Evidence: literally all polls) RT: @mitchmusic @jk_rowling @kazjohnson what complete nonsense, Corbyn helps the working and middle classes out of the hell of austerity thanks.” Twitter, 1 Sept 2016, 11:36 a.m., https://twitter.com/jk_rowling/status/771280476023717888.

@jk_rowling. “Ever gone hungry to feed your kid, Nick? I have. Last Labour government helped many like me. RT: communick The left don’t hate your “decadence”, we hate your loathing of working class people and working class politics […]” Twitter, 31 Aug 2016, 4:24 p.m., https://twitter.com/jk_rowling/status/770990701102366721.

@jk_rowling. “Utterly deluded. I want a Labour govt, to help people trapped where I was once trapped. Corbyn helps only Tories. RT: @newkindpolitics @jk_rowling For too
long, wealthy individuals have been able to splash their cash then expects payback.
Corbyn threatens this. #JezWeCanAgain” Twitter, 1 Sept 2016, 7:45 a.m.,
https://twitter.com/jk_rowling/status/771222307297636352.

@jk_rowling. “Off to Newcastle for #SAMvSCO and if lots of you tweet #AsOne to support
Scotland, you can have Sirius’s birthday! #RugbyWorldCup” Twitter, 10 Oct 2015,
1:29 p.m., https://twitter.com/jk_rowling/status/652808279995904000.

@jk_rowling. “Snape is all grey. You can’t make him a saint: he was vindictive & bullying.
You can’t make him a devil: he died to save the wizarding world” Twitter, 27 Nov
2015, 10:43 a.m., https://twitter.com/jk_rowling/status/670176159561326592.

@jk_rowling. “In honouring Snape, Harry hoped in his heart that he too would be forgiven.
The deaths at the Battle of Hogwarts would haunt Harry forever.” Twitter, 27 Nov
2015, 10:54 a.m., https://twitter.com/jk_rowling/status/670178875406729216.

@jk_rowling. “Harry chose to perpetuate the names of the two who had nobody in their
families to do so. RT: @hogwartslife “he died to save the wizarding world” WHAT
ABOUT REMUS, BLACK, DUMBLEDORE, TONKS, FRED, MRS WEASLY
RON HERMIONE???” Twitter, 27 Nov 2015, 5:56 p.m.,
https://twitter.com/jk_rowling/status/670285105953415168.

@jk_rowling. “In – Free – Countries – Anyone – Can – Talk – About – Politics. Try
sounding out the syllables aloud, or ask a fluent reader to help.” Twitter, 28 Jan 2017,
10:04 p.m., https://twitter.com/jk_rowling/status/825449564777934849.


Allsobrook, Marian. “Potter’s place in the literary canon”. BBC News. 18 June 2003,

Beauchamp, Zack. “J.K. Rowling is in a massive Twitter war about the future of progressive

Bourdieu, Pierre. “The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World


Ellcessor, Eleanor. “‘One Tweet to Make so Much Noise’: Connected Celebrity Activism in the Case of Marlee Matlin.” *New Media & Society*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2018, pp. 255–271.


