J. K. Rowling's Imaginary Realm of Faërie – a Collection of Myths and Folktales from Eastern and Western Cultures

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Abstract
Storytellers, especially fantasy writers, have always relied on the power of a willing reader's imagination that can surpass any word or image conveyed through literary texts. Our research is fuelled by the possibility to explore the memorable collection of creatures and the symbolic depth that they add to one of the most popular book series of modern times. The analysis is centred on three categories of magical animals that inhabit J. K. Rowling's wizarding world, as they have either been popular in different mythologies, illustrated the man-beast archetype or can be characterised as magical beings with dark counterparts.
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Introduction

Since its publication in 1997, the seven-book series has brought momentous change not only in the publishing or movie industries, but also in reading habits and children's literature itself. Aside from the staples of fairy tales that populate Rowling's wondrous world (wizards, witches, heroes or dark lords), the British writer has also incorporated several miraculous beasts and creatures from Greek and Roman mythology. Therefore, she has been frequently praised for adding depth to her novels in exploring the connotations of legendary creatures and other reinvented beasts which deeply characterise fantasy literature. We intend to explore the manner in which the British writer has managed to build her own version of an imaginary realm of Faërie to sustain the evocation/ creation of external and internal wonder through the inhabitants of the secondary world. Although some references to mythology or the thin pastiche of folklore and literary tradition might go unnoticed especially among children who have yet to learn about these associations, examining and reflecting on Rowling's multi-layered cast of non-human creatures

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should represent an inherent urge for readers and especially scholars, who are not themselves Harry Potter fans.

1. Mythical creatures

Totemism, with its ancient rituals and beliefs, seems to be the root of mythical creatures such as the centaurs, minotaur and satyrs that so often populate modern fantasy literature. Not only the *Harry Potter* novels, but also the Narnia books draw upon the man-beast archetype in a variety of forms by continuously reinventing the esoteric lost wisdom of the ancients and the representation of humankind's atavistic traits. In his seminal work of comparative mythology, Campbell also refers to "the great human problem" of sharing "the wilderness" with beings such as the sabretooth tiger or the mammoth, where "an unconscious identification took place" which "was finally rendered conscious in the half-human, half-animal figures of the mythological totem-ancestors" (Campbell, 1949: 336).

Among these man-beast representations, centaurs were the only ones positively appreciated in ancient Greek mythology and to whom human talents and virtues were attributed, as Bulfinch explains: "The ancients were too fond of a horse to consider the union of his nature with man's as forming a very degraded compound, and accordingly the Centaur is the only one of the fancied monsters of antiquity to which any good traits are assigned", including skills in hunting, medicine, prophecy or arts such as music (Bulfinch, 1934: 105). Rowling draws in her structural tradition of the school story upon this connotation of centaurs possessing the gift of prophecy when she fruitfully employs the centaur Firenze as the students' new Divination teacher. With his passion for education, Firenze also embodies the wisest and most well-read centaur, Chiron, who taught Achilles (among other Greek heroes such as Theseus) how to play the lyre. The British writer demonstrates through Firenze's explanations that she knows how to capitalise on this association between centaurs and prophesizing, as the mythical creature states that his role is to help students distinguish between "the self-flattering nonsense humans call fortune-telling" and "the wisdom of centaurs, which is impersonal and impartial" because "centaurs have unravelled the mysteries of these movements over centuries" (Rowling, 2003: 531). Although the names of Rowling's centaurs (Firenze, Magorian, Bane and Ronan) do not resemble the ones in Greek mythology (Chiron, Nessos, Pholus, Anhios, Agrios, Kyllaros, Hylaios, Orneus, Medon, Lykabas, Monyhos and Pyrakmos), their predilection

towards seclusion and violence is still illustrated in Bane's behaviour. The most propagated myth regarding the origin of the centaur is based on Zeus's creation of Nephele – the cloud which appeared in the shape of the goddess Hera – who tempted King Ixion and gave birth to these half-human creatures in Thessaly. It is also believed that centaurs were later raised by Nymphs in the forests of Thessaly, on Mount Pelion (Kernbach, 1989: 105).

Greek natural history, as well as Mesopotamian, Indian and Chinese mythologies lie at the heart of the following creature which appears in the first novel and is discussed by Firenze and Harry Potter. The slain unicorn (as well as the centaur) is encountered in the Forbidden Forest and its traditional associations with compassion and kindness are not forgotten, but reinforced by its affiliations with medicinal properties, as Firenze informs Harry:

It is a monstrous thing, to slay a unicorn […] Only one who has nothing to lose, and everything to gain, would commit such a crime. The blood of a unicorn will keep you alive, even if you are an inch from death, but at a terrible price. You have slain something pure and defenceless to save yourself, and you will have but a half-life, a cursed life, from the moment the blood touches your lips (Rowling, 1997: 188).

The killing of this gentle creature whose blood is drunk by Voldemort emphasises the unicorn's symbolism and also allows Rowling to set the narrative stage in illustrating the villain's cruel nature and heartless disregard for life. The first novel is furthermore enriched with another allusion to the Underworld of Greek mythology when Harry, Ron and Hermione discover that the Philosopher's Stone is guarded by "a monstrous dog, a dog that filled the whole space between ceiling and floor" with "three heads. Three pairs of rolling, mad eyes; three noses, twitching and quivering in their direction; three drooling mouths, saliva hanging in slippery ropes from yellowish fangs" (Rowling, 1997: 119). Although there are other examples of creatures throughout mythology with several-headed appearances such as the Hydra or the Chimaera, Cerberus is the one who is often depicted with just three. The mythical canine guard of Hades "is generally described as having three dogs' heads, a serpent for a tail, and on his back innumerable snakes' heads […] chained up in front of the gate of the Underworld" who "also succumbed to the charms of Orpheus" (Grimal, 1991: 91-92). Rowling's modern reinterpretation[2] greatly

[2] Son of Typhon and Echidna, his vigilance has been undermined twice (besides Orpheus's song, by Herakles's physical strength), while he has rarely been described as possessing

diminishes the threatening affiliation by naming the animal Fluffy but preserves the dog's weakness because the animal is soothed by music, thus allowing Harry, Ron and Hermione to walk past him.

Another mythical creature which is introduced in the first novel is the dragon, that will reappear in central roles throughout the series, especially in the fourth and seventh installments. With origins in folktales told in cultures across the globe (Mexican, Icelandic, British, Chinese), Shuker clarifies that dragons or dragon-like creatures appear in almost all cultures from "simple, serpentine forms to much more complex, specialised beasts" (Shuker, 1995: 9) such as the Quetzalcoatl from Aztec culture, the Basilisk of Iceland, the Wyvern from Great Britain or the dragon deities in China. Rowling uses this rich heritage, but also brings an inventive spin to the traditional dragon of literary fantasy in the first and fourth books, where her dragons are clearly identified by nationalities and, sometimes, even names: Norbert the Norwegian Ridgeback, Common Welsh Green, Hebridean Blacks (Rowling, 1997: 169-170), Hungarian Horntail, Swedish Short-Snout, Chinese Fireball (Rowling, 2000: 287). The British writer completes her list of nationalities with the dragons of the wizarding world in the companion volume, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (2001), by adding the Antipodean Opaleye, Peruvian Vipertooth, Romanian Longhorn and Ukrainian Ironbelly, all ten breeds testifying her resourcefulness and skill in adding different characteristics to each of them. Moreover, she implies that dragons are also common in Romania, as Ron Weasley's second-oldest brother, Charlie, is said to work with them in this country.

In the second novel, readers discover that the monstrous creature in the Chamber of Secrets is a basilisk, the "King of Serpents", while Harry Potter gains a real advantage in defeating the creature because Fawkes, the phoenix, comes to his aid. It seems that the terrifying basilisk originates in Roman mythology, as Pliny the Elder describes the legendary serpent as "not above twelve fingers-breadth long: a white spot like a starre it carrieth on the head, and setteth it out like a coronet or diademe: if he but hisse once, no other serpents dare come neere." (Pliny, *N.H.* viii. 32f. quoted in Alexander, 1963: 170). As the Roman naturalist describes the snake's poisonous and deadly nature, so do readers appreciate Rowling's similar portrayal of the basilisk's "venomous fangs" and "murderous stare" (Rowling, 1998: 215). The incorporation of this mythical creature is

one hundred heads or fifty (according to Hesiod). Cerberus also appears in the Scandinavian mythology as Gharmr (Kernbach, 1989: 105).

contrasted by the use of the phoenix, which is portrayed as a symbol of immortality and peace. With origins that date back to Egypt, gaining widespread recognition through Greek mythology, the firebird is known to Western culture as having a five-hundred-year life span and being able to rise from its ashes. Thus, the mythical creature, which appears in Tacitus's and Herodotus's reports, is associated with resurrection, as its tears also have healing powers, characteristics on which Rowling draws heavily in creating Fawkes, Dumbledore's trusted pet.

The classical, mythical imagery is respected in the novels, as Fawkes fits Herodotus's description of the bird's golden and red plumage. Some researchers claim that there are certain similarities between the Greek Phoenix and the Garuda bird in Vedic mythology, although the best correspondent can be found in Chinese mythology in the immortal Fenghuang – "an enchanted bird which lives atop the mountains, looking like a yellow bag, albeit displaying a burning red colour, six legs and four wings, with singing and dancing abilities. Nevertheless, the common feature of these three mythological representations is the phoenix's appearance as an enchanted bird" (Kernbach, 1989: 469-470). The literary symbolism of Rowling's use of the phoenix is enhanced by the loyalty that the magical bird shows for its master and, furthermore, feels in those who remain faithful to Dumbledore. The phoenix also serves as Dumbledore's "patronus" – an outward projection of his positive energy force – and the source for the twin wand cores shared by Harry and Voldemort, a quality which makes it difficult to duel each other. The mythical bird's song is also used in the final pages of the sixth novel, where an entire chapter entitled "The Phoenix Lament" marks the grief and sorrow felt by Harry Potter at Dumbledore's funeral.

The third novel allows Rowling the opportunity to introduce yet another mysterious creature – the hippogriff – the impossibility of its existence relying mostly on the animosity between horses and griffins described by the classical Latin writer Virgil rather than on their fantastical nature. While many of us may believe that the hippogriff is one of Rowling's inventions, the creature dates back to the first century BCE and is also mentioned in Descartes' *Meditations*, long before its appearance in the wizarding world. The French philosopher associates its "fictitious" nature and roots to our power of imagination by comparing it with the unicorn, more than 350 years before Rowling describes "the most bizarre creatures Harry had ever seen" with "the bodies, hind legs, and tails of horses, but the front legs, wings and heads of what seemed to be giant

eagles, with cruel, steel-coloured beaks and large, brilliantly orange eyes" (Rowling, 1999: 87).

2. Therianthropes

Besides the aforementioned mythical creatures which either embody the more complex situations of species mingling, that are sometimes narrated, or the ancient man-beast archetype, the figure of the therianthrope also reappears in modern fantasy literature. The therianthrope is a being able to transfigure from a human into a savage animal and vice versa, thus directly symbolising the fragile frontier between civilised hominids and wild beasts. Once more, the therianthropic transformations derive from folklore and fairy tales, where particularly the male character's changing into a creature like a frog is the most frequent pattern. While Tatar refers to this tendency as the "animal groom" motif and explains that it "may have been told by women to women in the context of covert reflections on maturity, marriage and sexuality" (Tatar, 1987: 177), Bettelheim describes it as the "animal husband" and addresses its symbolism in a similar manner by pointing to "a symbol of the girl's sexual anxieties" (Bettelheim, 1976: 297).

The most common portrayal of our human tendency to regress to the more primal characteristics at night, while retaining our civilised self during the day is found in werewolves (or lycanthropes) and the theme of transfiguration by fantasists. One of the greatest revelations in the third novel is Remus Lupin's hidden identity, whose name also suggests lycanthropy. By keeping his true identity a secret, Rowling demonstrates the typical view of werewolves as dangerous hunters, thus the general fear expressed at Hogwarts by the students' parents who "will not want a werewolf teaching their children" (Rowling, 1999: 309). It seems that particularly the folktales and fantasy literature of Europe and America have frequently been imbued with werewolves, a myth perpetuation based on a number of theories: blaming them for the exploits of serial killers that often mutilated people during night attacks, associating our evolution from a gathering primate which rapidly turned into a hominid focused on hunting (a skill that is still kept deep within our human unconscious instilling a thirst for murder), and using them to reflect our conflicted nature, the eternal dualism of humankind. The transformation is generally described as a consequence of a magical curse, but there are narratives such as Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

(1886) which rely on a science-fiction presentation of the werewolf archetype, as Jekyll drank a specially concocted formula in his laboratory in order to transform. Naturally, vampires fall into the same category as werewolves, their transformation emphasising the difference between our normal appearance during daylight and the bestial manifestation that is revealed at night. There is not much disclosed about vampires in Rowling's wizarding world, although the creature is mentioned in the first book. Their recurrence is spotted in the second and sixth installments (specifically in the presence of Sanguini), but there are no clues if the Christian religious symbols or the traditional legends concerning the methods used to harm or kill them apply to the fantastic universe as well.

Werewolves are not the only shapeshifters that symbolise the previously discussed man-beast archetype. In her depiction of Animagi (witches and wizards who train in order to transform at will into animals) and Metamorphmagi (magical people with an innate ability to take the full form of an animal), the British writer infers Ovid's epic *Metamorphoses*, that exposes how characters suffering from unrequited love or unrestrained erotic yearning metamorphose from one form to another. The animals that some of the most important characters in the novels transform into are not arbitrary but demonstrate once more Rowling's skilfulness in choosing each creature as a natural "beastly" manifestation of the characters' personas. Professor McGonagall's brisk and "witchy" manner is epitomised by her Animagus cat form, Sirius Black's Animagus dog form is deeply connected to his naming after the Sirius star situated in the *Canis major* constellation (popularly termed the *Dog Star*), Rita Skeeter's prowess to scoop for information and use it in a gruesome way serves her Animagus beetle form, while Peter Pettigrew's betraying and fleeing nature is reflected in his Animagus rat form. Insight into the characters is also provided with sense of humour when Rowling devises another shapeshifter in the form of Boggarts, which can change their form according to the person's worst fears and be deflated by using the Riddikulus charm (an obvious pun on the English adjective "ridiculous", as the charm works only if the wizard/witch visualises the Boggart from an amusing point of view).

3. Magical creatures and their "fell" counterparts

J. R. R. Tolkien envisaged a Middle-earth populated by a myriad of magical creatures, yet governed by a fascinating dual quality; in this sense, each magical creature had its dark correspondent, an element which Tolkien termed its "fell" counterpart. The most interesting example refers to the portrayal of orcs as descended from elves and transformed into the foul breed after being held captive by Melkor and tortured for several years. Identified by J. R. R. Tolkien (1964: 71) as the dark counterpart of dwarves in his ubiquitous portrayal of the duality of magical beings inhabiting Middle-earth, goblins represent the murky side of development, where greediness and lust for gold make them put their engineering skills to bad use. Rowling's portrayal of goblins follows their penchant for digging underground, while also preserving their fascination for gold. The author preserves the magical aura about gold which characterises some fairy tales and fantasy stories, including the Grimms' portrayal of Rumpelstiltskin, the magical dwarf capable of spinning straw into the precious metal. Nevertheless, her view of goblins as fell creatures is attenuated by allowing them to serve as bankers for the wizards' and witches' precious vaults successfully hidden under the London streets.

As fantasy worlds always serve as mirrors of the real world, reflecting the contemporary changes that are taking place, so does Rowling's depiction of goblins reflect our self-destructive manner: it has become a habit for us to build and empower international banks to wield the economics and facilitate the rise of conglomerate companies that ultimately manage to turn us against each other, rather than help us evolve. It is highly possible that Tolkien's darker version of goblins, relying heavily on advanced technology and tarnishing the mountains in their mining, symbolised an era dominated by world wars, global industry and the atom bomb, all of which ultimately led to human destruction. Although Rowling does not elaborate on languages as Tolkien did when he devised syllables and syntaxes with emphasis on the Elvish tongue, she does refer to the language used by goblins as "Gobbledegook". Moreover, she creates an equivalent to the English noun "pickaxe" in the form of "Bladvak" (Rowling, 2000: 387) and decides to add some characteristics in the final novel when the language is described as "a rough and unmelodious tongue, a string of rattling, guttural noises" (Rowling, 2007: 242).

Since dwarves (also seen in other forms such as hobbits or munchkins) do not exist in Harry Potter's wizarding world and elves are portrayed as enslaved people, hence their permanent status as house-elves, Rowling grants the merpeople and Trolls their own distinctive tongues. Once again, Hogwarts and its premises offer readers the presence of mermaids and mermen, as they live in the large, deep lake that first-year students must cross in order to reach the school. The writer even emphasises the protagonist's unawareness about this particular element of the surroundings of the castle, as a possible manifestation of Harry's familiarity with the place: "The lake, which Harry had always taken for granted as just another feature of the grounds, drew his eyes whenever he was near a classroom window, a great, iron-grey mass of chilly water, whose dark and icy depths were starting to seem as distant as the moon" (Rowling, 2000: 419).

The opportunity for Mermish to be described as "screechy noises that the merpeople made when they were above water" (Rowling, 2000: 438) coincides with the moment Rowling introduces Goblin language in the fourth installment. Even though Mermish and Troll are simply posited, with Mermish reappearing in the sixth and seventh novels, the British writer creates a leader for the merpeople, as Merchieftainess Murcus helps the jury designate a winner in the second task of the Triwizard Tournament. While these languages are not essential in plot development, Parseltongue becomes an important factor for Harry Potter's recurrent self-doubt. The boy's ability to speak Parseltongue (snake language) without even learning it beforehand augments the underlying and sinister link between him and Voldemort. Described as an ability "used in the worst kinds of Dark Art" and deeply connected to "the most famous Parselmouth" in the fictional world – Voldemort, snake language is finally associated with a "weird hissing noise" in the sixth novel (Rowling, 2005: 192) and a "horrible strangled" sound in the seventh installment (Rowling, 2007: 501).

Parseltongue also highlights the author's focus on illustrating ancestry in all forms, given that snake language appears as a very rare gift which Salazar Slytherin, one of the four founders of Hogwarts, cherishes in his selection of students. Voldemort's ability to speak Parseltongue back when he was merely Tom Riddle, a simple student enrolled at Hogwarts School, represents an obvious manifestation of him being the heir of Slytherin, the one who would continue Salazar's noble quest of purging the school of all Muggle-born students. Through Parseltongue, Rowling

manages to portray language as an innate ability while also raising important questions about the protagonist's "goodness" and his role as universal hero.

As we have previously mentioned, elven tongues, such as Tolkien's Finish-like language in Quenya and the related Sindarin, are not shaped by Rowling, who chooses to tackle the moral relationship of lesser creatures with humankind as one of her recurring themes. House-elves, thus, are portrayed as beings that are enslaved by humans and obliged to serve their masters until they are awarded new clothes – the method used to liberate them. In a fantasy world designed to please the young reader, Rowling dares to carefully navigate serious issues such as exploitation, pain inducing treatment, marginalisation, intolerance and limitation of fundamental rights. Among other species that are presented as uncomfortable obstacles for wizarding people, such as gnomes, doxys and pixies, house-elves receive continuous attention and enhance Rowling's encouragement of critical thinking. Readers are, thus, invited to appreciate one of the moral signposts in her magical world: the empathy for animals. The British writer attempts to direct her readers' sympathy towards enslaved elves through Hermione's elf liberation campaign. Activism for allowing elves to have a more fulfilling life and be treated as humans' equals is fully developed when Hermione creates the "Society for the Promotion of Elfish Welfare". Thus, Rowling chooses to hide beneath an unattractive short formula (S.P.E.W), the character's noble intentions, Hermione explaining her previous attempt to name the organisation "Stop the Outrageous Abuse of Our Fellow Magical Creatures and Campaign for a Change in Their Legal Status" (Rowling, 2000: 198).

Giants are also considered omnipresent creatures (beside dwarves) in fairy tales and fantasy, which reinforce "the child's favourable reflection upon himself and his unfavourable projection of childish qualities onto adults" (Indick, 2012: 11). From Bettelheim's point of view, children perceive giants as parents, as he underlines the reiteration of this theme for all cultures in one form or another. As he notes, "children everywhere fear and chafe under the power adults hold over them" (Bettelheim, 1976: 27-28), thus this ubiquitous symbolic representation of them in fantasy literature. Some of the most notable giants painted as lovable and kind creatures in Rowling's fictional universe are Madame Maxime (headmistress of Beauxbatons Academy of Magic) and Hagrid's brother, Grawp. Therefore, the author closely follows Jones's theory based on "the conception of giants, with their clumsy stupidity and their alteration of

kindliness and ogerish devouring of children […] a projection of various infantile thoughts about grownups, particularly the parents" (Jones, 1965: 100). The childish nature of giants is also illustrated by Tolkien, while in Greek mythology, they bear strong resemblance to the Titans:

> *Giants, therefore, are a supernatural race, older and only half human. They represent emotional factors of crude force, factors which have not emerged into the realm of human consciousness. Giants possess enormous strength and are renowned for their stupidity. They are easy to deceive and are a prey to their own affects, and therefore helpless for all their might... A similar state of affairs prevails now in the world at large, where giants – uncontrolled collective, emotional force – lord it over the earth. Society is unconsciously led by primitive archaic principles* (von Franz, 1970: 123-124).

Nevertheless, for Rowling they appear as larger magical beings with their own history and moral ambivalence traced in their support of Voldemort during the Dark Lord's first rise to power. As another great battle approaches, giants are portrayed once more as neutral otherworldly creatures that Dumbledore tries to persuade to fight alongside humans this time. The problem behind their shifting allegiance stems from the similar ill treatment that wizarding folk has applied not only to them, but also to elves, centaurs and goblins on countless occasions. Freedom becomes, once more, a valuable "weapon" for Voldemort to convince giants to join his cause and, in the end, be liberated. Because Hagrid himself is portrayed as a half-giant, a status that he greatly struggles to conceal, Rowling emphasises the human beings' intolerant and biased nature. Whether compared to an elf, a centaur, a goblin or a giant, a wizard will always be the superior race, while the other magical creatures' grotesque bodies and other irregular qualities will even lead to architectural representations such as *The Fountain of Magical Brethren* – the statue which portrays how the "different" creatures of the magical world are looking up admiringly at the wizard and witch.

Although Rowling does not build on orcs (seen in *Beowulf* as Cain's descendants, the fallen biblical figure), trolls and wargs, which are identified by Tolkien as "Fell creatures", she manages to populate her realm of Faërie (the homeland of her creatures) with several other creatures typical of fairy and folk tales. Therefore, the British author manages to offer us the wisdom of self-knowledge conveyed through every fantasy story in the "picture-language of the soul" that Campbell explains: "If ever there

was an art on which the whole community of mankind has worked – seasoned with the philosophy of the codger on the wharf and singing with the music of the spheres – it is this of the ageless tale. The folk tale is the primer of the picture-language of the soul" (quoted in Indick, 2012: 181). Campbell's perspective reiterates the fact that we do not have to be specialised or highly trained in order to grasp the magic of this wisdom. It suffices to see how children decipher it every time, because it is conveyed through the language of symbols understood by everyone, as they are humankind's primal mode of comprehension: "[…] all myths and all dreams have one thing in common, they are all «written» in the same language, *symbolic language*...the one universal language the human race has ever developed...a language one must understand if one is to understand the meaning of myths, fairy tales, and dreams" (Fromm, 1951: 7). Fromm's perspective meets Freud's observation (quoted in Indick, 2012: 26) about the incorporation in folklore of symbols which have universal validity, thus projecting the feature in the realm of Faërie and making it timeless as well. Even the smallest children perceive kings and queens as representations of parents, while princes and princesses reveal truths about oneself. Dark woods are symbols of the hidden parts of our soul, while fountains are generally associated with curative powers.

As the series progresses, so does Rowling's realm of magical creatures, the cast of her extraordinary animals relying on a rich variety of folkloric beliefs. The extent to which the British writer develops this cast of non-human creatures is exemplified in the publication of *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*. The book, which was published in 2001 as a companion volume to the fictional world of Harry Potter and also the inspiration for a film launched in 2016 bearing the exact name, introduces us to no less than eighty-one species of fantastic animals studied by people who specialise in *Magizoology*. As the origin and characteristics of these species cannot receive adequate treatment in the present research for reasons of space, an accurate enumeration will be useful, as it has the purpose to improve the readers' knowledge about the wonderful menagerie of both dangerous and benevolent creatures that populate Rowling's novels. Magical or originating from Japanese, English (namely Yorkshire and Western parts of the country) and European folklore, the assortment of the animal kingdom features in an alphabetical order the following creatures: Acromantulas, Billywigs, Blast-Ended Skrewts, Blood-Sucking Bugbears, Boomslangs, Bowtruckles, Chimaeras, Crumple-Horned Snorkacks, Crups, Demiguises, Dugbogs, Erumpents, Fairies, Fire crabs,

Flobberworms, Ghouls, Griffins, Grindylows, Hinkypunks, Kappas, Kelpies, Knarls, Kneazles, Leprechauns, Mokes, Manticores, Murtlaps, Nifflers, Nogtails, Plimpies, Porlocks, Puffskeins, Pygmy Puffs, Red Caps, Salamanders, Sphinxes, Veelas, Winged Horses (four breeds: Abraxan, Aethonan, Granian and Thestral) and Yetis. This inventory does not contain previously mentioned and analysed fantastic creatures such as trolls, unicorns, werewolves, pixies etc. Also, the list comprises only creatures that appear in the seven novels, a choice which has revealed an interesting fact when comparing the companion volume with the books. Four species of magical creatures, specifically Blast-Ended Skrewts, Boomslangs, Blood-Sucking Bugbears and Hinkypunks are not mentioned in the brief companion piece, although they appear in the first four novels, all of which were published before December 2001 – the publication date of *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*. This is probably due to the fact that the four species are not fantastic beasts, thus they cannot be categorised in the A-to-Z list inside the companion volume.

4. Conclusions

All those interested in the critical body of work on Rowling's popular novels should know that scholars have offered Marxist readings, psychoanalytical approaches, historical perspectives, postmodern theoretical frameworks and politics of gender, race, class, or other social categories of identity for examination. Critical lenses have also extended beyond the initial texts or aforementioned contexts, with scholars investigating the British writer's narrative from various viewpoints (philosophical, economic, religious, or pedagogical) and analysing issues of capitalism, commercialism or marketing, as well as reader response, educational value(s), translation, or magic as technology.

The three categories that we have developed in order to explore the fantastic beasts which populate Rowling's imaginary realm demonstrate that the presence of creatures such as centaurs, unicorns, monstrous dogs, dragons, giant serpents, phoenixes, hippogriffs, therianthropes, as well as the dual quality of other magical beings such as elves, dwarves or giants represent Rowling's fruitful incorporation of Greek, Roman, Indian, Chinese or Egyptian mythologies and folktales (some of which bear origins in Aztec culture, Iceland or Great Britain). In our attempt to explore one of the most popular book series in modern times from this point of view, we hope that the British writer's role serves as a clear reminder that "classic"

monsters, creatures that are a common part of folklore alongside the author's reinterpretation of other magical beings may coexist quite harmoniously in a magical place envisaged by a fantasist.

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