

# FANTASTIC BEASTS IN ANTIQUITY

*Looking for the monster,  
discovering the Human*

Edited by  
Sarah Béthume and  
Paolo Tomassini



FERVET OPVS

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# FANTASTIC BEASTS IN ANTIQUITY

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Collection FERVET OPVS

8

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## ■ UCLouvain

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## Table of Contents

<i>Les animaux fantastiques et où les chercher dans l'antiquité. Introduction</i> Sarah Béthume et Paolo Tomassini	1
---	---

### **FANTASTIC BEASTS IN TEXTS : NAMING, NARRATION, IMAGINATION**

<i>Where the Wild Things Are: Challenging the Monster in Homer and Hesiod</i> Camila A. Zanon	11
--	----

<i>« Celui-dont-on-ne-doit-pas-prononcer-le-nom » (“He-who-must-not-be-named”). Dire l’indicible en Grèce ancienne : analyse du phénomène du tabou linguistique à propos du nom des Euménides</i> Sarah Béthume	27
--	----

<i>Xénophon, Deleuze et le centaure. De l’union équestre aux devenirs des corps augmentés</i> Alexandre Blaineau	55
---	----

<i>World’s Imagery and an Imagined World: Fantastic Creatures in Vera historia by Lucian</i> Ilona Gorņeva	67
---	----

<i>Werewolves in the Greco-Roman world</i> Colin MacCormack	83
--	----

### **FANTASTIC BEASTS IN PICTURES : REPRESENTATION, TRANSFORMATION, INTERPRETATION**

<i>Designed to Impress: Griffins in Aegean Bronze Age Glyptic</i> Diana Wolf	103
---	-----

<i>Mistress of the fantastic: hybridity and monstrosity of the Πόρνια θηρῶν</i> Thea S. Wolff	123
--	-----

<i>Representations of the Sphinx on Engraved Gems: Preserver of Life or Bearer of Death?</i> Idit Sagiv	141
--	-----

<i>Jonah and the pistrix: figurative genesis of a sea monster</i> Cristina Cumbo	153
---	-----

**FANTASTIC BEASTS IN MEMORY :  
RECEPTION, ASSIMILATION, REELABORATION**

<i>Migration of Fantastic Creatures: The Stories of the Pygmaioi and Cranes</i> Kiwako Ogata	169
---	-----

<i>Mythical Sanctuaries of the Wizarding World: The Ancient Classical Concepts of “Animal Protection” in J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter Universe</i> Anna M. Mik	191
--	-----

<i>La réception des êtres fantastiques antiques au Moyen Âge. Autour du Minotaure, des (ono)centaures, hippopodes, satyres et faunes (et de quelques autres)</i> Jacqueline Leclercq-Marx	205
--	-----

<b>List of contributors</b>	221
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# Mythical Sanctuaries of the Wizarding World: The Ancient Classical Concepts of “Animal Protection” in J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter Universe<sup>1</sup>

Anna MIK

*University of Warsaw, Faculty of “Artes Liberales”*

## Résumé

Cet article entend explorer l’idée de collecter et de protéger des créatures mythiques en les réunissant dans des espaces isolés, dans le monde fictionnel de J.K. Rowling. Il s’agit d’analyser la mise en œuvre du motif tel qu’il est connu des sources anciennes et spécialement de la mythologie grecque, si importante dans l’univers de Rowling. Après avoir examiné ces “sanctuaires mythiques”, comme la Forêt Interdite et le Lac Noir du château de Poudlard, et les avoir comparés avec les lieux où résident les créatures mythiques connues dans la mythologie grecque, nous souhaitons montrer l’évolution du motif des sanctuaires mythiques pour les animaux fantastiques, ainsi que la manière dont ces « habitats » étaient présentés — tout autant dans le monde antique que dans l’univers des sorciers.

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<sup>1</sup> The research results presented in this paper have been achieved within the project *Our Mythical Childhood... The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children’s and Young Adults’ Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges* led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak at the Faculty of “Artes Liberales”, University of Warsaw, with funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme — ERC Consolidator Grant (Grant Agreement No 681202).



What are “Fantastic Beasts”? This expression, recently most often associated with J.K. Rowling’s book<sup>2</sup> — and now also movies — *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*,<sup>3</sup> can be related to all sorts of mythological and legendary creatures from various cultures and traditions. In some cases — as in Rowling’s bestiary — this notion might include real animals that no longer exist on our planet, like a dodo bird. Dodo — for Wizards carrying the name of Diricawl — according to the author did not extinct but developed the ability to vanish.<sup>4</sup> Following the author’s suggestion, it could be assumed that fantastic beasts surround us to this day and should be admired and protected — seemingly just like the ones inhabiting the Harry Potter universe.

If that would be the case, we should turn to creatures that soon — just like dodos — will vanish forever. According to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) list, one of the critically endangered species on earth is a Sumatran tiger,<sup>5</sup> perceived by locals as dangerous, even monstrous beast — in a similar way that Rowling’s “animals” are perceived by some Wizards and Witches. In order to protect it, severe punishments for poaching and constant supervision have been developed by animal activists and the Indonesian Government. That would include national parks,<sup>6</sup> two protected areas on Sumatra Island, a 110,000-acre conservation area, a rehabilitation centre, Tambling Wildlife Nature Conservation and governmental Batu Nanggar Sanctuary, where Sumatran tigers might feel relatively safe. Sumatra became a sanctuary, not only for tigers, but also rhinoceros, orangutans, and elephants — mythical animals of our world.

As L. Hardwick claims,<sup>7</sup> one way of studying reception is based on the view that Antiquity is not just an inspiration for many authors and artists, but also the way of thinking (or re-thinking) the reality that surrounds us. That would be, among others, the case of J.K. Rowling, who studied classics, as well as Roman philology. Both educational experiences find their presence in texts

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<sup>2</sup> Edition used in this paper: ROWLING (2001).

<sup>3</sup> YATES (2016).

<sup>4</sup> ROWLING (2001), p. 9-10.

<sup>5</sup> WWF SPECIES DIRECTORY (2019), online; as we read on the WWF website: “Sumatran tigers are the smallest surviving tiger subspecies [...]. The last of Indonesia’s tigers—as few as 400 today—are holding on for survival in the remaining patches of forests on the island of Sumatra. Accelerating deforestation and rampant poaching mean this noble creature could end up like its extinct Javan and Balinese relatives. [...] Human-tiger conflict is a serious problem in Sumatra. People have been killed or wounded, and livestock fall prey to tigers. Retaliatory action by villagers can result in the killing of tigers.” *Sumatran Tiger. Facts* (2019), online.

<sup>6</sup> Gunung Leuser National Park, Kerinci Sebral National Park.

<sup>7</sup> HARDWICK (2003), p. 5.

belonging to the Harry Potter world. This article aims to show how Antiquity and later literary traditions concerning concepts of mythical space, animality and, ultimately, monstrosity resonate with texts written or co-written by Rowling and what meaning do they bring into the contemporary world.

The main motif that will be analysed is one of a space inhabited by creatures that might have been inspired by Greek and Roman mythology. Space, according to W. Kostecka and M. Skowera, “is an important cultural context, and at the same time is culturally determined”<sup>8</sup> — hence numerous publications in the field of “place studies”.<sup>9</sup> Places “where the wild things are” carry special meaning: they are areas with fantastic quality, allowing magical creatures to survive in the hostile world. By comparing concepts of animal protection exposed in Rowling’s work and as they have been known since classical Antiquity, it will be presented how children’s culture in cooperation with Antiquity can reflect on the current situation of endangered animals.

In classical Antiquity, various animals served as pets, food, entertainment, but foremost they were “[...] indispensable medium of communication with the immortal gods”.<sup>10</sup> But as far as mythology goes, it must be stressed that “the assumption in many cultures that animals once possessed the earth plays no part in the Greek’s creation story”.<sup>11</sup> That, however, does not apply to monsters that appear quite early in Hesiod’s *Theogony*.<sup>12</sup> At first, according to S. Lonsdale, they were: “tucked out of sight in Tartarus along with the three-headed dog Kerberos”.<sup>13</sup> What is even more crucial is the reason they were imprisoned: “out of jealousy for their strength”.<sup>14</sup> This resonates with the general view of the ancient Greeks, as well as of contemporaries: “Fear and hostility are prominent feelings projected onto animals. Animals have the power to make men feel guilty”.<sup>15</sup>

According to S. Lonsdale, “the monsters originally can be seen as wild species”<sup>16</sup> that can and must be tamed. A similar notion applies to most Wizards and Witches of the Harry Potter world — however, not necessarily to

8 KOSTECKA and SKOWERA (2016), p. 9.

9 SOMERVILLE *et al.* (2009), BROECKMANN and NADARAJAN (2008).

10 LONSDALE (1979), p. 155.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 155.

12 Hes., *Theog.* 142-143 (Cyclops); 295-296 (Echidna), etc.

13 LONSDALE (1979), p. 155-156.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 156.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 153.

16 « Their banishment is an attempt to free the civilized upper world from unruly influences. Once Zeus is made aware of their indispensable powers, the harnesses their energies for the Titanomachy; he domesticates them, in effect ». LONSDALE (1979), p. 156.



J.K. Rowling. The need to name them either “being” or “beast”, which is followed by rigorous categorization of magical creatures,<sup>17</sup> proves that “imperfect understanding is often more dangerous than ignorance”<sup>18</sup> and both Muggles and Wizards made some irreversible decisions which have resulted in the suffering and death of many creatures. And just like Muggles, who created real-life sanctuaries, Wizards came up with an idea of creating safe habitats:

Perhaps the most important step in the concealment of magical creatures is the creation of safe habitats. Muggle-Repelling Charms prevent trespassers into the forests where centaurs and unicorns live, and on the lakes and rivers set aside for the use of merpeople.<sup>19</sup>

Such safe habitats’ can be found in the surroundings of the School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. As we can read on “Pottermore”, an internet platform gathering all news by Rowling and Warner Bros., “the grounds of Hogwarts function partly as a nature reserve for magical creatures which have difficulty existing in Muggle-inhabited areas”.<sup>20</sup> There are several specific locations that have been inhabited by the fantastic beasts. First to be analysed is:

## 1. Dark and Safe Undergrounds

Quite often, the Hades (location) serves as the key to interpretation of Hogwarts’ undergrounds.<sup>21</sup> The Chamber of Secrets seems to be the obvious choice for such a metaphor — the realm of the Dark Lord kidnapping the young girl sends us straight to the myth of Persephone. Another possible location would be undergrounds from the first part of the series, where Harry, Ron and Hermione have to pass a three-headed dog and use the music to put him to sleep.<sup>22</sup> However, Hades can also be found in spaces other than undergrounds. As we read on “Pottermore”, Forbidden Forest is: “A large, dark forest on the grounds of Hogwarts where many weird, wonderful and highly dangerous creatures live”.<sup>23</sup> That would be, among many others, “Acromantula, hippogriffs, unicorns, thestrals, werewolves and a rogue Ford Anglia”<sup>24</sup> — an enchanted car

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17 ROWLING (2001), p. 10-13.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 18-19.

20 *The Great Lake* on POTTERMORE (2019), online.

21 BLACKFORD (2012), p. 181-198; GROVES (2017), p. 35.

22 GROVES (2017), p. 36.

23 *The Forbidden Forest* on POTTERMORE (2019), online.

24 *Ibid.*

that has rebelled and escaped from its owner. It is forbidden for students to visit the forest, as it is dutifully reminded each year by the headmaster of Hogwarts Albus Dumbledore.<sup>25</sup> According to our knowledge, no one hunts in the woods — at least: no humans.<sup>26</sup>

This dangerous and mysterious place might be interpreted in many ways.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, the Forbidden Forest is a dark, maybe even obscure, but still safe space for those creatures, who were excluded from the wizarding society. Space that is only hostile to humans — but also absolutely friendly to all misunderstood beasts — like, for example, centaurs.

In the first book, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, along with the main character, we enter the Forbidden Forest for the first time. There Harry meets Firenze,<sup>28</sup> one of the few “friendly” centaurs living in the woods, inspired not only by the classical mythology but also allegedly by Dante’s *Divine Comedy* and Florence, the city Dante was connected to. Just like in the poem, we meet a guide of the main character accompanying him during his journey through “hell”: Firenze tells Harry that everyone is lying to him and explains what is really going on in Hogwarts. He also reveals that the creature that Harry just saw, that has been feeding on the blood of innocent unicorns, is actually Lord Voldemort. For Harry, just as for the poet in *Divine Comedy*, it is a turning point in the story.

The link to the famous poem of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, inspired by Virgil’s *Aeneid* and involving the Mantuan poet himself as a guide for Dante, might also sug-

25 “First years should note that the forest on the grounds is forbidden to all pupils”, cf. ROWLING (1997), p. 94.

26 *What the Forbidden Forest reveals about Harry Potter characters* on POTTERMORE (2019), online. For each character in the series, the Forbidden Forest played a different role: “For Hagrid, Keeper of Keys and Grounds, the Forbidden Forest was practically his back garden”; “Harry’s experiences in the Forbidden Forest were mostly chaotic and they often had some connection to Voldemort, as he learned more about his destiny and the people around him”; “The Forbidden Forest was often dark and frightening but in the end, it was not the place in which Voldemort killed Harry. It was the place where Harry finally understood, the place where he saw his loved ones, and the place where he came back”.

27 *Behind the Scenes. The Forbidden Forest* on POTTERMORE (2019), online: “Whether it is called the dark forest or the Forbidden Forest, Stuart Craig considers the forest in the Harry Potter films a character in itself. For *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, the first forest scenes were filmed on location in Black Park in Buckinghamshire, England”. A. Petrina, for example, associates it with the Arthurian tradition. She writes: “Forbidden Forest, whose name sounds as premonitory as Syege Perelous, or the Waste Forest surrounding the Grail Castle, or even T. H. White’s Forest Sauvage”, cf. PETRINA (2006), p. 105.

28 “Without the ability to approach centaurs and learn more about them, it is impossible for students to understand or feel comfortable around creatures portrayed as dangerous, wild animals”, cf. GROSH, (2015), p. 93.



gest the connection between the Forbidden Forest and the mythological underworld ruled by Hades. It was located at the ends of the earth, on the far shore of the earth-encircling Okeanos, beyond the gates of the sun and the land of dreams.<sup>29</sup>

The Dark Realm of the classical mythology might be the Forbidden Forest of the Harry Potter world. Both spaces are associated with death and danger, although they are not necessarily evil or cursed. They simply are not homes for living men. Both are also inhabited and guarded by mythical creatures, which do not belong to the so-called civilized world. The solid connection between these two locations strengthens the presence of the dark figures: Hades in the Underworld and Voldemort in the Forbidden Forest, who at this point is on the verge of death. As for the former, the underworld is his rightful place, whereas the latter is an intruder. Both figures awe anyone who encounters them. Ancient people also feared to say the name of Hades, just like “Voldemort” — You-Know-Who — is a forbidden word.<sup>30</sup>

It appears grotesque to imagine the Hades as the mythical zoo full of peculiar animals. First and foremost, zoos should be entertaining, while here we are dealing with quite the opposite case. The same goes with the Forbidden Forest, which is supposed to serve as a sanctuary for the endangered species, and yet — many times is invaded by unwanted guests. It is also a place where everything and everyone who is not accepted in the wizarding community — magical car, talking spider, half-giant (Hagrid’s brother) — are gathered, not necessarily to live a happy life, but to hide from the hostile environment, and survive. However, the question remains: what does the adjective “forbidden” mean? Does it forbid beasts to harm humans? Or maybe, on the contrary — does it stop humans from harming beasts?

B. Groves claims that there is more than one ‘Hades’ in the Harry Potter books. She suggests that one of them could be even the Great Lake, as Hermione, sort of kidnapped to the underwater kingdom, could be yet another Persephone.<sup>31</sup> Following the researcher instinct, let us move on to the next magical sanctuary located nearby Hogwarts.

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29 Hom., *Od.* 10.487 s.

30 On the “forbidden words” and especially the taboos around the name of the Greek Erinyes, see the paper of S. Béthume in this volume.

31 GROVES (2017), p. 37.

## 2. The Great Okeanos

On Pottermore, we read: “The lake is full of creatures that would make a Muggle naturalist swoon with delight — if terror did not seize them first”.<sup>32</sup> The Great Lake is not only the living space for all the water creatures. In the fourth book of J.K. Rowling’s series, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, it becomes the underwater arena of the second competition of the Triwizard Tournament, a dangerous school contest resembling the Olympic games. Contestants have to find a way to spend one hour underwater, in order to save someone important for them. Harry, following the house-elf Dobby’s advice, eats a mysterious plant called Gillywig, which evokes the growth of gills on his neck and fins on his hands and feet. Thanks to this, the young wizard is able to reach the bottom of the lake and complete the task. There, he sees the underwater kingdom, ruled and inhabited by “merpeople” — creatures resembling mythical mermaids.<sup>33</sup>

Even though the Great Lake is mostly associated with the Scottish mysterious waters with legendary creatures living in there, some traces of Classical Antiquity can still be found in its depths. Firstly, it might be claimed that the magical waters of Hogwarts can be related to the mythical kingdom of Poseidon. As god of the [Mediterranean] sea, he ruled all sea creatures,<sup>34</sup> “highest of the gods, lord of the sea, Poseidon of the golden trident, earth-shaker in the swelling brine, around thee the finny monsters (θῆρες) in a ring swim and dance [...]”.<sup>35</sup> Similar depictions of the male sea-like humanoid creatures we can find in the Grate Lake, surrounded by various Fantastic Beasts.

The Great Lake and the Mediterranean Sea might be only vaguely comparable, but there are other motifs that connect the two spaces. In the underwater kingdom of Poseidon, Theseus had to prove that he was his son, after Minos had thrown a ring into the water and challenged him to find it. The test of proving one’s champion status also applies to Harry Potter, who has to bring back what is the most important for him — his best friend Ron. The boy who lived, as it was stated before, had to swallow the plant that allowed him to be underwater for an hour. This motif refers to the myth of Glaukos, who just like Harry,

32 “There are Grindylows (vicious little water demons), merpeople (of a hardy Scottish strain) and a giant squid, which is semi-domesticated and permits students to tickle its tentacles on sunny days, when it basks in the shallows”, cf. *The Great Lake on POTTERMORE* (2019), online.

33 J.K. Rowling herself says that the Great Lake game stage is her favourite one. We read on Pottermore: “I find it satisfyingly creepy; I like the diversity of the methods employed by the competitors to breathe underwater, and I enjoyed plumbing the depths of a part of the grounds that had never been seen before”, cf. *The Great Lake on POTTERMORE* (2019), online.

34 Hom., *Il.* 14.156, 15.187 s.; Hes., *Theog.* 456.

35 Ael., *NA* 12.45 (translation by A.F. Schofield in the *Loeb Classical Library* collection).



had to eat a strange herb to get underwater. The connection between these two stories gets even stronger, when we stress that the plant eaten by Potter can be found in the book *Magical Mediterranean Water-Plant and Their Properties*, read by Neville in Rowling's book.<sup>36</sup>

Merpeople and Grindylows, as well as the giant squid of Rowling's creation, have a tendency to pull students underwater when they come too close to the surface — just like numerous water nymphs and monsters. Both mythical and magical characters meet many obstacles on their way to explore wonders of the dangerous waters; this proves that the underwater kingdom is an exclusive space in which only those who really "fit" there might feel safe. Humans, Muggles or Wizards, do not belong there, and they are to be considered the dangerous intruders of the water sanctuaries. The phenomenon of the animal protection is even more visible if we take into account the description of merpeople in Rowling's bestiary, which states that those creatures, just like centaurs, were excluded from the wizarding society as not compatible with the standards of the civilized world.<sup>37</sup> Just like the Forbidden Forest, the Great Lake is dangerous and hostile to humans — but a perfect world for all the creatures that live in it. This concept contradicts with the one on which various oceanariums are built upon. Magical water beasts are not supposed to be seen — just like in Antiquity — as their kingdom is independent and separated from the human's world.

### 3. Cultural Cages

Antiquity certainly was not the only inspiration that came to Rowling's mind when she was creating magical sanctuaries for mythical beasts. The concept of animal protection includes the short book: *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, that Rowling published under the name of a fictional character from the Harry Potter universe: magizoologist Newt Scamander. The form of the book — entries about Fantastic Beasts in alphabetic order, with illustrations and a short introduction — refers to the tradition of medieval bestiaries. Not only that, Scamander himself relates to the bestiary tradition:

Astonishing though it may seem to many Wizards, Muggles have not always been ignorant of the magical and monstrous creatures that we have worked so long and hard to hide. A glance through Muggle art

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<sup>36</sup> ROWLING, (2000), p. 195.

<sup>37</sup> ROWLING (2001), p. 28-29. On the subject see also the contribution of C. MacCormack in this volume, dedicated to werewolves in the Greek and Roman World.

and literature of the Middle Ages reveals that many of the creatures they now believe to be imaginary were then known to be real. The dragon, the griffin, the unicorn, the phoenix, the centaur — these and more are represented in Muggle works of that period, though usually with almost comical inexactitude.<sup>38</sup>

There are multiple examples of a similar strategy of presenting animals to the wide range of recipients.

In the introduction to his *21<sup>st</sup> Century Bestiary*, C. Henderson gives another ‘proof’ for correlation of fantastic beasts and real-life animals:

I woke with the thought that many real animals are a stranger than imaginary ones, and it is our knowledge and understanding that are too cramped and fragmentary to accommodate them: we have *barely imagined* them. And in time that we are now learning to call the Anthropocene, a time of extinctions and transformations as momentous as any in the history of life, this needs attention. I should, said this niggling thought, look more deeply into unfamiliar ways of being in the world of which I had only an inkling. And I should map those explorations in a Book of Barely Imagined Beings.<sup>39</sup>

Bestiary — for both Rowling and Henderson — is a place of the gathering. Space where fantastic, unreal, barely imagined beasts meet with completely ordinary creatures for the ‘real’ world. Unlike in medieval times, where bestiary animals served as moral guidelines,<sup>40</sup> in modern bestiary there is a tendency to pull through the environmental postulates and to present fantastic creatures as something worth preserving. And even though those concepts seem so different from the ‘original’ ones, Henderson points to the strong connection to the Antiquity. Analysing Borges work, Henderson introduced the neologism “*aletheiagoria*” (“ἀλήθεια” is Greek for ‘truth’ or ‘revealing’), that in his thinking alludes to “phantasmagoria”. He writes:

It suggests (to me at least) flickering ‘real’ images of a greater reality.  
I have tried to look at a few ways of being from different angles and,

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38 ROWLING (2001), p. 14. On the medieval bestiaries and the Antiquity’s legacy, see the paper of LECLERCQ-MARX in this volume.

39 HENDERSON (2013), p. 10.

40 “[...] for the medieval mind every creature was a manifestation of a religious or moral lesson”, cf. HENDERSON (2013), p. xviii. Also, LECLERCQ-MARX in this volume, who shows that, in the Middle Ages, the figuration of mythic creatures symbolically represents the devil.

through ‘a wealth of unexpected juxtapositions’, explore both how they are like and unlike humans (or how we imagine ourselves to be) and also how their differences from and similarities to us cast light on human capabilities and human concerns.<sup>41</sup>

The act of gathering all the mysterious creatures in order to describe and classify them, makes one think that this might be an attempt to control the uncontrollable and incomprehensible beasts to — in a way — rule them. Getting to know their habits and main traits, gives a Wizard a certain power over them — even if the one claims he or she is a friend of the representatives of the magical fauna. However, there are some postulates, which slightly distances the hierarchical vision of the world of magical fauna.

he concept of the magical bestiary was elaborated in the film version of *Fantastic Beast and Where to Find Them*.<sup>42</sup> Here, we witness the story of Newt Scamander before he published his work. The young Wizard travels to New York with a suitcase full of magical creatures in order to release some of them in their natural habitat. The suitcase is, of course, enchanted, and it contains a whole sanctuary for all sorts of beasts, with varied environments, weather zones, plants, etc.

Henderson would probably recognize in this movie a simple cultural mechanism based on the historical facts concerning bestiaries and cabinets of curiosities, as he writes:

Methods of representation may change but a fascination with other modes of being remains. The cabinets of curiosities of the sixteenth centuries, for example, are in obvious respects quite different from the bestiaries of the medieval period. Bringing together actual specimens and fragments of the exotic animals, plants and rocks, they helped pave the way for more systematic study of the natural world in the eighteenth century when the taxonomic system that we still use today came into being. But, like the bestiaries, these cabinets still had the power to enchant, as their German name, *Wunderkammern* (‘cabinets of wonders’), attest.<sup>43</sup>

Just like European travellers collected wonders from all over the world in order to keep them in private collections, so does Scamander. However, the idea behind it, explored by the director of the movie David Yates and

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41 HENDERSON (2013), p. 15.

42 YATES (2016), movie.

43 HENDERSON (2013), p. 13.



Rowling — as a screenwriter, is quite different: collecting magical animals serves as a way to protect them, and — if possible — to release them, which clearly corresponds to the idea of contemporary sanctuaries — not zoos! — for wild animals. The reason behind it might be actually still anthropocentric. If we go back to the book, we would find out that Scamander is determined to save the Fantastic Beasts, “to ensure that future generations of Witches and Wizards enjoy their strange beauty and powers as we have been privileged to do”<sup>44</sup> — and not for the well-being of magical creatures. Nevertheless, Scamander still represents a pro-ecological view of the not-so-magical world and reflects a contemporary thought of animal protection: in both book and its adaptation.

#### 4. Conclusions

“The tendency to banish monsters [...] to the underworld — imprison them, so to speak, in the lower regions of man’s mind — indicates both a fascination and an avoidance of the frightening and unknown”, writes S. Lonsdale.<sup>45</sup> A monster figure does not necessarily have to be an animal: it can be a woman, a child, LGBTQ people, the ones with disabilities, people of colour, so almost everyone who, in one way or another, is marginalized in a particular society.<sup>46</sup>

As in the Harry Potter universe, in ancient Greece — according to Lonsdale —, “man’s relationship with animals [...] is neither simply one of superiority nor submission”.<sup>47</sup> As Grosh points out, Rowling seems to support this view, as she “clearly critiques the wizarding world’s hierarchy, which places Witches and Wizards in a superior position above other magical creatures”.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, in Antiquity “the relative lack of animals in the creation story is in keeping with the Greek anthropocentric world-view”<sup>49</sup> — and so this is in Harry Potter. Grosh writes that “Wizards have achieved a position of complete superiority over other magical creatures”.<sup>50</sup>

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44 ROWLING (2001), p. 21.

45 LONSDALE (1979), p. 157.

46 This also corresponds to C. Grosh’s claim, that “J.K. Rowling has also included social commentary about the hierarchal foundations of society” (GROSH [2016], p. 89). All these concepts developed by Rowling are not only the ones about the isolation of dangerous beasts, but also about protecting them from the uneducated and cruel Witches and Wizards. Classical thought might only support this thesis, as it is most certainly not the only way of interpretation of Rowling’s work.

47 LONSDALE (1979), p. 155.

48 GROSH (2015), p. 89.

49 LONSDALE (1979), p. 156.

50 GROSH (2015), p. 90.



Spaces where Rowling placed various mythical beasts are similar to ones appearing in Greek mythology. She connects the past with the present by commenting and, at least partly, supporting ancient Greek's views on mythical beasts. At the same time, she comments on the current situation of animals and how should the human-animal relationship look like. Although her vision seems to be the most popular, there are more cases of such an approach in the works of children's and young adult's literature, to mention Brandon Mull's *Fablehaven* or Lucy Coats's *Beasts of Olympus*: in both books, mythical creatures are kept in isolation, even if they are not a threat to humans. However, some of Rowling's ideas do not correspond to these views at all: for example, from the perspective of animal studies, taking dragons used in the first Triwizard Tournament task from the Sanctuary, does not seem to be pro-ecological. Especially whilst those dragons are females hatching the eggs, that have been destroyed during the competition. This issue also covers the case of animal products, like fangs, feathers, etc. used by Wizards to create a wand or prepare a potion. Rowling does not comment on that, as she does not seem to see the problem.

Nevertheless, the analysed spaces presented in both mythology and the Harry Potter series resemble those created by various pro-animal organizations: just like the ones on Sumatra. It might be claimed that Rowling's views on animals, or at least some of them, based on Classical Antiquity's tradition, might complete the postulate of Newt Scamander, which is: "to think that generations of young Witches and Wizards have grown to a fuller knowledge and understanding of the Fantastic Beasts",<sup>51</sup> as they are "currently surrounded by millions of the most vicious creatures on the planet. Humans".<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> ROWLING (2001), p. 33.

<sup>52</sup> ROWLING (2016), p. 113-114.

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