

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA
CENTRO DE COMUNICAÇÃO E EXPRESSÃO
DEPARTAMENTO DE LÍNGUAS E LITERATURA ESTRANGEIRAS

Bruna Cardozo de Campos

A Comparative Analysis of *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* and its Film
Adaptation

Florianópolis

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Trabalho Conclusão do Curso de Graduação em
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Menezes Mousinho

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“Draco Dormiens Nunquam Titillandus” – J.K. Rowling.

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Abstract

Ever since the early history of cinema, literature has been used as a source of inspiration for films. Motivated by this, research has been conducted in an attempt to study the adaptations from books to movies. This research analyzes the adaptation of a bestiary, entitled *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, to the cinema. *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, which is written by J.K. Rowling, is a spin-off book from the *Harry Potter* book series, written by the same author. The adaptation of this book to the cinema holds a particular characteristic. Since it is a catalog of magic creatures, and a narrative script had to be developed specifically for the purpose of making the film, this study aims to find how the creatures of the film were depicted from the bestiary to the screen. To study this adaptation, selected literature on cinematographic adaptations will be analyzed. This includes books such as *A Theory of Adaptation*, by Linda Hutcheon, *Adaptation, and Cinema as a Digest*, by André Bazin, *Adaptation and its Discontents* by Thomas Leitch, amongst others. This research will therefore analyze such selected literature considering adapted elements between the bestiary and the film, such as audiovisual depiction of creatures described in the book, in an attempt to find how two specific creatures were depicted in the movie.

Keywords: Fantastic Beasts, Film Adaptation, Adaptation Studies, J.K. Rowling

Resumo

Desde o início da história do cinema, a literatura tem sido usada como fonte de inspiração para filmes. Motivado por isso, pesquisas tem sido conduzidas na tentativa de estudar as adaptações de livros para filmes. Este estudo analisa a adaptação cinematográfica de um bestiário, intitulado *Animais Fantásticos e Onde Habitam*. *Animais Fantásticos e Onde Habitam* é um bestiário, derivado da série *Harry Potter*, ambos escritos por J.K. Rowling. A adaptação deste livro ao cinema possui uma característica particular. Uma vez que o bestiário é apenas um catálogo de criaturas mágicas e, um roteiro precisou ser desenvolvido especificamente com o propósito de tornar o filme possível, este estudo tem como objetivo descobrir como as criaturas deste filme foram retratadas do bestiário para a tela. Para estudar esta adaptação, será feita a análise de literatura selecionada sobre adaptações cinematográficas. Isso inclui livros como *A Teoria da Adaptação*, de Linda Hutcheon, *Adaptation, and Cinema as a Digest*, de André Bazin, *Adaptation and its Discontents* de Thomas Leitch, entre outros. Esta pesquisa, portanto, analisará tal literatura, considerando elementos adaptados entre o bestiário e o filme, como por exemplo, a representação audiovisual das criaturas descritas no livro, na tentativa de descobrir como duas criaturas específicas foram retratadas no filme.

Palavras-chave: Animais Fantásticos, Adaptação Cinematográfica, Estudos de Adaptação, J.K. Rowling

1. Introduction

Ever since the early history of cinema, literature has been used as a source of inspiration for films. Motivated by this, studies have been conducted in an attempt to investigate adaptations from books to movies. This research analyzes the adaptation of J.K. Rowling's bestiary-style¹² book, entitled *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, to film. The book is a spin-off work from the *Harry Potter* novel series, written by the same author. In this book, the author writes under an alias-called Newt Scamander, the main character in the story. The story is inserted in the *Harry Potter* universe and tries to play the role of a real textbook used by Harry in the narratives of the main novels. The premise of *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* is to identify, catalogue and separate the fictional magical creatures from the *Harry Potter* universe from the non-magical ones. Such creatures are derived from previous mythologies for example, dragons, phoenixes, and leprechauns. In addition, the book also has a comic approach with passages where the main characters from the *Harry Potter* series make comments about the content. The adaptation of this book to cinema holds a particular characteristic. Since it is a catalogue of magic creatures, and a narrative script had to be developed specifically for the purpose of making the film, this study aims to find how the creatures of the film were depicted from the bestiary-style book to the screen. To study this adaptation, a selected literature on cinematographic adaptations will be considered. This includes books such as *A Theory of Adaptation*, by Linda Hutcheon, *Adaptation, and Cinema as a Digest*, by André Bazin, *Adaptation and its Discontents* by Thomas Leitch, amongst others. This research attempts, therefore, to find how two specific creatures, which are the Niffler and the Erumpent (*Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*), were depicted in the

¹ From this point on, the book analyzed will be referred as a *bestiary*.

² Bestiary, literary genre in the European Middle Ages consisting of a collection of stories, each based on a description of certain qualities of an animal, plant, or even stone (Encyclopaedia Britannica). In this work's case, a bestiary about fictional fantasy creatures.

*Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*³ film adaptation. For this purpose, two main scenes, involving these two creatures, were selected. A comparison is made between the way the animals are described in the bestiary, and how they are depicted in the film, regarding cinematographic techniques such as mise-en-scène, sound, and graphic production (computer generated imagery⁴). In addition, aspects such as authorship, and some concepts of adaptation studies will be considered.

2. Review of Literature

The review of the literature section presents previous studies regarding movie adaptation to be taken into account in the analysis between bestiary and film. This section brings an overview of what is considered an adaptation, and what theorists have been studying in this field.

According to Thomas Leitch, before adaptation studies became widely spread, only cinematic productions, "based on novels or plays or stories" were considered adaptations (89). Leitch states that "from the publication of George Bluestone's *Novels into Film* in 1957 to the appearance in 1999 of *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text*, edited by Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan, the field remained attached to this idea" (Leitch 89). Only after Cartmell's and Whelehan's book, other sorts of products such as "television programs, films based on comic strips, novelizations", among other media forms began to be considered adaptations (Leitch 89). Throughout history, adaptations are seen as an "inferior" product of a previous good source, i.e. books (Hutcheon xii). This portrayal of the subject instigated scholars to investigate more about it, and as Cartmell and Whelehan state in *A Short History of Adaptation Studies in the Classroom*, adaptation "is a growth area" inside "the Arts and Humanities" field (1). Thus, the more scholars conducted research into this field, the more new

³ Also referred throughout the text as *Fantastic Beasts* only.

⁴ Referred as only CGI from this point on.

"perspectives" were brought to it, giving the possibility to go beyond what was frequently seen only as "'novel to film' or 'literature and film' studies" (Cartmell and Whelehan 1).

After such a progress in adaptation studies, several new concepts regarding film adaptations, and adaptations in general, emerged. In the book *A Theory of Adaptation*, written by Linda Hutcheon, she attempts to streamline adaptation through the question "What is not an adaptation?"(170). Hutcheon answers this question by raising several examples of what she considers adaptations, and what she does not (170-172). Contrary to the previous concept that, as stated above, "only cinematic productions, based on novels or plays or stories" could be adaptations, Hutcheon considers many different forms of "retelling" a story. She mentions books adapted into other books, a film as basis for other films, a fragment of a play into a modern version of it, along with game adaptations, prequels, sequels, spin-offs, and so on (Hutcheon 172-173). This means that not only are adaptations more than novels, plays, or stories based films, but also that adaptation is not restricted to a change in terms of product, i.e, from paper-to-screen (172). In addition, she defines adaptations as: "adaptation is how stories evolve and mutate to fit new times and different places" (Hutcheon 176).

Refuting Hutcheon's question, "What is not an adaptation?"(Hutcheon 170), and the surrounding theory of it, Leitch states, in his chapter from Deborah Cartmell's collection *Adaptation and Intertextuality, or, What isn't an Adaptation, and What Does it Matter* (Leitch 88), that instead of giving a solution, Hutcheon raises even more questions regarding this sort of study, leaving it far from a plausible answer. After Hutcheon's statement about what is not an adaptation (Hutcheon 170), Leitch raises other questions wondering if any sort of intertextual processes would be considered adaptations; "Why do adaptations have to be extended and announced as such? Is every performance an adaptation?" (Leitch 88).

Leitch (87-88) also highlights Linda Costanzo Cahir's "contemporary" view of Bluestone's work regarding adaptations (*Novels into Film* 1957). Cahir defines adaptations as:

The term "to adapt" means to alter the structure or function of an entity so that it is better fitted to survive and to multiply in its new environment. To adapt is to move that same entity into a new environment. In the process of adaptation, the same substantive entity which entered the process exits, even as it undergoes modification – sometimes radical mutation – in its efforts to accommodate itself to its new environment (Leitch 87).

According to Leitch, Cahir's perception seems to indicate that adaptations are *mutations*, or even new products derived from one source that are made in order to give new perspectives of the same story (Leitch 88).

Another point to take into account within adaptation studies is scholars' different perspectives regarding "authorship" (Russell 392). First, literature scholars state that authors are "unproblematic figures" (Russell 392). Even though "they are no longer, after the adaptation process, the holder of the story, writers remain central in terms of critical and historical writing about novels" (Russell 392). Film scholars, for instance, portray the director as the "author", even though at times they are refuted amongst their own critics (Russell 392). On the other hand, "media and communication studies" take into consideration other aspects regarding film adaptation and authorship (Russell 392). They raise elements such as "cultural reception" and focus especially on "economic aspects" of media instead of "creative participants" (Russell 393). However, such different perspectives from scholars find a common place when studying adaptations (Russell 393). Russell states that adaptation studies give rise to "opportunities to revise and rethink the nature of creativity and authorship" (Russell 393). Linda Hutcheon corroborates with Russell's idea in her book *A Theory of Adaptation*, where she declares:

Films are like operas in that there are many and varied artists involved in the complex process of their adaptation. Nevertheless it is evident from both studio press releases and critical response that the director is ultimately held responsible

for the overall vision and therefore for the adaptation. Yet someone else usually writes the screenplay that begins the process . . . For this reason, in a film, the director and screenwriter share the primary task of adaptation (85).

Hutcheon's statement aids the idea that *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* is an adaptation, whose authorship is shared mainly between author of the book and the film production team. For the *Harry Potter* film adaptations, Rowling was the major source for both script writing and setting building, without, however, writing the script itself. David Heyman - producer of both *Harry Potter* movies and *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* - stated in an interview, made when *Harry Potter and The Prisoner of Azkaban* was released, that when producers and director produced the *Harry Potter* films, they were doing it "right from the book", attempting to "translate" J.K.'s view of it (Russell 395). Heyman also said: "we tried to discover the best way to convey what Jo was expressing on the page – in movie terms." (Russell 391). On the other hand, since the writing of *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, as a bestiary, derived from Harry Potter's school bibliography and, also after some already established *Harry Potter* films, J.K. Rowling had, as her own words state, "been carrying the germ of the idea for *Fantastic Beasts* since 2001", when she wrote the initial book for charity - the desire of adapting her new creation (Rowling "Acknowledgment"). Therefore, Rowling started the adaptation process from the very beginning in association with the director and other important people related to her previous adapted films (Rowling "Acknowledgment"). The *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* movie script is Rowling's debut as a screenwriter. Hence, not only is she the author of the primary source, but also the writer responsible for adapting the text. Thus, the *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* film adaptation is a product derived from a partnership between its own author and director, wherefore, as stated above, a shared authorship of the adaptation. Therefore, such close involvement, from J.K. Rowling with *Fantastic Beasts'* both primary text and script writing could have had a major impact on how the creatures were depicted on-screen. Even though it was a director-

author/screenwriter collaboration, the creatures' depiction, and/or the entire setting itself, could be interpreted as a *direct translation*. It could be seen as a direct transposition from the author's point of view to the screen, or, as Hayman mentions, "right from the book" (Russell 391).

Thomas Leitch presented in his book, *Adaptation and its Discontents*, another point of view that Russell emphasizes in his article regarding authorship. According to Russell, Leitch deals with authorship not as matter of creation but as a sales product (Russell 394). According to Leitch, authors' motivation in terms of writing process can be related to a "commercial value", i.e. guided by what sells more (Russell 394). Russell also brings a quote by Leitch which says:

Rising to the status of auteur depends on an alignment of several marketable factors: thematic consistency, association with a popular genre, an appetite for the coordination and control of outsized projects, sensitivity to the possibility of broad appeal in such disparate "media as movies, television, books, magazines and T-shirts" (Russell 394).

Russell also states that the author is a constructed figure, who exists to convey a "paratextual veneer of artistry, aura and authority" (393). In addition, the author argues that blockbusters adaptations, which usually involve large amounts of money, and also have to deal with "a range of interconnected products targeted at a global audience", tend to cause issues for the authors when their products, novels, video games, short stories, etc., are adapted (Russell 394). This happens, according to Russell, because when there is such a wide production, authorship is easily incorporated by producers, with "vast sums of money", and many aspects are modified to attend not only to satisfy copyrights terms but also to fit into the producer's style (394). Related to this approach, there are some aspects to be considered regarding the *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* adaptation. First, the *Harry Potter* series is made up of blockbusters; therefore, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, as part of its context, was expected to be a blockbuster itself. This means that those "vast sums of money" invested by producers, issues regarding copyrights, and "a range of interconnected products targeted at a

global audience", were also involved in its production (Russell 395). Secondly, the *Harry Potter* series was already established, with a vast amount of marketable products, thus, the *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* film, which is related to *Harry Potter* series, would also be expected to be profitable.

In order to analyze and compare the creatures, it is important to offer some working definitions regarding cinematographic aspects. The first of these would be "mise-en-scène". Mise-en-scène, in general, terms would mean "everything that is inside the scene" (Bordwell and Thompson 112). Deriving from the theatrical nomenclature, the French word mise-en-scène means "place something in the stage", in this case, "on screen" (Bordwell and Thompson 112). Setting and Lighting, for instance, are part of what compose the mise-en-scène. Setting is essentially how the scene is built (Bordwell and Thompson 115). The objects used, how they are disposed in order to tell a story, and also the set itself (Bordwell and Thompson 115). Lighting techniques compose each scene. They can be natural or virtually added by CGI (Bordwell and Thompson 125). Such techniques enables the director to manipulate the scenes in order to achieve the goals proposed in the film composing, therefore, what is within the frame. A frame considers on-screen and off-screen elements and is composed of various components such as angle, sounds, shapes, distance and space (Bordwell and Thompson 182). Thus, framing has the function of transmitting the message of a scene. Other important techniques within the cinematographic area are sound editing and sound mixing. Sound editing collects all the necessary sounds and voices, while sound mixing defines how such sounds will work together, in order to move the plot ahead, and how each sound combined with other elements would provide certain feelings and meanings regarding the story (Bordwell and Thompson 264). Lastly, CGI is basically any image or animation that is created by computer software, whether in movies, series or games. Such computer resource enables the creation of literally anything from scratch (Bordwell and

Thompson 179). Also CGI is used to complement and/or improve a scene - by the usage of face and movement captures for instance - in order to bring more realistic features (Bordwell and Thompson 179).

Last but not least, even considering all the elements cited above, film production in *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* has its own particularities. The discussion presented above was related to adaptation and authorship, and it states that authors are more inclined to play the role of a figure that participates in the communication between the source material and the production plan of the film adaptation, instead of actually collaborating with the adaptations of their work. Therefore, some questions concerning how *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* creatures were depicted must be considered such as: did the *Harry Potter* series' adaptations influenced how *Fantastic Beasts* was adapted, since it involved the writer of both? Did the film script focus on the written bestiary, or were the previous *Harry Potter* film adaptations also regarded as inspiration? How the cinematographic techniques were used in terms of depiction of the creatures?

3. Analysis

Considering the elements addressed above, and the *Fantastic Beasts* written bestiary, the portrayal of the two creatures I have chosen - the Niffler and the Erumpent - seem to represent what film productions are capable of nowadays. In order to analyze how both creatures were depicted in the *Fantastic Beasts* film adaptation - beginning with the Niffler followed by the Erumpent - it is important to show how they are described in both the bestiary and in their first appearance in the film, also considering details from the *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them - The Original Screenplay*. Finally, I will discuss their appearance on screen.

According to the description given by the bestiary where the magical creatures are catalogued, the Niffler is a creature that is “fluffy, black, and long snouted”... and it is attracted by anything “glittery”. Although considered meek and capable of affection, it is also very “destructive” (*FBWFT* 30). The Erumpent on the other hand, is described as a “large” size creature that from a distance can be confused with a rhino, because of its shape, weight and size (*FBWFT* 16). Also, it has a “sharp horn” which can penetrate anything “from skin to metal”, and it has a “fluid” that makes what it has touched “explode” (*FBWFT* 16). Such descriptions provide specific characteristics of both creatures, giving a clue of how the Niffler and the Erumpent would look like later on screen.

Keeping in mind the descriptions of the beasts given by the bestiary, the first appearances of both - Niffler and Erumpent – seem to use such previous descriptions as basis in terms of features construction regarding their cinematographic portrayal. According to some details given by *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them - The Original Screenplay*, the Niffler is portrayed, in its first appearance as; “a small, furry black cross between a mole and a duck-billed platypus...hastily pulling the beggar’s hat full of money” (Scene.7, *FBWFT – The Original Screenplay*). This description of the Niffler matches the description of the bestiary, when it says that it is "black/fluffy" (*FBWFT* 30), "furry/black" (screenplay book), "attracted by anything that is glittery" (*FBWFT* 30), "pulling the beggar’s hat full of money" (screenplay book), and also gives a perspective of how the creature looks like, and how it will act on-screen. The first mention regarding the Erumpent, however, is subtler. The beast does not appear itself on screen, but the main character, Newt Scamander, presents some evidences regarding its existence. As indicated by the screenplay’s first details regarding the creature, Newt, while inside his suitcase (where he keeps all the magic creatures and personal stuff), realizes that one of his beasts is missing (Scene.47, *FBWFT – The Original Screenplay*). After this passage, Newt asks Jacob (another character that is with him inside the suitcase):

"So where would you say that a medium-sized creature that likes broad, open plains—trees—water holes—that kind of thing—where might she go?" (Scene.47, *FBWFT – The Original Screenplay*). Such clues regarding the Erumpent's portrayal not only provide some of the features that match the beast's description given by the bestiary such as; "a large size creature, that from a distance can be confused with a rhino, because of its shape, weight and size" (*FBWFT* 16), but also indicates that it is a "she". Such description also leads for an expectation of how does "she" look like, and how "she" will act in her appearance on-screen. Moreover, the fact that the beast is a female can impact in its general depiction on screen. The relationship between the beast and the main character, for instance, will define how the scene will be developed. Consequently, the creature's portrayal must be viable in terms of interaction in the scene, since the plot is based on the way the main character deals with beasts.

Regarding the portrayal of the creatures on screen, two main scenes will be analyzed considering the previous definitions of the creatures, along with cinematographic techniques cited in the review of literature section. In addition, some details provided by the *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them - The Original Screenplay* will be used as support for the scene descriptions, along with figures, which illustrate each creature scene's description. Both scenes were selected regarding their relevance for the plot in terms of depiction of the beasts, and the portrayal of the relationship between them and the main character, which is the focus of the film.

The Niffler's scene begins with Newt and Jacob walking together towards Central Park in order to find the Erumpent (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:48:25). As the sequence continues, the scenario places them in a street full of jewelry and shining objects (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:48:55). Then, Newt become aware of a small trail of jewelry, that leads him to start looking for clues of the Niffler (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:49:01- 00:49:10). It is important to

mention the construction of the mise-en-scène in this last scenario. The frame sequence shows that the lights are almost out, making the scene dark which contrasts with the shining jewelry scattered throughout the floor, indicating that the creature can be around, since “it is attracted”, as stated above, “by anything that is glittery” (*FBWFT* 30). Such elements suggest that some characteristics of the beast (attraction by shining objects) were preserved in its on-screen depiction. In addition, it foreshadows the Niffler’s appearance raising the suspense about where the beast is, and what it is going to do when/if it gets caught.

In the first frame where the Niffler appears the creature is presented from behind, with a centered angle, focusing on Newt crossing in front of it (on the other side of the window), indicating that it intends to stay hidden, pretending to be part of the decoration in the shop window in order to escape from Newt (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:49:13- 00:49:19). Also, the lights are darker from where the camera is showing the creature, and the sounds are almost ceased, providing a certain tone of mystery about the Niffler’s possible capture. The camera changes the angle to the other side of the window and moves with Newt's movement back and forth, indicating that he might have found something (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:49:20- 00:49:23). The angle changes and now the focus are on the Niffler once again, showing it almost sideways (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:49:22). The borders of the frame are dark, highlighting the Niffler's position among black showcases that are almost of the same size and shape as the creature, blending it with the environment (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:49:24). As the jewels fall down, the Niffler and Newt make eye contact. The sounds are still quiet and only the creatures’ breath is heard, creating an atmosphere of suspense regarding what would be the next move (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:49:25- 00:49:30). Once the Niffler and Newt enter the jewelry most of the chase is shown from a distant angle. Such angle highlights that both jewels and chandelier have the same pattern of color, bright and gold, contrasting with the dark tones of the other objects in the frame. Such portrayal emphasizes that everything in that scenario is built to

attract the Niffler's attention. In order to continue the idea that the chase is still happening, but without being repetitive, the focus is not fundamentally on the camera, but on the sounds of glass breaking and things falling apart (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:49:35- 00:50:14). As the mobile where Newt and the Niffler are ends up crashing in the shop window, the camera angle coming from below, sounds once more get quieter, and characters very still, suggesting that the chase is about to end (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:50:16- 00:50:17). The Niffler is now standing beside Newt looking at him as if it was waiting to be saved from the eminent fall, even though the creature is still trying to escape (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:50:23). The sound now is focused on the cracking window and on the moment when it falls to the ground, raising the atmosphere of "gran finale" (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:50:23- 00:50:31). As a last sigh, the Niffler tries once more to run away (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:50:31). In order to portray the creature's last try, the camera angle shows it from backwards, running towards the opposite direction bringing a more dramatic tone to the action (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:50:32- 00:50:34). In contrast, the next angle shows the Niffler being pulled by a spell, losing all the jewelry that it has caught (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:50:36- 00:50:49). The construction of such a moment in slow motion emphasizing facial and body expressions, along with all the jewels flying, clearly portrays the Niffler's attachment regarding shiny objects. After being captured, the creature accepts its fate staying with Newt (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:51:00- 00:51:19). The Niffler's surrender corroborates with its duality in terms of behavior – as depicted by the bestiary - of being “meek and capable of affection” and “very destructive” at the same time (*FBWFT* 30).

Here are some stills portraying the selected Niffler scenes:



Figure 1 – Newt realizes that the Niffler might be around.



Figure 2 – The camera angle shows the Niffler trying to hide from Newt.



Figure 3 – Newt thinks that he might have seen something suspicious.



Figure 4 – The Niffler is shown hidden among the jewels, in order to try to avoid being captured.



Figure 5 – While the jewels which the creature was holding falls, it tries to stay still pretending to be part of the window shop. At the same time, the beast makes eye contact with Newt.



Figure 6 – Newt and the creature making eye contact moments before the chase.



Figure 7- The camera angle showing from a distance Newt chasing the Niffler.



Figure 8 – The chandelier along with figure 7 portrays how the scene is built in order to attract the Niffler's attention.



Figure 9 – The window cracking indicates that the chase is about to end.



Figure 10 – After breaking the window, the Niffler tries one again to escape from Newt.



Figure 11 – In slow motion, the Niffler is being pulled by a spell, losing all the jewels that it has taken.



Figure 12 – Following shot still showing the Niffler losing its jewels.



Figure 13 – The Niffler finally being captured by Newt.



Figure 14 – The Niffler after being captured, staying still with Newt accepting its fate.

After capturing the Niffler, Newt and Jacob resume their hunt after the Erumpent. The scene starts with Newt and Jacob discussing Jacob's safety while helping Newt to capture the Erumpent (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:51:57- 00:52:07). In order to place the Erumpent in the scene, sound effects such as a loud roar in the distance, and visual indicators such as rubble of the zoo entrance are used prior to its appearance, leading to the expectation of what is to come. The following sequence shows a zoo that looks abandoned, with some destroyed parts in its entrance (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:52:32- 00:52:33). As the description given by the bestiary of the Erumpent features mentions, such a "large size creature...can be confused with a rhino, because of its shape, weight and size", could indicate that she has gone through the place

(*FBWFT* 16). Such scenario seems to foreshadow the creature's arrival. The following event confirms its presence. The camera angle first shows - through bars - the Erumpent from behind, and focuses on Newt and Jacob, showing the destruction around them, and a loud breath is heard (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:52:50- 00:52:54). As Newt observes the scenario and hears the snort he states; "She's in season. She needs to mate" (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:52:56- 00:52:59). Such statement matches the Erumpent's first description of being a "she", corroborating with the idea that the creature being a female would determine the relationship between the creature and Newt⁵, along with the definition of how the scene would be conducted in order to fulfill the plot's demand.

The first appearance of the Erumpent, as stated above, is from behind with the camera passing behind some cage, and the sound is very focused on the animal's heavy breathing. However the sound is focused on the breathing while the camera is moving towards the Erumpent, the original soundtrack of the *Harry Potter's* films opening theme is heard, in a very subtle way, further raising the suspense (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:52:50- 00:52:59). The Erumpent is seen from a high angle that depicts its size, and provides a slight view of its "sharp horn...which has a fluid that makes what it has touched explode" (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:52:58- 00:52:59) (*FBWFT* 16). While Newt moves closer to the creature, the camera angle changes again (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:53:12 - 00:53:15). First showing the creature from a higher perspective, then from back, in order to emphasize how imposing or "fantastic" the Erumpent is, especially in comparison with Newt's size (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:53:16- 00:53:19) The back angle also goes back to the description of the Erumpent given by the bestiary where it compares the creature with "a rhino, because of its shape, weight and size... and its long tail that reminds of a string" (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:53:20) (*FBWFT* 16). The following sequence portrays the first face-to-face interaction between The Erumpent and

⁵ Such relationship will be shortly discussed further on.

Newt (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:53:34). First, the camera angle is close to the creature, while it is slowly turning around, showing its face (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:53:35). As the angle reaches the front, the camera starts to move backwards revealing the whole creature (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:53:36- 00:53:45).

One aspect that was observed is that the depiction of the Erumpent on screen fits the one found in the bestiary. However, the bestiary describes that the creature has, as stated above, “a sharp horn... which has a fluid that makes what it has touched explode”, but does not mention that such fluid is placed in a fluorescent bag right above the horn (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:52:58- 00:52:59). Such characteristic is what makes it a *fantastic* creature, a fictionalized recreation of a real animal. On the other hand, as the scene continues with Newt trying, by performing a mating ritual, to capture the Erumpent, the camera angle focuses on the creature’s behavior portraying it as almost a common animal that is *in season* (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:53:47- 00:54:20). While this sequence is happening, the sounds have a tone of romance depicting the emotional interaction of the Erumpent, which is in season and needs to mate, with the main character. Such interaction between main character and beast portrays the importance of the individual construction of each creature to the plot. It shows that each beast has its own personal characteristic and particularity.

Moreover, the setting shows a destructed zoo raising an atmosphere of disorder/destruction commonly caused by such a huge animal. In addition, the lighting in the scene is very low. Together with the palette of gray and earthy tones of the scenario, the lighting emphasizes some features of the beast - fluorescent bag matching the horn, and the fact that such a combination can give it explosive powers - that corroborates with the Erumpent’s portrayal as a *fantastic beast*. Such features differs the Erumpent from an ordinary - non-magical - wild animal. An example of it is the following sequence where the Erumpent is chasing Jacob, after he "accidentally spills the musk in himself" (Scene.57,

FBWFT – The Original Screenplay). The Erumpent acts like an ordinary animal, until it explodes a tree with a magical horn, and finally, it is swallowed by Newt's case (*Fantastic Beasts* 00:54:26- 00:56:27).

Erumpent's figures (*Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* film):



Figure 15 – Newt and Jacob discussing about Jacob's safety before capturing the Erumpent.



Figure 16 – The entrance of the zoo indicating that the Erumpent might have been there.



Figure 17 – The Erumpent’s first appearance on screen.



Figure 18 – The scenario of destruction indicates the presence of the Erumpent. Also, Newt realizes that “she is in season and needs to mate” (Scene.57, *FBWFT – The Original Screenplay*).



Figure 19 – The camera angle contrasting the Erumpent’s size with Newt’s size while also exaggerating the size difference through its high-angle perspective.



Figure 20 – First clear appearance, from behind, of the Erumpent.



Figure 21 – The camera angle moving in order to show the entire beast.



Figure 22 – First image of the entire beast, contrasting its shape and size with a hippo.



Figure 23 – A little bit more of the entire creature, while Newt starts to perform the mating ritual.



Figure 24 –A clear depiction of the Erumpent’s “sharp horn” which has “a fluid that makes what it has touched explode” (FBWFT 16).



Figure 25 – The Erumpent almost being captured through the mating ritual.



Figure 26 – The Erumpent smelling another source of the “Erumpent’s musk” (Scene.57, *FBWFT – The Original Screenplay*).



Figure 27 – Close-up shot on the Erumpent’s face.



Figure 28 – The Erumpent chasing Jacob after smelling the “Erumpent’s musk” (Scene.57, *FBWFT – The*

Original Screenplay), portraying its capability of destroying what is in its way. Typical from a creature of this size and shape.



Figure 29 – Framing portraying the destruction described above.



Figure 30 – The Erumpent chasing Jacob.



Figure 31 – The portrayal of the Erumpent’s “sharp horn” “that makes what it has touched explode” (*FBWFT* 16).



Figure 32 –The tree imploding after being perforated by the Erumpent’s horn.



Figure 33 – The Erumpent finally being captured by Newt.

Regarding CGI aspects of the production, both creatures had a similar development (*Inside the Magic: The Making of FBWFT* 136). According to the interviews given by the production team, published in the book *Inside the Magic: The Making of Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, the focus concerning the creatures' depiction was to make them *believable* (*Inside the Magic: The Making of FBWFT* 136). For this purpose, the producers initiated an investigation of how each creature would be "visually depicted", and how "interesting would be for the audience to watch them on screen" (*Inside the Magic: The Making of FBWFT* 137). Consequently, scale models were produced and digitalized, in order to proceed with the creatures' depiction on screen (*Inside the Magic: The Making of FBWFT* 142). Furthermore, the producer David Heyman states that since the beginning of the creatures' creation, sound effects and movements were considered in order to have a fluid design that would enable the beasts to show their personality towards the plot (*Inside the Magic: The Making of FBWFT* 135).

In order to facilitate the interaction between the main character with the creatures, real-size dolls were produced, considering that they would be later finalized with CGI, and that they needed to be *believable* (*Inside the Magic: The Making of FBWFT* 142). Such dolls enabled the cameraman to have something to frame, and provide a point of reference for digital animators (*Inside the Magic: The Making of FBWFT* 142). For instance, the Niffler was made of a mix of its real size doll, played by a puppeteer, and a combination of facial and movements recorded from a real actor, in order to show not only its features, but also a real personality (*Inside the Magic: The Making of FBWFT* 138). Such a combination enabled a more organic interaction with Newt making the scene more realistic (*Inside the Magic: The Making of FBWFT* 138). Even though the Erumpent did not have facial expressions recorded beforehand, a fully articulated life-size model was created and operated simultaneously by four actors, respecting the main characteristics of an animal of this size (*Inside the Magic:*

The Making of FBWFT 139). Such way of producing the creature made its interaction with the lead actor natural, since the created model for the Erumpent provided a realistic reference point for the performance (*Inside the Magic: The Making of FBWFT* 139).

Another point to be considered regarding the creatures' adaptation is the matter of authorship. *Fantastic Beasts'* adaptation appears to be moved more by "economic aspects" than "creative participants"(Russell 393). It is known, as stated above, that J.K. Rowling was directly involved in all the process of the adaptation. As the prime writer of book and script, her involvement would mean consistence, in terms of maintaining some original aspects of the plot previously mentioned in the *Harry Potter* series. However, her involvement could be seen as a commercial strategy. As she was already successful in her previous *Harry Potter* books and films, it would be important to have her, not only as a source of material in terms of production, but also as a name of relevance in the industry associated with previous successes. Even though scholars in the field of adaptation have put the spectrum of fidelity in terms of movie adaptations aside, for most of the fan base having the *original* author would mean, for instance, being at least consistent with the previous stories. As *Fantastic Beasts* is not only based on the bestiary book, but also on a previous scenario derived from a pre-existing movie series that is inserted in the same cinematographic universe, the audience expects the production team to maintain the same atmosphere. Therefore, having J.K. Rowling as part of the production team would allow the director/producers to be more flexible in terms of on-screen construction, giving the idea of a consistent plot that would consider previous elements that were already established by the *Harry Potter* films' universe. Such aspects surrounding the *Fantastic Beasts* production corroborates with Leitch's statement of what would motivate an author in its writing process (393).

Regarding a production with such a "commercial value", "the status of auteur depends on an alignment of several marketable factors" such as "thematic consistency, and

association with a popular genre” (Leitch 393). Thus, J.K. Rowling’s involvement could indicate that the depiction of the beasts, as well as the development of *Fantastic Beasts*’ plot itself, could have been influenced by economic aspects related to the fact that it was already expected that *Fantastic Beasts* would become a successful blockbuster such as the *Harry Potter* franchising. Consequently, involving such a valuable and popular figure as J.K. Rowling, which means meeting the expectations of the fan base in terms of consistency would mean financial success of the final product.

Finally, although *Fantastic Beasts*’ script was created from scratch, and most of the creatures in the film only existed in the written version of the bestiary, there are several connections with the *Harry Potter* series that are not mentioned in the *Fantastic Beasts*’ book. Even though *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* has a new plot, elements that refer to the *Harry Potter* series are noticed throughout the film. Musical soundtrack, names, spells, and even plot aspects such as delicate themes involving interpersonal relationships can be noticed in both films. Therefore, in order to maintain the link with the already existing magical universe, at the same time as creating *believable* creatures from the beginning, it seems coherent to base itself on a successful franchise.

4. Final Remarks

The present analysis has investigated some aspects of the adaptive process of *The Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* from literature to film. It has demonstrated that descriptive elements prevail in the bestiary-style book while the plot of the film attempts to incorporate some of the fictional creatures described in the literary work. The analysis proceeded to look for audiovisual characteristics that worked together to portray two creatures in particular, considering elements of mise-en-scène, framing, and sound. In addition, aspects of authorship were also considered regarding the adaptation process.

Consequently, I have brought attention to an intertextual communication between the book and the film, observing how descriptions of the beasts are adapted and which of their features found their way into the film representation of their behaviors and interactions with other fictional characters. For this purpose, textual evidence was brought from the book, along with images from the film to corroborate my arguments.

All in all, this work can help a number of academic fields for future research. The field of adaptation studies can benefit from the technical and comparative analysis of the movie bearing in mind the relationship between a written and an audiovisual work. Studies on fantasy fiction are another area that was part of the present analysis, including the overview of the successful *Harry Potter* franchise which was mentioned throughout. Finally, the analysis considered production and industry-related aspects that can help to understand how adaptation choices are made for such big-budget movies as *Fantastic Beasts*.

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