What is a Typoid?

A Typoid, or *Bio-Identenoid*, is a simple lifeform identification tool typically practiced by individuals who do not possess extensive scientific expertise. The "-oid" suffix means "similar to" or "having the likeness of". Typoids are a scheme of classifying creatures by what other creatures they look like, applying a descriptive identification for a broad audience, rather than any rigorous scientific classification scheme. As it is commonly used by people with little or no scrupulous scientific backing, it can be considered an aspect of popular culture.

In theory, typoids are drawn from biological taxonomic nomenclature from the class, order, phylum, and kingdom levels. In use the typoid classification is inconsistent about which of the terms are used. Some terms are generated from common language, mythology, popular culture references, or slang terms.

Specific typoids are a list of traits which distinguish the derivative creature or are highlight the unique nature of the type of creature. When creature being identified is shown exhibiting a majority of the traits assigned to the typoid then identifies as the specific typoid. Because of the loose classification scheme it is relatively common for a creature to meet sufficient criteria to qualify as more than one typoid classification. Some also have sub-classifications below them, similar to biological taxonomic trees.

The system is widely rejected by the broader scientific community. The classifications are subjective and frequently based upon minimal observations. The system leads to over-generalization to the point of encouraging dangerous mistakes in identification.

Cultural anthropologists and other social scientists are the most skeptical of the system as it drives cultural assumptions and prejudice. Many of the comparative creatures have positive or negative cultural connotations not all of which are immediately apparent. These cultural connotations are then applied to the identified species much to their dismay. Overcoming these externally applied connotations can be a time consuming and difficult challenge.

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