

Kisota
- Therian -
Standard Animal
Coywolf / Coyote

Mar 24, 2015 at 10:24am

Quote



Feral savoir faire
Posts: 86

If there's a thread around for this, I haven't seen it... and I'm not sure if necro-posting is a no-no here. In any case, maybe it's time to have a new discussion.

I'm curious why this website defines some terms the way it does...

Specifically, why is therian defined as ONLY animals that have lived on Earth? What purpose does that serve?

We had a similar discussion on Werelist recently, so if you're active there you may already be tired of the discussion. But there were two basic things that were concluded there, and therefore two main points I have against that kind of definition:

1) It does NOT have historical meaning within the community. Older members (Jakka, etc) are able to back this up. The "original" definition was about having an integral connection/identity as a non-human animal. The "earth animal" limitation came later.

2) The distinction is arbitrary. None of us are literally physically any animals but humans. We're interpreting our experiences and there is no meaningful difference between a "real" animal and a "fictional" one when we're speaking of the experiences of humans. Drawing a line in the sand based on the "interpretation" of the experiences rather than the experiences themselves is strange, not useful, and is rather exclusive.

This definition definitely excludes dragons and other "non-Earthy" animals who are feral and very animalistic in every sense except the label. Why exclude them from the terminology? Why make every distinction and sub-forum on this whole site torn between whether you call yourself a "real" animal or not, when the experiences may be very comparable?

I'm not alone in thinking that the only useful categorization would be to suggest that people who have primarily animalistic, feral experiences "therians" and those who either have human -types or very cultured, sentient ones simply "otherkin." I think there's a fairly good argument for this usage. It means that communities for "therians" are inclusive to those with "beast"/feral type experiences and leaves people to decide for themselves whether their experiences are predominantly feral, and therefore whether the term is appropriate (or, of course, whether therian communities are going to be useful for them),

Why be exclusionary to people whose experiences may be very similar, simply because they call themselves something that isn't "real?"

So why? Why the distinction then? I see the "Earth animals ONLY!!!" thing being blared at people here very frequently, when it is neither the original definition, an agreed-upon one, nor a particularly useful one. I'm a therian by pretty much any definition, but I find the term usage kind of exclusive and confusing. What does insisting upon this definition accomplish? Why use a definition restricted by the word a person uses to define their experiences, rather than one that is defined by the experiences themselves?

Last Edit: Mar 24, 2015 at 10:26am by Kisota

Seraphyna
- Therian -
Standard Animal
Standard Animal
Lion and Reef Shark

Mar 24, 2015 at 2:43pm

Quote



Resident Shlon
Posts: 2,085



"All that is gold does not glitter; not all those who wander are lost." -Tolkien
"All that we see or seem is but a dream within a dream." -Poe

« Prev 1 2 Next » Actions Search...

Draft Horse



The face of tomadic fury

Posts: 99 ♀

Mar 24, 2015 at 2:43pm Seraphyna said:

Personally, I see no point in having the term "therian" if it's going to refer to animalistic creatures in general. Why? Because everything from some angels, demons, fae, etc., to some mythical animals, to earthly animals fit the definition. The point of labels in the first place is to explain and specify. Therianthropy popularly having the definition of earth animals only has been around since at least 2004 when I found the online community. Currently, the definition the majority of people use and is upheld as the standard definition is earth animals either living or extinct.

So, based on just consensus. Is it necessarily rational consensus?

Mar 24, 2015 at 2:43pm Seraphyna said:

Therianthropy is a specific type of otherkinity...and making it as vague as to mean "animalistic" negates the entire purpose of having a separate term. If we go with "animalistic" as the definition, then it gets confusing. What is "animalistic enough" for the definition? Some dragons would count and some wouldn't. Some fae would count, some angels would count, some elves would count...and others wouldn't. It would be a term seemingly to designate a "special club" within each kintype in that case and lead to far more debate and exclusion.

I kinda think that

Mar 24, 2015 at 10:24am Kisota said:

[...] people who have primarily animalistic, feral experiences "therians" and those who either have human -types or very cultured, sentient ones simply "otherkin."

addresses the above unambiguously enough. Animalistic experiences and civilized culture as we know it are pretty clearly distinct. Technically anything alive that's not a plant, bacterium, fungus, etc. is an animal (discounting ghosts, which are dead, and detes, which... are too iffy a subject to even bring in) but that is besides the point as this has more to do with the ways the twain experience the world.

Mar 24, 2015 at 2:43pm Seraphyna said:

Therians are people who identify as a non-human animal that either lives on earth or once did. This is the popular definition of the past 11 years and the one that I find makes the most sense.

The actual "popular" definition varies very widely between communities (not to mention between people). Besides, the original definition seemingly originates in communities that weren't aware that there were other terms, like "otherkin". For this reason the two terms, while supposedly unrelated, are entirely convergent, and the original post in this thread posts a much more sensible way to separate the twain than has been popularly done.

I find that that popular definition sets up a set of standards and perhaps even invites a measure of elitism, making a distinction between what's "real" and what's "not real", which is pretty detrimental, especially when it comes to people new to the concepts and communities. It's very intimidating. While I myself have perceived that people who identify as "therians" as acting more mature than people who identify as "otherkin", I see many of the "therians" having the same stories, thero/(kn)-types, and backgrounds, making the "popular" distinction pointless.

Thrx Quote

Therian - Standard Animal

T-Rex



Posts: 114 ♂

Mar 24, 2015 at 3:40pm

This here really rubbed me the wrong way when I saw it. Here we have someone who is new to it and the first thing she's told is that her identity is not what she thinks it is but rather that she must be fit under some other label beyond her control. I don't think I'm alone to think that determining whether you're an otherkin or a therian should be up to YOU, the person, rather than the community and its glossaries. Maybe said person would end up changing how they identify by themselves eventually but that's exactly the point. It should be up to her to do so and not up to random people online to tell her what she is. I can only imagine how discouraging it might be for someone new to be treated that way right off the bat.

Last Edit: Mar 24, 2015 at 3:44pm by Thrx

Definitions of Termination - X

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« Prev 1 2 Next »

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Last Edit: Mar 24, 2015 at 3:44pm by Thix

Quote

Ksota
Thieran
Standard Animal
Coywolf / Coyote

Mar 24, 2015 at 3:43pm

 Mar 24, 2015 at 12:33pm @mountainmoss said:

Really the argument could be made for most definitions. When you get right down to it, language and terminology are arbitrary.

Arbitrary means "based on random choice or personal whim, rather than any reason or system," so I strongly disagree here. Terms and their definitions can hold a lot of meaning, and even if the exact word we choose for a category is chosen at random, the categories themselves should be meaningful. And even if much of our language just kind of happens, there is still good reason to question our systems.

Humans like to place things in boxes, to categorize things, it is human nature, so naturally, humans also try to categorize kn and therianypes. "Original" definition or not, things like therianism have been around a lot longer than recorded time, and like everything, definitions change.

Yes, of course it's human nature to categorize. You're right about that. Definitions can evolve, as well, yes, we're on the same page, but my main argument here is that the evolution of the word is making it less useful and more exclusionary. (As an aside, the terms you're looking for are therotype and therianthropy, not therianype and therianism; note on connotation here: -ism tends to imply religion or ideology, neither of which apply to the experience of therianthropy inherently).

It isn't exclusionary, it is just dividing therians/otherkins into two distinct groups

How is it not exclusionary to impress an arbitrary division on a relatively small community, effectively telling people "regardless of what this term used to mean, we're using it NOW to tell YOU, you and YOU that you cannot call yourselves therians any longer. Post in the "otherkin" section of the forum with the other fictional things, please!"?

This is what I mean by arbitrary distinctions. This usage places restrictions on people that simply don't divide the community in a useful way. A dragon who decides they are a dinosaur is suddenly a therian when they weren't before. And nothing of value other than the label applied to the experience has changed! That kind of thing suggests the term doesn't have a lot of meaning.

In a way, it helps connect similar minded people.

Interesting analogy to use in this argument. Because basically what I'm saying is that the definition this website uses is exclusive to like minded people. Because it excludes people from the "therian" definition whose experiences are virtually the same as "Earth-animal" therians, simply because they call themselves something different.

If you want to connect like minded people, connect them by using terms that align people by experience instead of arbitrary self-identifiers. To use your MOGAI example...separating animals in a non-human-identified community by "real" and "not real" is like if we have a community of non-heterosexual people, then sub-categorize them by what they're wearing instead of how they experience their sexuality (or in addition to it). Maybe some people say, "well, hey, I'm more likely to get along with someone who shares my sexuality AND style!" but... style isn't really the point of the community. The shared experiences are. Any other division is just that, division.

« Prev 1 2 Next » Actions Search...

Some people who believe in therianism do not believe people can be connected to fictional creatures or the like. On the other side of things there are people who believe only certain fictional species can have kin types while others can't.

I don't want to sound like I'm badgering you, I promise. This really isn't personal and I'm not trying to be mean! But it's therianthropy, not therianism, and it's not something people believe in. It's a form of identity.

As for people who draw lines on who can have what connections ... I really take issue with that. No one has the right to say what OTHER people can and cannot feel. If a person personally doesn't believe in something, that's fine, but that doesn't mean the community should accept it as a whole. When a harmful opinion that can have no rational basis in reality is expressed, I would hope people would argue with that. So yeah, some people feel these (kind of irrational, exclusive) things, but if they express those opinions publicly I think they should expect to be met with argumentation. Maybe we can never all 100% agree on a definition, but I don't think that should be a reason not to have serious discussions.

I think it all comes down to finding people most like you. Using myself as an example, I could go looking for people like this: Otherkin in general -> Therians -> jaguar Therians.

This may be a matter of personal preference, but I do not find myself to automatically find people "most like me" to be the people with the same or similar theriotypes. I find the experience, interpretations of the experiences, and explanations of therianthropy to be most telling in who will be "like me" in a therian way. Your mileage may vary, of course - if this is the method you use, more power to ya!

But still does not address the question of ... do you automatically feel less like someone because they decided they were a dragon, not a dinosaur?

I don't personally like to be lumped together with people of the same or similar theriotype, because I find it a lot more important to talk about what we actually experience. But I admit that could be a personal preference. I definitely do see people who just really want to hang out with others with their theriotype. But I don't think including non-"Earthly" animals under therianthropy experiences is going to hurt that situation.

And I never thought this forum was commenting on validity. It does seem to be relatively inclusive... but it's more in an "equal but separate!" way. Directing people to different forums or subforums because the focus of the current forum is likely not useful for their experiences is one thing, but saying "don't post here, because you're a wyvern, not a pterodactyl" regardless of what the person is experiencing is not helpful for the individual and not a meaningful way to divide a community.

Psychologically, I could see how anyone could identify as really anything, though spiritually I can see why people would say such things. At that point, it really just comes down to someone's individual spirituality. Some people believe in multiple universes. Some people believe in past lives. At the end of the day, it doesn't REALLY matter how you attribute it (in my opinion anyway).

Right. I agree with this. It's good not to be exclusive based on personal beliefs, particularly since it's the shared experience the community is supposed to focus on. I think having some separate areas for people with different experiences (spiritual ones like past lives, etc, vs interest in scientific explanations) can be useful as long as it's done in a good way.

Last Edit: Mar 24, 2015 at 3:55pm by Kisota

Sorry.
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« Prev 1 2 Next » Actions Search...

Seraphyna
- Therian -
Standard Animal

Standard Animal
Lion and Reef Shark



Mar 24, 2015 at 3:59pm

Mar 24, 2015 at 3:21pm R said:

Technically anything alive that's not a plant, bacterium, fungus, etc. is an animal (discounting ghosts, which are dead, and deities, which... are too iffy a subject to even bring in) but that is besides the point as this has more to do with the ways the twin experience the world.

HouseofChimeras has a live oak headmate who has brought up the point that they experience their plant identity in much the same way someone experiences an animal identity...in a reactionary and instinctual manner...yet it is constantly pointed out that therianthropy does not include plant-kin. So either definition you go with involves some semblance of "elitism" and term "policing".

Resident Shikon
Posts: 2,085

Mar 24, 2015 at 3:21pm R said:

The actual "popular" definition varies very widely between communities (not to mention between people).

Not really. All forums I'm on, Facebook, and Tumblr all have a majority of members using the earth animal definition. It seems that those who stick to the old definition are older folks not wanting to embrace the evolution of terminology or people who just want to use the term "therian" because they like it better and/or want to distance themselves from the otherkin community at large for whatever reason(s). Furthermore, all forums I've ever been on for the past 11 years, including Werelst, have a majority of members who use the earth animal definition. In fact, Werelst is the only place where I've seen some members using "therian" to refer to any animalistic kintype. Furthermore, the term "animalkin" actually pre-dates the term "therian" to refer to animalistic kintypes...

Mar 24, 2015 at 3:21pm R said:

I find that that popular definition sets up a set of standards and perhaps even invites a measure of elitism, making a distinction between what's "real" and what's "not real", which is pretty detrimental, especially when it comes to people new to the concepts and communities.

If it were "real vs not real" then plant kin wouldn't get told they cannot use the term therian to refer to their experiences which, like I said, are very similar to those people with animalistic kintypes experience. Either way you define it, "therian" will always exclude people who don't fit the definition. The popular distinction of earth animal isn't pointless...it's specified. What I personally think would actually be pointless would be this:

1. To try and force a wider definition on the community at large and get the majority to redefine a term that has been popularly defined in a different manner for at least 11 years.
2. Taking a term that's specified to then be so general where you'd have even more of an "elitist" vibe by saying some of a kintype fit the definition but others do not. Who decides what's "animalistic" enough? By saying "earth animals" there is no value judgment.

« Prev 1 2 Next » Actions Search...

Standard Animal

Coywolf / Coyote



Feral savor fare

Posts: 86

HouseOfChimeras has a live oak headmate who has brought up the point that they experience their plant identity in much the same way someone experiences an animal identity...in a reactionary and instinctual manner...yet it is constantly pointed out that therianthropy does not include plant-kn. So either definition you go with involves some semblance of "elasm" and term "poking".

I can't speak for anyone else, but when this discussion came up before on Werdist, I basically invited Daraahagh (the headmate) to use whatever term was preferred. Whether a person considers their experience "animalistic" enough to call themselves a therian is, I think, up to the individual to decide.

And maybe some people don't consider themselves therians by definition but find the communities for therians useful. That's fine too. I am simply not going to tell someone they are or are not a therian unless they express something about their actual experiences that demonstrates they may or may not be. So no policing.

want to distance themselves from the otherkin community at large for whatever reason(s)

Maybe the reason is because they find they share experiences with "therians" instead of with the people who typically simply call themselves "otherkin." In this case, you're basically saying, "okay, use our community, but you're not actually one of us. Because we said so."

1. To try and force a wider definition on the community at large and get the majority to redefine a term that has been popularly defined in a different manner for at least 11 years.

There's not really any "forcing" necessary; basically all this would mean is inviting people to use terminology that they find useful to reflect their experiences, rather than denying them abilities to use terminologies based on relatively arbitrary ways they define their identities.

2. Taking a term that's specified to then be so general where you'd have even more of an "elitist" vibe by saying some of a kintype fit the definition but others do not. Who decides what's "animalistic" enough? By saying "earth animals" there is no value judgment.

I still don't think "animalistic" is general. It IS somewhat open to interpretation... but again... this way invites people to use terminologies that THEY choose to best reflect their experiences.

The individual person gets to decide if their experiences are animalistic enough to warrant "therian" terminology and communities over broader "otherkin" ones. No value judgement here either.

"Earth animals only" gives the exclusionary vibe by both defining people FOR them (which, as can be seen here, is offensive to folks and can lead to strife within the community), AND by making a distinction between "real" and "not real" -types. (The distinction being discussed in this thread is all about experience and individual choice of terminology, so no, the exclusion of plant-kn and such is not something enforced by the experience-based definition).

« Prev 1 2 Next » Actions Search...

Draft Horse



The face of tormented fury

Posts: 99 ♀

Mar 24, 2015 at 3:59pm Seraphynia said:
It seems that those who stick to the old definition are older folks not wanting to embrace the evolution of terminology

...which would be happening in this particular case.

Mar 24, 2015 at 3:59pm Seraphynia said:
or people who just want to use the term "therian" because they like it better and/or want to distance themselves from the otherkin community at large for whatever reason(s).

Quite honestly, I've little reason to fault them for this.

Mar 24, 2015 at 3:59pm Seraphynia said:
Furthermore, the term "animalkin" actually pre-dates the term "therian" to refer to animalistic kintypes...

...which is a term that's much less visible and therefore readily available to whomever is to join the communities.

Mar 24, 2015 at 3:59pm Seraphynia said:
If it were "real vs not real" then plant kin wouldn't get told they cannot use the term therian to refer to their experiences [...]

How exactly? I'm not sure I follow.

Mar 24, 2015 at 3:59pm Seraphynia said:
So either definition you go with involves some semblance of "elitism" and term "policing". [...] Either way you define it, "therian" will always exclude people who don't fit the definition.

Here I will say I agree with what Ksota and Thrix have brought up with regards to term policing: it should really be up to the individual to determine what their sort of feelings are and then find the term that suits them. We as the community can help them along the way but we are not to tell them what they are or what they aren't. We can tell them what the words mean and then let them determine what fits them best. The definition Ksota proposes actually very much provides for phytanthropes, especially seeing how you say the experiences are reportedly very similar. The "exclusion", to this end, is basically towards mundanes (I swear I almost wrote humans) and otherkin (who are the cultured, non-animalistic set).

« Prev 1 2 Next » Actions Search...

Mar 24, 2015 at 3:59pm Seraphyna said:

What I personally think would actually be pointless would be this:

1. To try and force a wider definition on the community at large and get the majority to redefine a term that has been popularly defined in a different manner for at least 11 years.
2. Taking a term that's specified to then be so general where you'd have even more of an "elitist" vibe by saying some of a kintype fit the definition but others do not. Who decides what's "animalistic" enough? By saying "earth animals" there is no value judgment.

Neither of which, to be pedantic, are something anyone is trying or intending to do.

A negative number was raised to a power that is not an integer.

Mar 24, 2015 at 4:29pm Quote

Kiscota
- Therian -
Standard Animal

Coywolf / Coyote



Feral savor fare
Posts: 86

"The "exclusion", to this end, is basically towards mundanes (I swear I almost wrote hoomans!) and otherkin (who are the cultured, non-animalistic set)."

Right, and those "exclusions" are matters of experience. The communities are formed because of shared experiences so the terminologies should, to be most meaningful, reflect the shared experiences.

Sorry.
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Mar 24, 2015 at 4:34pm Quote

Canlagr
- Therian -
Standard Animal

Bird



Personally, I feel that it's more beneficial to mingle with others who share your experiences. I've read descriptions by people whose "types are in no way considered earthly animals that were similar to my own. It's absolutely possible to have a non-earthly "type that is extremely similar to an existing species- someone used dragons and pterodactyls as an example- and I don't see any particular reason for a big distinction between two people whose experiences are so alike.

Naturally there IS a bit of wiggle room as to which "types are feral and which are not, as well as "types that could be seen as either, but I don't think that's a huge issue, to be honest. This is something only the person in question can really decide because they're the only ones who can know how feral they really feel, I see no reason for there to be any elitism involved. Feel feral? Good enough.

The same goes for plantkin. If their experiences are similar to those of feral therians, why not?

« Prev 1 2 Next » Actions Search...

Post# 27 ♀

Avatar drawn by Kasota.

Seraphyna
- Therian -
Standard Animal

Mar 24, 2015 at 4:59pm Quote

Standard Animal
Lion and Reef Shark



Resident Shikon

Post# 2,085 ♀



"All that is gold does not glitter; not all those who wander are lost." Tolkien
"All that we see or seem is but a dream within a dream." Poe

Mar 24, 2015 at 5:01pm Quote

Deleted
Deleted Member

Post# 0

I do not agree with your style analogy to counter my use of the LGTBQA group. Despite being a movement as a whole, there is a lot of animosity in the movement and there are subgroups. It isn't one big happy family. I get berated, insulted and silenced among other things by gay and lesbian people because I am Bi, so having a group of Bi people to talk to is extremely helpful so I can talk about purely Bi experiences, because gay people do not experience the world like I do. Same as having a Therian group to talk to instead of a otherkin group, because someone who identifies as a "dragon" does not experience the world in the same way I do or other earthly animals do. On the surface both groups superficially represent "Non-human connections" by down to the nitty-gritty, the terms can mean completely different things to different people. As nice as any group of any movement/minority/whatever getting along completely sounds, it will never happen, in any group. Feminism, gay rights, anything, there are divides and there will always be people who separate themselves into groups within groups, so trying to fight it is pointless in my opinion. And as for the dragon vs dinosaur thing, it is splitting hairs. A dinosaur is something that has physically lived on this planet, and is in no way shape or form a dragon, so comparing the two is sort of moot.

I personally, with the experiences I have had with "otherkin" groups, do not want to be labeled an otherkin, because I am not one.

Last Edit: Mar 24, 2015 at 5:04pm by Deleted

KiKatPurr
- Therian -
Standard Animal

Mar 24, 2015 at 9:15pm Quote

Jaguar  Mar 24, 2015 at 5:01pm @mountainmoss said:

« Prev 1 2 Next »

Lithlan
- Thieran -
Standard Animal

Mar 24, 2015 at 11:17pm

First off I want to apologize if there's any disjointed thoughts or broken sentences. Writing this reply half asleep. :/

Standard Animal
Wolf

As somebody who's not been in the community for an overly long amount of time, I never had the opportunity to see the terms develop. All I have as input in that regard is that I've seen the "Earthly Animal" definition almost everywhere I've looked for information or discussion about therianthropy. I think both camps have legitimate arguments backing them... though I think the root of the issue that Koota and some members on werelist (I'm not familiar with the discussion) are trying to address is that a lot of new comers to the community first discover the term thieran and form a connection with the word when they realize the experiences of thierians align with their own.

Lithlan Avatar

Personally I've found that a lot of the sites one might stumble upon when first considering a non-human identity refer to thierians. From personal experience, I find it's a more common term externally (and thus it's highly likely a lot of people will first discover they have a lot in common with thierians, before ever realizing what an "otherkin" was). When one finds a term that perfectly describes what they're going through they instantly feel a desire to engage in that community. In a sense, they form a bond to that concept. It's... part of their identity. When they discover that the term they've started to consider as being a part of who they are... is in fact not what they are, it's easy for them to start doubting their views.

I don't know what to say but I haven't updated this in like 2 years so here it is.

Posts: 459

The problem with all of this isn't with the term itself, or with the usage of it. The problem here is that therianthropy and related words are an extremely visible group of terms which people latch on to as soon as they find a kinship with the community. We could create any number of terms. We could create a new one for the animality definition, or even a different one for the earthly animal definition... but it doesn't matter. The problem is that the term is perceived to have some sort of weight to it. Being a thieran is not any different from being an otherkin (imo, using the earthly definition). Both terms have vast variance in experience among different individuals, because ultimately they describe the same condition. Believing oneself to be non-human on a non-physical level in some way. Beyond that, everyone's experience is unique to that individual.

I think that at this point the two terms are overkill. Thierians are a subset of otherkin, but "therian" by its nature isn't specific enough to be truly useful in communication. It's a half-measure. If we're speaking about terms we're looking at communication, which is designed to relay concepts. If I were to say "I'm a wolf otherkin"... by the "earthly animal" definition, that's already obvious that I would fit under the thieran banner. But meanwhile, if I say "I'm a thieran" it does nothing but let somebody know that I identify as an earthly animal (assuming I'm using that context). If we start playing with that definition, then it loses even more communicative value as the listener/reader must then determine what definition I'm using!

If we were to look at it in a different context, it's like saying "I'm a North American." It doesn't really identify what nationality you are, just that you're from that general area. Only... I don't see how that would be useful for thierians/otherkin. Relative geographic location can still be helpful... relative identity is less useful. Especially when there's such variance under the umbrella of otherkin/thieran as it is.

I got a little off course there but don't really want to delete it as it's relevant to the topic... but what I'm trying to say is that I personally found the term "therian" more visible when first searching strings of words and definitions for my experiences. In the case of prospective otherkin I think it would be very likely they would come across the thieran term first, and then think "Hey, this is exactly what I'm experiencing but with X (i.e. dragons)."

As far as what I can tell, I can see that the earthly animal definition is the commonplace one. Personally, I think that the commonly accepted definition should be relayed to the newer members of the community. That said, I think it should not be relayed in such a manner as to come across as hostile. When people are first taking their steps to learn more about non-human identities they're often either misguided or scared to "say or do something wrong"... I don't think that harping on them over terms right away is the answer by any means, but I don't see the problem with communicating the accepted definition by (what I perceive to be) the majority of the community.

Perhaps the term will evolve once more, or change again in the future, but that's just my own view on the discussion. I leave it up to the community at large to decide what the finality of the terms are, but I think it's definitely worth the conversation. I'm in the middle ground a bit on the issue so I can't really get behind either side. On the one hand I understand the arguments against the common definition, but on the other I see a commonly held description of the term from my own perspective. A definition which, until this point, I had understood to have been around for quite awhile.

"Talk sense to a fool and he calls you foolish."

Questioning oneself is the only vaccination against delusion.

« Prev 1 2 Next »

Standard Animal

Coywolf / Coyote



Feral savor fare

Posts: 86

Mar 24, 2015 at 4:54pm Caitagr said:

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Naturally there IS a bit of wiggle room as to which 'types are feral and which are not, as well as 'types that could be seen as either, but I don't think that's a huge issue, to be honest. This is something only the person in question can really decide because they're the only ones who can know how feral they really feel, I see no reason for there to be any elitism involved. Feel feral? Good enough.

The same goes for plantkin. If their experiences are similar to those of feral therians, why not?

Thanks. Yeah, this is kind of what I'm getting at. The experiences of non-earthly and earthy animals CAN be similar so why exclude them just based on the label given to those experiences? If they want to use the term because it reflects their experiences or is otherwise preferable (say, because they did not get on well with "otherkin" communities or don't like the word animakin), then let them define their own experiences that way. (By the way, since this thread keeps getting into semantics, I would also like to point out that "animal", when getting technical, refers to creatures in Kingdom Animalia, whereas therian means something more like "feral beast", so in a way, the term animakin is kind of MORE restrictive... not to mention it is kind of stupid sounding to some, and people should not be told to use x-kin terminology if they don't want it.)

If the focus of a community is on therian experiences, then make sure the topics stay on feral animal experiences. There's no real objective difference between what a pterodactyl and a wyvern experience is the wyvern has a lot of flying-reptile-animal experiences and wants to focus on those.

Sorry, English isn't my first language so I get definition wrong sometimes.

OH! Wow, your English is really good then. No worries at all; thanks for being chill.

I'd prefer to drop the MOGAI analogy entirely now, because I don't think it was a good one in the first place, and I feel like my point is being missed. Having meaningful subcommunities (bi, lesbian, etc, or therian, etc) is good when the communities are defined by experiences. When you define them by something irrelevant to the experience (like what clothes you're wearing or what animal/beast/etc you call yourself), it just creates division that is not meaningful.

Same as having a Therian group to talk to instead of a otherkin group, because someone who identifies as a "dragon" does not experience the world in the same way I do or other earthy animals do

I strongly disagree with this statement. If this statement WERE ALWAYS true, then yes, you have a case to separate therians as "earthy animals" because the experiences are different. But it is not always true! Take the wyvern/pterodactyl example again: If someone thinks they're a pterodactyl and talks about their experiences in ways that, say, bat, bird, and reptile therians relate to on different levels, that's good, right? All just therians talking.

Now say one day the pterodactyl therian wakes up and thinks about it and decides to interpret their experiences as "wyvern" instead of "pterodactyl." Do their experiences suddenly become irrelevant to therians and totally unrelatable? I think that's an absurd suggestion, and it would be terribly rude to say "now you can't call yourself a therian; post on the other side of the forums from now on."

For that matter, why are "earth-animal" therians just fine and dandy including prehistoric animals, for which we know very little regarding behavior, but not very similar non-earthly animals?

So, no,

« Prev 1 2 Next » Actions Search...

A dinosaur is something that has physically lived on this planet, and is in no way shape or form a dragon, so comparing the two is sort of moot.

This is not true either. A dragon or wyvern therian/otherkin's experiences can be virtually identical to that of dinosaurs. Why is it okay to include a dinosaur therian, when they are just interpreting their experiences without KNOWING dinosaur behavior, but as soon as they say "hey, maybe this is dragon stuff instead" then NOPE, totally different, away with you?

I personally, with the experiences I have had with "otherkin" groups, do not want to be labeled an otherkin, because I am not one.

But if a wyvern person says this same thing, because they've had bad experiences with otherkin groups and didn't fit in, well then, that's just too bad? And even if they felt at home with other therians and were able to relate to and compare experiences with pterodactyls, reptiles, etc.... you'd still tell this person "too ****in' bad, you are still an otherkin, not a therian"?

I think that's just plain mean and divisive.

I think both camps have legitimate arguments backing them... though I think the root of the issue that Kisota and some members on werelit (I'm not familiar with the discussion) are trying to address is that a lot of new comers to the community first discover the term therian and form a connection with the word when they realize the experiences of therians align with their own.

Kind of. I'm not so much focused on newbies as just... personal freedom to define one's experiences. If we want to "embrace the evolution" of the term, we have to let there be some room for people to decide what the terms mean for them. Yes, lines have to be drawn somewhere so the word "therian" still holds meaning and the communities remain useful and focused.

But the "earth animals ONLY" definition doesn't make sense as far as useful ways to divide subcommunities. It just doesn't make sense to include every animal that's ever existed on earth, including the prehistoric ones that we know little about, and exclude very similar people who just happen to call themselves something not "real." And it can be offense to people, old or new, who have found their experiences and preferences as far as communities are more aligned with therians than general "otherkin."

The Earth animal definition places meaningless restrictions on people. The "primarily animalistic experiences" definition invites people to decide for THEMSELVES whether their experiences are best defined that way and whether therian communities are most useful for them. That way the communities sort themselves and no policing of what terms people choose is necessary (outside reminding people to stay focused on animalistic experiences in therian-specific areas).

The appeals to tradition and the masses just don't hold much weight. "Well, most places do it this way and have for a long time".... not a good argument. And making up new terms like theromythic, or pushing people toward -kin terminologies like animalkin doesn't really solve the problem. Some people might like those terms but it doesn't really fix the issue of whether "therian as earth animals" is a good, meaningful distinction rather than an exclusionary and arbitrary one.

Instead of reverting to that, why not let people choose terms for themselves, based on their own experiences? New people can be told that SOME people think therian only refers to Earth animals, but I think they should be invited to use the term if they prefer it because their experiences are animalistic and they find therian corners of the internet most useful.

Last Edit: Mar 25, 2015 at 10:51am by Kisota

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« Prev 1 2 Next »

Posts: 114

Ksota
- Therian -
Standard Animal

May 8, 2015 at 10:07am

Welp, I don't want to beat a dead horse, but the forums here have been heh quiet, and my last comments (as well as quite a few others) were never really addressed. So might as well bump it up, get some real discussion going again.

Coywolf / Coyote

I'm really curious to see what people make of my points in my last post.

Buuuuuut if people want to give up on the taking points I've brought up so far, we could try a simplified refresher instead.

Here's the basics:
I think the term therianthropy should be defined not by the label given to one's identity but by the experience (that of a non-human feral creature, so primarily highly animalistic experiences).

Given that the experiences of some beast/feral creature "otherkin" are likely indistinguishable from those of Earth-animal therians, I see no justification for excluding those people from therian communities or terminology.

I would like to see an argument for the "Earth animal only" definition that does not call up any of these things:
1) *Argumentum ad antiquitatem* - the "appeal to tradition" fallacy (EG: "But this is the definition we've used for years!")
2) *Argumentum ad populum* - the "appeal to the masses" fallacy (EG: "But this is the most common definition now; everyone uses it!")
3) False premise - fallacy committed when one starts an argument with a statement that is not consistently true (EG: "If a person has a kin/theriotype that isn't an Earthly animal, their experiences are different from Earthly animal therians inherently / the two are not comparable!")
4) *Argumentum ad consequentiam* - the "appeal to consequences" fallacy - arguing about the (assumed) consequences rather than the initial discussion (EG: "If we allow people with non-human feral animal experiences who AREN'T Earth animals into therian communities the words will be meaningless / the communities not useful/etc".

Basically, I've yet to see a straightforward logical argument in favor of the Earthly animal definition. The arguments almost always either rely on statements like "well, this is the definition everybody uses / that's been in use for years" or just-so arguments like "non-Earthly animals are just different / I don't relate to them just because." Even arguments about comparisons to scientifically documented behaviors don't really hold water. For many fossil species, (and deep ocean species, for that matter), not a lot about behavior is known. So I have to kind of assume that some of this is related to ego - therians feeling more verified, more "real" somehow because they identify as Real Animals with Real, Scientifically Documented Behaviors and bodies.

Not like those *otherkin* who just have to slap labels on their experiences willy-nilly, right? And call themselves things that aren't even Real? Because if they actually had experiences like earthy animals, they'd identify as such, yeah? (please note the sarcasm; this is a bad argument).

If the basis for calling oneself "therian" is having scientifically verified behaviors and forms to compare oneself to, how do you avoid expressing that without it sounding EXACTLY like a statement of value, of therians being more based in reality? And should we then pull out the "you're not therian, then" statements of dismissal on people who demonstrate their animality in ways that are not scientifically accurate (EG wolf therians discussing the A/B/O social system?) or who identify as animals whose behavior is not well understood (say, a newly-discovered mammal?)

I just think there's something arbitrary and not entirely un-smug about including all of Animals under the "therian" terminology (be it wolf, lizard, insect, sea slug, brainless sea-squirt, or extinct brainless crinoid) but suddenly drawing the line at wyverns or pegas because whoa, that's too far out there, too unreliable.

Last Edit: May 8, 2015 at 10:23am by Ksota

Sorry.
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May 8, 2015 at 11:08pm

Haru/Shimo
- Otherkin -
Mythical Beast

Mythical Beast
Winged Kirin

I read through a few of the posts on this thread, including your previous post, to get an idea of what the debate is about. However, since you gave the option, I'll start fresh with your last one.

May 8, 2015 at 10:07am Ksota said:

Here's the basics:
I think the term therianthropy should be defined not by the label given to one's identity but by the experience (that of a non-human feral creature, so primarily highly animalistic experiences).

Given that the experiences of some beast/feral creature "otherkin" are likely indistinguishable from those of Earth-animal therians, I see no justification for excluding those people from therian communities or terminology.

A lot of this I can agree with, having experienced many sides of the spectrum. Whether mythical or known Earthly creature, many of the experiences are the same or comparably similar.
Just to restate, the primary issue you have is that the term Therianthropy would include, say, a white stallion, but not a unicorn of the same physical build and cognitive capacity.
While I wholly agree that that distinction seems a bit "unfair", it's not a matter of fairness or elitism.

The only thing, so far as this forum is concerned, that defines Therians as a specific group of Otherkin is that the creature that they feel that they are has a known physical counterpart on this planet, on this plane of existence.

Basically, I've yet to see a straightforward logical argument in favor of the Earthly animal definition. The arguments almost always either rely on statements like "well, this is the definition everybody uses / that's been in use for years" or just-so arguments like "non-Earthly animals are just different / I don't relate to them just because." Even arguments about comparisons to scientifically documented behaviors don't really hold water. For many fossil species, (and deep ocean species, for that matter), not a lot about behavior is known. So I have to kind of assume that some of this is related to ego - therians feeling more verified, more "real" somehow because they identify as Real Animals with Real, Scientifically Documented Behaviors and bodies.

Fair enough.

The reasoning for labeling a Therian as a specific kind of Otherkin is really just as I stated above. The distinction isn't a matter of preference, it's a matter of organization based on that which is available for physical study, and that which (as of this point in time) is not. For example:

Biology covers the study of life and living organisms.

Exo- and Astrobiology are the study of (or rather the search for in hopes of study of) life forms outside of the this planet.

One can surmise that should multiple variations of forms of life with definitive differences be discovered across the cosmos, each planet/realm of similarity would then be classified under their own terminologies, their own sub-biology.

This is the simple reasoning for Otherkin vs Therian, and why Therian is a sub-set of Otherkin.

All of Otherkin-dom is an untestable, unproven experience that only holds any weight because so many of us have similar experiences, Therianthropy included. So, since Therians have arguable proof that the creature they identify as actually exists/existed, that is one feature that distinguishes them from the rest of Otherkin. If nothing else, they can hold *that* much as something that anchors their experiences in plausible reality, where as Otherkin (like myself) identify as something that has no physical evidence to back its existence.

Regarding experiences/behavioral similarities, that's all fine, but even if mythology says ambrosia tastes like honey or wine, the later two are known to be fact, while the former is now little more than legend. On the other hand, should fossil evidence or living specimens of unicorns and dragons be discovered, then those creatures would be drawn into the fold of Therianthropy. This I can say without doubt, because there are many legends of creatures we know to be real, such as the dire wolf and the giant squid. At one point those things would have been considered Otherkin theriotypes, but now are not.



May 8, 2015 at 10:07am Ksota said:

Not like those *otherkin* who just have to slap labels on their experiences willy-nilly, right? And call themselves things that aren't even Real? Because if they actually had experiences like earthly animals, they'd identify as such, yeah? (please note the sarcasm; this is a bad argument).

If the basis for calling oneself "therian" is having scientifically verified behaviors and forms to compare oneself to, how do you avoid expressing that without it sounding EXACTLY like a statement of value, of therians being more based in reality? And should we then pull out the "you're not therian, then!" statements of dismissal on people who demonstrate their animality in ways that are not scientifically accurate (EG wolf therians discussing the A/B/O social system?) or who identify as animals whose behavior is not well understood (say, a newly-discovered mammal?)

This we can safely put under the undeniable fact that not one of us can verify what it -really- is to be the creatures we identify as. As certain as I am in my experiences, I cannot be certain that they match flawlessly with what any of those creatures experience day-to-day.

As with all of us, we're experiencing what we are through the filter of a human body, a human mind, and programmed social responses. Therians who misrepresent their theriotype's behaviors and physical attributes have this to blame. Even if their feelings are 100% genuine, and even if we were to assume that they exactly match the creature in question, all this is still being interpreted by a human mind with its own set of instincts, its own set of social behaviors, its own likes and dislikes, strengths and limits. The experiences will inevitably be altered by our current physical state, and so our own conceptions of "what it's like to be a _____" play a part.

This is likely why many otherkin name their non-human 'parts' as though they are separate, treating them as pieces of themselves. Depending on your understanding of what causes Otherkin experiences, doing so may be accurate, as those kintypes may be but parts of the whole. However, even in cases like reincarnation or multiplicity, what the individual living now feels that they are makes them otherkin or not, but that's a whole different topic.



May 8, 2015 at 10:07am Ksota said:

I just think there's something arbitrary and not entirely un-smug about including all of Animalia under the "therian" terminology (be it wolf, lizard, insect, sea slug, brainless sea-squirt, or extinct brainless crinoid) but suddenly drawing the line at wyverns or pegasi because whooa, that's too far out there, too unrelatable.

This I wholly agree with, up until the point of mythical creatures. I feel that "Therian" doesn't really fit as a good term for Otherkin of the Earthly Animal variety, specifically because Theria is a subclass of Mammalia several levels down. A very narrow term to now include all earth creatures in this sub-culture.

On the other hand, the reason it was used was because it derives from Therion, which in Greek meant as you said above, "Wild Beast". Therefor, adding the suffix for human (anthrop) to create Therianthropic, which means part man, part beast, fits with the general description of our state of being (as well as many ancient god figures) which later becomes Therianthrope to refer to an individual who is Therianthropic.

It's not just a matter of "This is how it has been used" to reference tradition as validation for its use today (although a *GREAT* many things we do/say today are done for that reason alone), but the term has meaning that fits the experience. The issue you've been arguing then is "what counts as 'beast' and what doesn't". To that, I can only refer you back to the previous distinction between Otherkin and Therian. Logically, by the reasoning for using Therianthrope as a term for the experience of feeling part 'creature' while physically human, yes, all Otherkin are technically "Therianthropes" so long as the creature they identify as is bestial. That is likely one reason why this place is called "Therian Wilderness" rather than "Otherkin Wilderness".

However, for the sake of simplicity, a Therianthrope is generally something that is both human and part known animal. Even in mythology, anything that was considered a "Man-Beast" was in part a known animal, be it canine, feline, avian, or equine. The number of mythical Therianthropes that were part man, part mythical creature, are so few that their existence doesn't impact the meaning of the term. Therefor, those who feel they are part mythical creature now, have adopted the term Otherkin, rather than Therianthrope.



May 8, 2015 at 10:07am Ksota said:

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« Prev 1 2 Next » Actions Search...

Standard Animal Part of my argument for why therian = earthly animal makes sense has always been this:

**Standard Animal
Lion and Reef Shark**



Resident Shikon
Posts: 2,085

The purpose of language is to specify, quantify, clarify, etc. If therianthropy were to refer to anyone with a bestial non-human identity, it would include most people. It would, therefore, lose its meaning. If, now, therianthropy were to include everything from angels to fae to dragons to the creature from the planet X (all because these individuals experience their identity in an animistic manner), then the word wouldn't really distinguish anything. Therians are currently otherkin by defintion. The purpose of the word therian is to distinguish a specific type of otherkin in such a way that has purpose and true specificity. It's not about being elitst or non inclusive, it's about how language works...that purpose of language.

This is why people are consistently coining new terms such as theriomytic (to refer to mythical animals), animal/other-hearted (to refer to those with a connection to something but not an identity as that something), why contherian was first coined, etc. Since the purpose of language is communication and specificity (among other things), in my opinion reverting a term to be more generalized effectively renders it meaningless.

I know you don't want this argument, but let's be realistic...even if some people agreed that therianthropy should refer to animakstic experiences in general, do you honestly expect the enough members of our relatively large, divided (across platforms such as forums/social media), etc. community to change how we've been using a term as a whole to be "less" specific?



"All that is gold does not glitter; not all those who wander are lost."- Tolkien
"All that we see or seem is but a dream within a dream."-Poe

May 11, 2015 at 7:34pm Quote

Kisota
- Therian -
Standard Animal

Coywolf / Coyote



Feral savor fare
Posts: 86

So, since Therians have arguable proof that the creature they identify as actually exists/existed, that is one feature that distinguishes them from the rest of Otherkin.

Okay, here's the most relevant part. I agree with a bit of the rest of your post, which makes it interesting to me that we're coming to different conclusions. But I think this is at the crux of it.

I understand that this is why the Earth animal definition is used. But it's not been made clear to me why that's a good categorization to use other than:

However, **for the sake of simplicity**, a Therianthrope is generally something that is both human and part known animal.

...for the sake of simplicity.

This statement is pretty much true:

All of Otherkin-dom is an untestable, unproven experience that *only* holds any weight because so many of us have similar experiences, Therianthropy included.

I agree with this for the most part.

« Prev 1 2 Next » Actions Search...

However...Because what we all ARE is a totally subjective experience, unproven and in many ways untestable...

Why divide the community based on whose labels are objectively demonstrated to exist? It is a non-sequitur of an argument.

The number of mythical Therianthropes that were part man, part mythical creature, are so few that their existence doesn't impact the meaning of the term.

I'm not sure what to make of this statement... I feel like I've seen a lot of dragons and gryphons in the therian community. But if there's not enough mythical therians around to impact the meaning of the term, why not just let them use it?

If, now, therianthropy were to include everything from angels to fae to dragons to the creature from the planet X (all because these individuals experience their identity in an animalistic manner), then the word wouldn't really distinguish anything.

But what part of my argument automatically includes angels and fae? What I'm saying is that if someone has a 'type that is *functionally an animal*, real or not, they should be able to call themselves therian and participate in therian-relevant community discussions. By functionally an animal, I mean feral, animalistic, driven by instincts and urges immediately comparable to "real" animals.

The purpose of the word therian is to distinguish a specific type of otherkin in such a way that has purpose and true specificity.

But the way it's used right now it draws utterly arbitrary lines between "real" animal and "fake" animal with identical experiences. Specific? Sure. Having purpose? Well... I suppose it serves the purpose of making a really SIMPLE definition that we can use to categorize people whether they like it or not.

Because defining the term as having something functionally animal as a 'type would not dilute therian community resources, there's just no support for the idea that it would render the term meaningless. The term would still serve the same function of distinguishing the animal subset of otherkin. It would just no longer say "well but you're not a REAL animal."

It would leave people the freedom to define themselves and determine whether therian-specific communities and discussions are relevant to their experiences. It's not as simple for people who want to categorize. I suppose, because it means that we no longer get to label dragons or gryphons or whatever against their will. Mythical animals would decide for themselves whether otherkin, therian, or theriomorphic is their preferred term.

But if we're going to open the door to a dragon when they decide they're really a dinosaur, regardless of their actual experiences, why not just let them decide what community suits their experiences in the first place?

I know you don't want this argument, but let's be realistic...even if some people agreed that therianthropy should refer to animalistic experiences in general, do you honestly expect the enough members of our relatively large, divided (across platforms such as forums/social media), etc. community to change how we've been using a term as a whole to be "less" specific?

This actually isn't an argument against my definition, so I don't really mind hearing it. It's a different matter entirely. And I don't know whether it would change everywhere. Even if it didn't, it would probably make a difference to some people to be welcome to the terms they want instead of being told "no, you're not real, so you're not one of us."

The definition I'm in favor of is really only marginally less specific, so things might not even change all that much, except for the mythical animals out there who find that the therian community suits them better.

[« Prev](#)
1
2
[Next »](#)
Actions Search...

Seraphyna
- Therian -
Standard Animal

Standard Animal
Lion and Reef Shark



Resident Shanon
Posts: 2,085

May 11, 2015 at 9:18pm Quote

May 11, 2015 at 7:34pm Kisota said:

But what part of my argument automatically includes angels and fae?

So, then, who decides what is animal enough? Plenty of fae fit your definition of "feral animal" as do plenty of demons, angels, etc.

May 11, 2015 at 7:34pm Kisota said:

What I'm saying is that if someone has a type that is *functionally* an animal real or not, they should be able to call themselves therian and participate in therian-relevant community discussions. By functionally an animal, I mean feral, animalistic, driven by instincts and urges immediately comparable to "real" animals.

Which is true of fae like the cat sidhe, black dogs, etc. and true of many demons, angels, similar which may not be entirely "feral animal," but have forms that fit that bill. So who, then, gets to decide what is animalistic enough to be therian and what isn't with your proposed expanded definition? Earthly animals is not a judgment call...animalistic, even with the inclusion of feral, is. Your proposed return to a broader definition would then include far more value judgments and "poking" than the fact based definition currently used by the majority of the community.

Last Edit: May 11, 2015 at 9:18pm by Seraphyna



"All that is gold does not glitter: not all those who wander are lost." - Tolkien
"All that we see or seem is but a dream within a dream." - Poe

Kisota
- Therian -
Standard Animal

Coywolf / Coyote



May 12, 2015 at 7:25am Quote

So who, then, gets to decide what is animalistic enough to be therian and what isn't with your proposed expanded definition?

The individual gets to decide for himself. I've stated this numerous times, here

It means that communities for "therians" are inclusive to those with "beast"/feral type experiences and leaves people to decide for themselves whether their experiences are predominantly feral, and therefore whether the term is appropriate (or, of course, whether therian communities are going to be useful for them),

Here

It would leave people the freedom to define themselves and determine whether therian-specific communities and discussions are relevant to their experiences. It's not as simple for people who want to categorize, I suppose, because it means that we no longer get to label dragons or gryphons or whatever against their will. Mythical animals would decide for themselves whether otherkin, therian, or theriomorphic is their preferred term.

Let's be honest, the community is already self-sorting to an extent.

On a place like Werelist, for instance, the focus is strictly therianthropology. Feral animal experiences. Occasionally we get fictionkin with human 'types, straight-up otherkin, and other sorts. If they don't have anything resembling an animal-type, they're usually asked "why come here?"

Most of them eventually stop posting because the content isn't relevant to their experiences, or people aren't really responding much (because they don't share a lot of the experiences).

People already tend to become more active in communities (and adopt the terminology of communities) whose focus is relevant to their experiences.

All I'm saying is we should *let people do that* without drawing too many more arbitrary lines in the sand.

So in the case of:

fae like the cait sidhe, black dogs, etc. and true of many demons, angels, similar which may not be entirely "feral animal," but have forms that fit that bill

... It is kind of up to them. Having an animal form isn't the same as functionally being an animal. I suspect many of these people are going to find that therian communities and terminologies are too limited or otherwise don't suit them. But for the ones that do? The ones that are functionally pretty close to equivalent to a real-world animal?

Why just exclude them on the basis of "real" and "not real"?

I'm sensing that a lot of people's discomfort with this definition is because it means we'd no longer be able to decide FOR OTHERS what terms they need to use. Our neat "simple" categories that we can sort people into (regardless of whether we even know them) wouldn't exist anymore, and we'd actually have to relinquish that control and have discussions with people about what terms they prefer and why.

But I don't see this as a problem. With something so personal, I value personal freedom and actually meaningful categorizations over simple but arbitrary ones. In many cases, yeah, words need to have strict definitions that aren't open to personal interpretation. But when it comes to personal identifiers, it should be up to the individual to decide whether or not a label is relevant enough for them to adopt. The way the terminology is now, it categorically excludes some people who are definitely animals but just aren't "real" ones.

Is simplicity and our ability to *define others* so important that we'd rather categorically exclude someone than listen to his reasoning and maybe let him choose for himself?

regardless of what definition you use, you will get people "enforcing" it for the sake of "shared experience".

So is it the grey area of what is shared and not that makes you uncomfortable? I'm just trying to figure out why this is a problem.

The way it is now, if you have a totally feral wyvern come in and introduce himself as a wyvern therian, you get people saying "Nope, you're not! You're an otherkin!" As I linked to above, sometimes this is pretty upsetting for people, largely because it removes their prerogative to choose their own personal labels.

Under the more inclusive definition, we'd now have to actually ask him why he calls himself that, instead of telling him what he is. If a person was actually a sentient wyvern with like, a religion and society or whatever, probably there would be people saying "well, therian refers to people who are feral animals, so do you think that term is really best for you? Maybe you'd find more in common with a more general otherkin community?" And we'd maybe remind him to stay on topic if the focus of the forum was strictly therianthropology.

But I honestly don't think it would be appropriate here either to just tell him "nah, you don't sound animal enough, so you're not a therian." Questioning is appropriate. Reminders of community focus are appropriate. I don't think outright denying people their chosen personal labels is appropriate.

If therianthropology refers to anyone who finds themselves animalistic enough to "fit in" to the community and benefit from it, then you might as well not use the term at all because it becomes meaningless.

How do you figure? This argument simply does not follow. I've already demonstrated that the term would hold virtually the same meaning as referring to animal people, but would simply no longer categorically exclude animal people with fictional -types.

In fact, the definition used on Project Shift (derivations of which are commonly used elsewhere), *would not change at all*. Therianthropology would still be "the state of being a person who is, feels, or believes he/she is in part or whole (non-physically) one or more non-human animals on an integral, personal level." The only change would be the removal of an arbitrary restriction (and the discouragement of categorizing people against their will).

« Prev 1 2 Next » Actions Search...

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Seraphyna
- Thieran -
Standard Animal

Standard Animal
Lion and Reef Shark



May 12, 2015 at 9:55am Quote

Except it wouldn't hold much meaning at all. It would then apply to just about every kintype in some way as someone out there would identify as a feral version of it. Some dragons would be thieran, some wouldn't. Some gryphons would be thieran, others wouldn't. You would just be segregating people who identify as the same basic creature into camps as opposed to bringing people together who identify as the same category of creature/being/whatever. People can already hang around the thieran community who don't fit the current definition. Few are kicked out, they are just often gently corrected when they call themselves thieran and told there are other terms that better fit their identity (such as theriomorphic).

The earthly specification brings people together with a shared experience...that of identifying as a feral animal that exists/existed on earth. I can't relate to a dragon, but I can relate to a wolf...and dragons have that theriomorphic term to slap on that has been around for a few years now. There's nothing wrong with having branches to a community, just as the otherkin community has branches.

If you want to use a wider definition of therianthropy along with a minority of folks, go for it...but the majority of the community isn't likely to change despite your best efforts, especially given the fact that on social media people are trying to come up with their own definitions such as otherkinity at large being about liking something or connecting with it.

Resident Shikon
Posts: 2,055 ♀



"All that a gold does not glitter; not all those who wander are lost." - Tolkien
"All that we see or seem is but a dream within a dream." - Poe

Kiota
- Thieran -
Standard Animal

Coywolf / Coyote



May 12, 2015 at 10:47am Quote

Except it wouldn't hold much meaning at all. It would then apply to just about every kintype in some way as someone out there would identify as a feral version of it. Some dragons would be thieran, some wouldn't. Some gryphons would be thieran, others wouldn't.

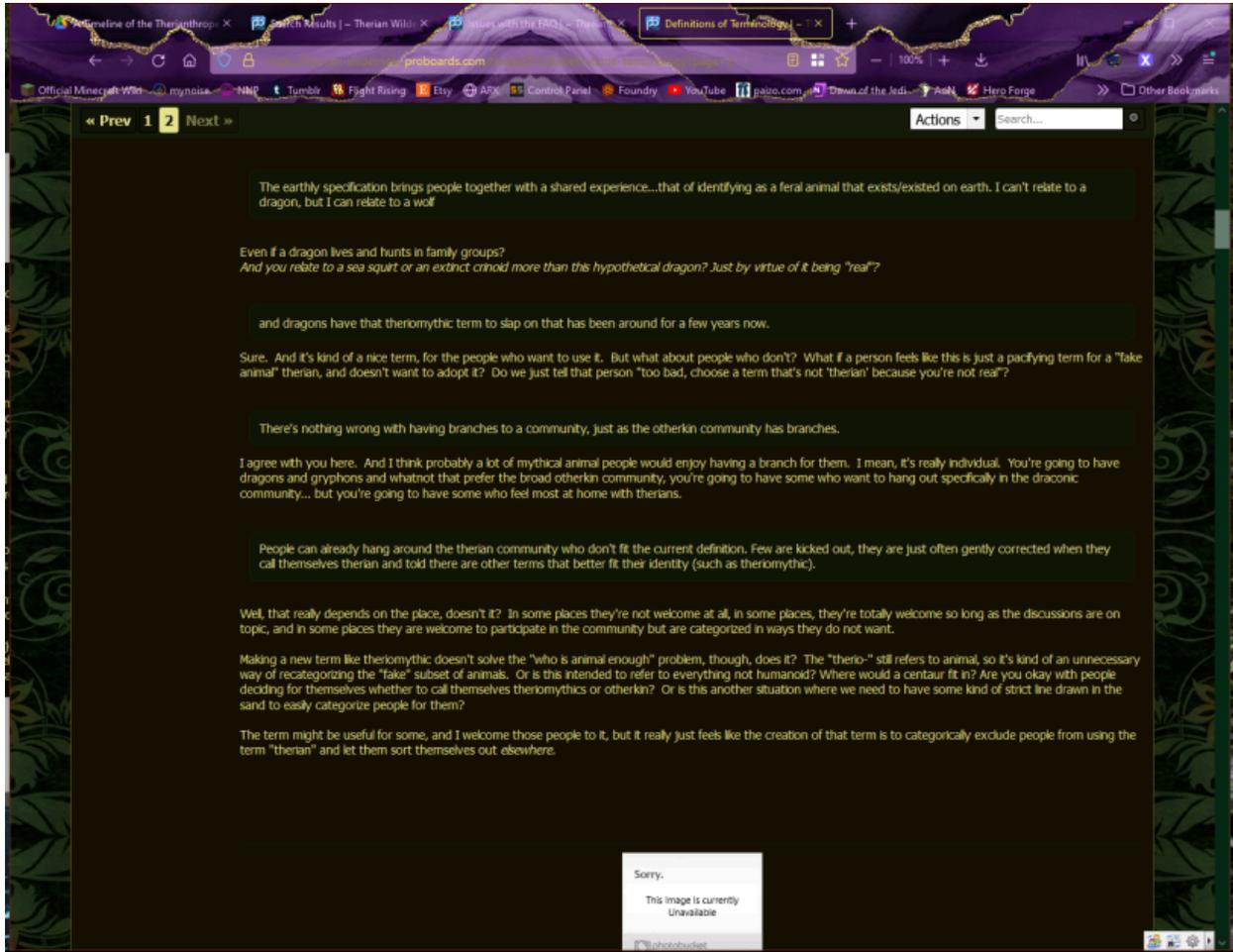
Yep, and I invite people to decide for themselves whether they are or not. If it makes people happy, maybe these things could be thought of as otherkin unless otherwise stated? But I think a gryphon or dragon who is more comfortable with thieran communities and terminologies should not be denied either of those things.

You would just be segregating people who identify as the same basic creature into camps as opposed to bringing people together who identify as the same category of creature/being/whatever.

Feral survivor fare
Posts: 86

I honestly do not know how to express any plainer that I am proposing people define themselves as opposed to being segregated artificially. There is nothing segregating whatsoever about telling people "If you identify as an animal, fictional or not, and want to call yourself thieran instead of otherkin or something, go ahead."

The idea that this is somehow more segregating than telling people "No, you're not a thieran, we're putting you in the otherkin usergroup" is... not sensible.



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[photobucket](#)

Seraphyna
 - Therian -
 Standard Animal
Standard Animal
Lion and Reef Shark



Resident Shanon
 Posts: 2,085 ♀

May 12, 2015 at 1:07pm

Anyone can call themselves otherkin as the word refers to people who identify as non-human. Even if you got our widespread community to revert to a broader meaning of therian, you will always have (as you've always had) people who run forums/groups/etc. enforcing their idea of what therianthropy and otherkinity is whether it's true or not. This will never change. People will always be categorized by others. How many dragons can you think of who are always referred to as "dragon kin" and label themselves as simply dragons or draconic? I can name quite a few. A centaur is still theriomythic/otherkin...it's a mythical creature. It's not a difficult thing to figure out...mythical animal = theriomythic. Centaurs, mermaids, unicorns, gryphons, dragons, etc. are all animals of myth.

Ultimately, any good community will welcome anyone to stick around who feels comfortable there...but people are also going to defend what words have meant for years and they have come to know. Language evolves to specify and it has in the community.

I often find that therians forget how many other communities evolved independently and we force otherkin terminology on them. Unicorns, fae and elves, dragons, etc. all had their own communities and terminology devoid of the -kin suffix. Many hate being called -kin and yet they are...or is this the only issue you find worth arguing for?



"All that is gold does not glitter; not all those who wander are lost." - Tolkien
"All that we see or seem is but a dream within a dream." - Poe

Ksota
 - Therian -
 Standard Animal
Coywolf / Coyote



Feral savior fae
 Posts: 95

May 13, 2015 at 8:59am

Let's stick to the questions at hand. I'll address what you've said, but I can't help but notice that a lot of the points I have brought up in the thread are being immediately dropped and other less relevant ideas picked up and tried on for size. This situation does bring up a lot of further questions, and I'll try to touch on them, but I want to keep the thread from getting too off topic.

Anyone can call themselves otherkin as the word refers to people who identify as non-human

Okay, I'm with you here, but I'm not sure I get the point.

Even if you got our widespread community to revert to a broader meaning of therian, you will always have (as you've always had) people who run forums/groups/etc. enforcing their idea of what therianthropy and otherkinity is whether it's true or not. This will never change. People will always be categorized by others. How many dragons can you think of who are always referred to as "dragon kin" and label themselves as simply dragons or draconic? I can name quite a few.

More or less irrelevant. Yeah, people love to stick others in boxes, regardless of what the people want. Does this make it right? Is this something we should encourage and perpetuate by holding to arbitrary restrictions?

Or, is your point that people can call themselves what they want, even when others are labeling them something else they don't want? Because I'm with you there, if that's what you're saying. I'm just also saying that no one's given me a logical justification for the "earth animals only" definition of therian, and so I think it's pointless, rude, and kind of silly to deny the term to mythical animals who find it represents their experience as an animal well.

« Prev 1 2 Next »

A centaur is still theriomorphic/otherkin...it's a mythical creature. It's not a difficult thing to figure out...mythical animal = theriomorphic. Centaurs, mermaids, unicorns, gryphons, dragons, etc. are all animals of myth.

My point was that the problem of "what is an animal and what is not" is still present. Centaurs? Mermaids? These count? Is it just a matter of having at least a partially non-human form? What about vampires with multiple forms? What about selkies and faeries and more feral types of elves? Using the term theriomorphic makes "therian" a simple & arbitrary definition, but still leaves the question of "where do you draw the line between animal and not" wide open. The problem that you have with making the term therian open to interpretation of "animal" is not solved by making up the term theriomorphic. It's just moved somewhere else. Is "therian" the only community word that's so important to have strict, objectively defined rules for?

I often find that therians forget how many other communities evolved independently and we force otherkin terminology on them. Unicorns, fae and elves, dragons, etc. all had their own communities and terminology devoid of the -kin suffix. Many hate being called -kin and yet they are...or is this the only issue you find worth arguing for?

Irrelevant. Red herring. But in the interest of not ignoring your words...

Refer back to what I said earlier - is this right? Is this a good thing to do to people I don't think it is. That's actually part of my point. The website is not the only one to force -kin terminology on people who do not want it. My entire point is that people should be allowed to use terms that reflect their experiences and that they prefer. I also wouldn't call a wolf person a therian if they didn't want that term (even though they fit it by really any definition). I wouldn't even tell them "well TECHNICALLY you're this" because there's no point, and can come across as rude. If they want to call themselves a "wolkin" or something instead, or avoid community terms at all and just say "wolf person", then I will respect their wishes, regardless of how I personally feel about the terms.

Time and time again in this thread I have said that I think we let people choose their own personal identifiers. The only time it's appropriate to deny someone it when their use of a term is so heinously inaccurate that it would dilute meaning in terms and resources in communities. Categorical exclusion of "fictional" animals excludes people whose experiences are immediately comparable to common "earthly animals" in the community. This distinction becomes arbitrary when one considers any earthly animal, however basal, brainless, or extinct, a theriotype.

Are we at least in agreement that telling people they're "otherkin" whether they want to be called that or not isn't nice? It makes a convenient blanket term, so for that it's useful. But I don't want to be called otherkin, and so I'm sensitive to that when I'm talking to people, and don't lay the term on any specific people who might not prefer it.

Like I was saying earlier when someone said they had bad experiences with otherkin and didn't want to be called one:

But if a wyvern person says this same thing, because they've had bad experiences with otherkin groups and didn't fit in, well then, that's just too bad? And even if they felt at home with other therians and were able to relate to and compare experiences with pterodactyls, reptiles, etc.... you'd still tell this person "too ****in' bad, you are still an otherkin, not a therian"?

Okay, now to steer things back on track some more, I'll point out some questions/taking points that haven't really been addressed yet.

Regarding "segregation":

There is nothing segregating whatsoever about telling people "if you identify as an animal, fictional or not, and want to call yourself therian instead of otherkin or something, go ahead." The idea that this is somehow more segregating than telling people "No, you're not a therian, we're putting you in the otherkin usergroup" is... not sensible. [Benefit of removing the earth-animal restriction: less segregating than categorical exclusions based on -type]

Regarding earth animals as being inherently more relatable:

« Prev 1 2 Next »

Mythical Beast
Winged Kirin



"The world as you know it barely exists, for you know next to nothing about it."
Posts: 608

before being dissected sentence-by-sentence.

All **Homo Sapiens** on this planet are called *Humans*.
All **Humans** on this planet are classified by races based on their physical features and lineage.
Ere Go, Indian, Native American, Asian, African, etc., are all specific *kinds* of **Humans**, and each kind further divides based on more specific traits/areas.

THIS IS HOW CLASSIFICATION WORKS

The different terms are there for IDENTIFICATION PURPOSES, and while people ignorantly argue/fight with each other over them, they're all humans.

Taking this a step further:
Here on Earth, we have animals that are classified by their physical attributes on **MANY** levels.
We also know of creatures that only exist in mythology with no physical proof or remains. As one might expect, they are called "Mythical Creatures", and are classified by their physical descriptions.

THIS IS A FACT of science present in modern society.

So, we continue this:
All **Humans** who identify internally as something that isn't human, are called *Otherkin*.
All **Otherkin** are classified by race based on what they feel they are internally.
Since there is an accepted and arguable difference between Animals and Mythical Creatures here on Earth, that same distinction exists if someone feels they identify as one or the other.

That. Is. All.

It is ENTIRELY a method of identification here, to help other members see at a glance how you identify so they don't have to ask repeatedly.
We DO NOT separate Therians from Otherkin, as you seem to be stuck on.
Therians ARE Otherkin, and in no way suggest that we think Otherkin are fake, nor that Therians are more valid in their identification.

All that we are is what we experience.
I don't care if you feel you're a Pokemon or a Na'vi. If that's what you feel, and you're absolutely certain it can't be anything else, that's what you feel.
Because we *KNOW* that those creatures are the product of a human fictional art forms, that is further classified as *Fiction Kin* for that fact alone.
That doesn't make it less any less valid if it's what you feel, it doesn't exclude you from discussion or participation in anything here.

As a personal example, I am Otherkin. I identify as a Kirin, a creature that only exists in Asian mythology.
I have memories of having lived as a Kirin, as well as a Dragon, both "feral, animal-like mythical creatures", but mythical creatures nonetheless.
I also have memories of having lived as Earth animals, such as a falcon and others I've yet to satisfactorily confirm.
If the memories of the mythical creatures weren't there, I would likely be considered a Therian, just one of many types of Otherkin.

Does it matter? NO! I am who I am, I am what I am, and the classification is merely a social identification mechanism.
So get over it.

Last Edit: May 15, 2015 at 3:50pm by [Nana Storm](#)

« Prev 1 2 Next » Actions Search...

All Otherkin are classified by race based on what they feel they are internally.



I understand that's how the classification works. And I know that it's a very simple and straightforward method. I won't argue that. My argument is entirely about whether such an artificial and taxonomically-based scheme is appropriate or fair for internal experiences.

It is ENTIRELY a method of identification here, to help other members see at a glance how you identify so they don't have to ask repeatedly.

Feral savor fare
Posts: 86

Well, okay, but my point is that maybe someone DOESN'T identify as "otherkin." I know many earth-animal therians who, though they technically belong under the otherkin umbrella, do not wish to be labeled as such. I've never seen anyone get too offended when an Earth animal person says "please, I prefer to just be called a therian."

My argument is that there's no logical reason, then, to deny the request when an animal that is NOT Earthly says "Please, I have always been in the therian community and relate to other animals; I prefer to be called therian."

Does it matter? NO!

Not to you specifically. But it matters to some people, namely non-Earthly animal otherkin who identify with the therian community and are told "No, you can't call yourself therian here, you get to be put in THIS group instead" or are flat-out denied access to therianthropy groups or forums.

Yes, therians are considered a subset of otherkin. However, if the term "therian" is going to be a distinguished subset, it should have criteria that are logical and fair.

To my mind, there is no objective taxonomy of the experience of being therian/otherkin. I don't think there's a logical justification (other than simplicity) for using that objective taxonomy to distinguish between subjective experiences, particularly when it clearly feels exclusive to some people.

the classification is merely a social identification mechanism.

Yes. There IS something to be said for having a straightforward method of identifying one another. But the term therian has and will always refer to animalistic-identified people. My argument is about the further restriction being placed on that definition. The "Earth animal" restriction is exclusionary and not particularly useful in categorizing animalistic people. I've seen it happen here that people are actually really hurt by being denied their chosen identity labels. But I'm not just arguing about THIS site. This is a general discussion about the value of this definition being used anywhere. Some other places where it's used reject non-Earthly animals entirely. And even the places that don't still have people telling people they can't use the term therian.

I guess it's a matter of societal simplicity, then? The ability of society or the group to put people into neat boxes? I guess I just value personal choice over that, at least when there's nothing to be lost by allowing it. None of the arguments here other than "it's a simple way of classifying people" really hold up, but if that's really that important to folks, then arguing kind of is pointless, I suppose. It could end up being an argument of philosophy.

So get over it.

With all due respect, this is a really discouraging tone to see being used by a member of the administration, given that the tone of the discussion has not rude or unpleasant up to this point.

« Prev 1 2 Next »

definition of the term.

But as I stated earlier, I can't change other sites. Even if we all on this forum adjusted how we classify "Therians" to fit your preferences, it won't matter. Therians will simply be classified further as "Earth-Animal Therians" and "Mythical Therians", and the issue will remain. The problem is other people being elitist, exclusionary, and wanting to separate. Regardless of the term, it will happen, so expanding the use of Therian is pointless.

The only real solution is rise above their pettiness and move on, leading by example and showing that Therian or Otherkin doesn't matter. It's ONLY a classification of creatures, matching what is done in the real world by recognizing the simple difference between real animals and mythical creatures. We solve the problem by treating people based on their statements and their actions, regardless of how they identify.

I guess it's a matter of societal simplicity, then? The ability of society or the group to put people into neat boxes? I guess I just value personal choice over that, at least when there's nothing to be lost by allowing it. None of the arguments here other than "it's a simple way of classifying people" really hold up, but if that's really that important to folks, then arguing kind of is pointless, I suppose. It could end up being an argument of philosophy.

I'll reiterate it again just to make sure the point gets across, but the distinction of Therian as "Earth Animals" has the same logical reasoning as why we make said distinction between "Earth Animals" and "Mythical Creatures" in real world daily life. It's not just social simplicity, it's an established difference between what we have evidence to prove exists, and what we don't. All of the arguments you're saying don't hold up, only don't hold up in your perspective, as many of them have very valid reasoning which has been offered repeatedly now.

With all due respect, this is a really discouraging tone to see being used by a member of the administration, given that the tone of the discussion has not rude or unpleasant up to this point.

Yes, it is a discouraging tone. I've been watching this conversation go back and forth for days now, participants picking apart sentences out of context and arguing in circles, as though no one reads the whole message and takes it into consideration. I'm tired of it.

We are what we are. Those who have a serious issue with being considered Therian or not need to rethink what matters. A person who feels he's a dragon, no matter how feral, is by the logical definition as the terms are currently used, Otherkin. **What matters is that he experiences being a dragon, that feeling it affects his life, affects how he sees and interacts with the world. Whether identifying as a dragon makes him Therian, Otherkin, Draconic, or Therio-Mythic, is irrelevant, and has no impact on his personal and subjective experiences.**

If such a person is dealing with problems on some forum or website because of their elitist imposed segregation of different groups, then they need to attack the forced separation or remove themselves from that situation, not argue over who is and isn't included in a certain group.

Last Edit: May 15, 2015 at 7:17pm by [Hauu Shana](#)

"Wise men speak because they have something to say; Fools because they have to say something."
-Plato
It takes a long time to say anything, when you explain. So I don't say anything, unless it's worth taking a long time to say.

Ksota
- Therian -
Standard Animal
Coywolf / Coyote

May 15, 2015 at 10:17pm

Quote

If someone makes such a request, we can refer to them by their kintype, or rather their name, which is the normal practice. However, just because someone



What matters is that he experiences being a dragon, that feeling it affects his life, affects how he sees and interacts with the world. Whether identifying as a dragon makes him Therian, Otherkin, Draconic, or Therio-Mythic, is irrelevant, and has no impact on his personal and subjective experiences.

Okay. I agree with this actually. It is irrelevant what term that makes him fall under. So if he happens to choose "therian" as his preferred nomenclature, people should at the very least not immediately deny him that. What term he find most appropriate may have an impact on his social experiences. And that's what I find unfortunate. If a person's experience is relevant to any of these terms, I don't see a reason why he should be denied any of them.

If such a person is dealing with problems on some forum or website because of their elitist imposed segregation of different groups, then they need to attack the forced separation or remove themselves from that situation, not argue over who is and isn't included in a certain group.

I kind of agree with this too, but attacking forced separation can mean arguing about who is excluded and why (note that I'm certainly not trying to imply here that T-WV has forced separation). In the case of groups that do categorically exclude non-Earthly animals, what more is there for a person to do except argue for their inclusion? And when people are welcomed by being told "nope, you're not a therian" I'm not sure how they should respond when they're hurt by that. There's nothing to do but argue your case, submit to being reclassified against your will by the group, or dip out. I find that a bit sad. I guess I'm glad I don't have to deal with that, but for those that do...

It's just...

I've seen more than a couple people feeling hurt over this distinction, and I've known enough mythical animal-folk over the years to know that their experiences are not inherently less relatable. Some of them have always hung around 'real world' animals, have shifts, and experience feelings, instincts, urges, dreams, shifts, and so on that are really comparable to those real-world animal people. So some of them find the same terminology relevant. What is gained by denying it to them?

So I don't think it's justifiable to be one of the ones who enforces that distinction. It can hurt people and gives us nothing in return but an artificial categorization. Why not let categories and groups develop naturally instead by like experience? Why not allow people that autonomy?

Last Edit: May 15, 2015 at 10:23pm by Kisota

« Prev 1 2 Next »

Mythical Beasts
Winged Kijin



The world as you know it barely exists, for you know next to nothing about it.

Posts: 608

May 15, 2015 at 10:17pm Kisota said:

It's just...
I've seen more than a couple people feeling hurt over this distinction, and I've known enough mythical animal-folk over the years to know that their experiences are not inherently less reliable. Some of them have always hung around 'real world' animals, have shifts, and experience feelings, instincts, urges, dreams, shifts, and so on that are really comparable to those real-world animal people. So some of them find the same terminology relevant. What is gained by denying it to them?

So I don't think it's justifiable to be one of the ones who enforces that distinction. It can hurt people and gives us nothing in return but an artificial categorization. Why not let categories and groups develop naturally instead by like experience? Why not allow people that autonomy?

Look, I know you're nice and you're just trying to do what you feel is right, but there's one big issue with your argument that I have to disagree with.

It is logical to distinguish between mythical and real animals because it has a bearing on objective reality. One can be measured objectively. One can not. That distinction has no meaning when talking about subjective experiences.

My issue with this is your reasoning that it doesn't.
If someone has examined their own experiences to claim that they are X, then they get classified based on what X is.
If X = Wolf, that's an animal.
If X = Dragon, that's a mythical creature.

That is why the distinction exists and applies to our subjective experiences.
As you're aware, classifying is how humans understand our world's many pieces. You may not personally be able to test and classify someone else's experiences, but they have done so themselves enough to determine what creature they feel they are. Once people say that they are something that has been classified, why would we not maintain that classification?

Is it absolutely necessary? Probably not, but lacking classification just creates confusion, which is why we do it. Order.
Do I agree with "Therian" being a fitting term for any specific section of Otherkin? Not really, but I've yet to find another that people accept, and many words aren't used properly to their definition these days.
Do I feel that expanding Therian to include mythical beasts would benefit the community as a whole? No, because then we just invite arguments about "I don't care if I'm a humanoid alien-kin, I want to be called Therian!"
Expanding the term's range of application reduces it's meaning, and it become effectively synonymous with Otherkin, and in some cases it already has. Hell, Otherkin and Therianthropy are all but synonymous already.

I'm glad we at least agree that this debate's importance is nothing compared to the actual experience of being what we are and understanding it.
That said, I've put in my two sense, and if you want to continue the argument till you're blue in the face, be my guest.
I have nothing further to say on the matter if you still persist that our subjective experience doesn't apply to classification after I've pointed out that if that were true, we wouldn't go through the trouble of trying to figure out what Species we feel that we are.

"Wise men speak because they have something to say, Fools because they have to say something."
-Plato
It takes a long time to say anything, when you explain. So I don't say anything, unless it's worth taking a long time to say.

Kisota
- Therian -

May 16, 2015 at 9:12am

Quote

« Prev 1 2 Next » Actions Search...

Standard Animal

Coywolf / Coyote



Feral savor fare
Post(s) 86

That said, I've put in my two sense, and if you want to continue the argument till you're blue in the face, be my guest.

This is the second time you've said something insulting and dismissive to me in this thread. I'm disappointed. If you don't want to argue your point, that's fine, but it's really poor form to state your points and then say things implying that other people continuing to state theirs is absurd.

If someone has examined their own experiences to claim that they are X, then they get classified based on what X is.
If X = Wolf, that's an animal.
If X = Dragon, that's a mythical creature.

That is why the distinction exists and applies to our subjective experiences.

Okay, but regardless, you're still applying an objective distinction (something actually exists vs it doesn't) to an internal experience where that distinction (existing vs not) does not exist.

It does not inherently apply and is being applied artificially. You CAN still use it to distinguish between people, yes. It still "works" in that sense, which is what I think you're getting at. But it does not apply automatically, and the question remains whether that distinction is more meaningful than one based on the experience itself.

You may not personally be able to test and classify someone else's experiences, but they have done so themselves enough to determine what creature they feel they are. Once people say that they are something that has been classified, why would we not maintain that classification?

Okay, the difference between my testing it and the individual "testing and classifying" their experiences is the difference between objective and subjective knowledge. It's a really big difference. Science cannot verify subjective experiences.

If people want to use scientific categories to label their experiences, that's fine. But it doesn't inherently apply. Maintaining the classification farther than "referring to someone as the species they identify as" doesn't really give greater meaning to the community.

Is it absolutely necessary? Probably not, but lacking classification just creates confusion, which is why we do it. Order.

I propose that when communities form around shared experiences, subcategories based on those experiences are more meaningful and more ordered than artificially applied objective-based classification schemes.

The term "theriomythic" didn't need to exist. It wasn't needed.
We don't have a need to reinforce other artificial categories like avianthropes and bipedal-thropes and black-colored kintypes. Those categories would only subdivide without adding much information.

Removing categorical exclusion based on kintype and instead encouraging usage of the term based on subjective experience would make the term more meaningful even if it might include more people.

For example:
A dragon introduces himself. A community places him either in an "otherkin" or a "theriomythic/mythical beast" grouping. What information has been gained?
"Dragon" was already more specific. Placing a less specific grouping on top of that does not give us any more information about him.

Now,
Say, under the experience-based definition, a dragon introduces himself as a dragon *therian*. Now we're learning something about the quality of his experience!

« Prev 1 2 Next » Actions Search...

A second example:

The dragon has a feral-wyvern friend. The wyvern introduces himself and his neatly told he is either a theromythic or an otherkin. Same problem again about the terms not adding information to what is already known, but at least he falls within a category.

Now the wyvern gets news of the discovery of [Yi Qi](#). Everything clicks, and the wyvern decides this animal matches what he's been experiencing.

So he immediately has to be reclassified as a therian, despite the fact that nothing meaningful about his experience has changed - only his understanding of it has. If he'd been allowed to call himself a therian in the first place, only one change would have been necessary after his discovery - that of his actual therotype label. The experience-based definition is inherently more meaningful and yes, ordered, because it reflects the experiences themselves rather than our understanding of them, which can change faster than the type of experience generally does.

Do I feel that expanding Therian to include mythical beasts would benefit the community as a whole? No, because then we just invite arguments about "I don't care if I'm a humanoid alien-kin, I want to be called Therian!"

I'd consider this a slippery slope fallacy. Removing the "Earth animal" restriction on the terminology does not make it so wildly open to interpretation (see the Project Shift definition earlier). In any case, this at the very least opens up room for discussion about what the word means and what a person's experience is rather than forcing categorical exclusion for the sake of "order" and simplicity. And in the case of this alien, if he calls himself a therian and hangs around therian boards, he's either going to fit in because his experiences are comparable or he won't because they're not, and will probably find something that suits him better.

Expanding the term's range of application reduces it's meaning, and it become effectively synonymous with Otherkin, and in some cases it already has. Hell, Otherkin and Therianthropy are all but synonymous already.

As demonstrated above, meaning is not lost and in fact may be gained.

Yeah, there's some blurring of terms going on (thanks, tumblr). But why did the therian community evolve in the first place? *Due to the experience* (experience that is in many cases somewhat different from mainstream otherkin experiences). In these types of communities, I think categories, if you must have them, are going to be more meaningful if they're based on actual experience and not an artificially placed categorization based in objectivity. The assumption that those "real" vs "mythical" real-world distinctions have inherent meaning to subjective experiences does not hold up - it's a less meaningful distinction than one based simply on the experience.

I have nothing further to say on the matter if you still persist that our subjective experience doesn't apply to classification after I've pointed out that if that were true, we wouldn't go through the trouble of trying to figure out what Species we feel that we are.

This argument doesn't quite follow. I think I touched on this above in this post, but subjective experience does not inherently apply to classification. Yes, you can artificially apply biological taxonomy to internal experiences. It can be really useful to express what *side(s)* represent how you see yourself. It's a personal thing, and expressing what species you identify as is likely to hold a lot of information about your experience.

Categorizing people by "not real" and "real" removes the personal choice and says nothing about the type of experience. So it's quite different from identifying one's therotype and is a less meaningful way of categorizing.

Last Edit: May 16, 2015 at 9:15am by Kisota

Sorry.
This image is currently

« Prev 1 2 Next »

Haru Shano
- Otherkin -
Mythical Beast

Mythical Beast
Winged Kirin



"The world as you know it barely exists, for you know next to nothing about it."

Posts: 608

May 16, 2015 at 11:55am

Kisota

First, I would like to formally apologize for my dismissive stances in the last couple posts. I have no problem admitting I was wrong. The reason I was doing so was my own misunderstanding. Having watched this thread go back and forth, it appeared that the issue was you refusing to acknowledge why the division between Therians and Otherkin existed at all, many of your responses dismissive of the reasons it is done in lieu of restating that it doesn't apply to subjective experience, which made no sense to me when people individually classify those experiences and label them by spending so much effort to discover *what* they feel they are. Grouping those species in a reverse taxonomical fashion simply made sense after the fact, since larger inclusive groups exist for each species, as you're well aware.

I realize after your last post that that was not the case, and that the point I was trying to show you was not the reason for this debate. I suppose after so long dealing with ignorant children who want to argue just to get their way, I mistakenly assumed this was a case of you wanting to change something for purely social reasons, similar to how people get upset over gender pronouns, reaching for any justification to do so. That assessment was wrong, and once again, I apologize. Regardless of what I thought your motivations were, it doesn't justify my lack of tact. I can't promise it won't happen again in the future, but I can make an effort to ensure it doesn't.

Regarding the discussion, the examples in your last post illuminated the point you're trying to get across, and I actually have to say I agree. Once someone has established what they feel they are, the only thing that is gained from grouping specific kintype into larger sets is easier classification, which ultimately isn't any easier because we still set their specified kintype as a custom title. So you're correct in stating that separating Earth Animals from any other creature that, if real, would be classified by the same standards, is actually detrimental to gaining a better understanding of Therianthrop.

The stigma of real vs mythical directly results from the individual determining what they feel they are, and then us simply grouping that creature, when we should be classifying by the individual's experiences and seeking to understand how/why one individual experiences Therianthrop in that way, while another doesn't. Approaching what we all experience as a study of the phenomenon. Separating these experiences by whether or not the individual feels that their kintype has a level of self-awareness would be more beneficial to a serious analysis of symptoms and reaction than dividing animal from mythical for purely social or simplicity reasons.

That said, I don't feel that the term Therian should be used to at all, if for no other reason than to avoid confusion such as what I just inappropriately reacted to. Feral works for animalistic kintypes, and would include even humanoids if they lack a level of self-awareness or ability for critical thinking. However, finding an appropriate term for the other half of the spectrum is a bit more difficult, as "Sentient" now applies to all living creature that can experience sensations, regardless of capacity for intelligence. Then comes the issue of how such a classification is determined. Mythical vs Non-Mythical is simple (likely one of the reasons it's openly accepted as it takes little effort), but experiencing what we do through a human form can give the illusion of self-awareness to a creature that may not have had it.

I'll have to reread the thread now that I believe I understand your argument, and see if you've already addressed the things I've just mentioned, but I again apologize for the uncalled-for hostility.

Last Edit: May 16, 2015 at 3:04pm by Haru Shano

"Wise men speak because they have something to say, Fools because they have to say something."
-Plato
It takes a long time to say anything, when you explain. So I don't say anything, unless it's worth taking a long time to say.

Kisota
- Therian -
Standard Animal

May 16, 2015 at 7:58pm

Wow, Haru, thank you very much. I appreciate all you've said.

Quote

« Prev 1 2 Next »

Actions Search...

-Flair
It takes a long time to say anything, when you explain. So I don't say anything, unless it's worth taking a long time to say.

Quote

Kisota
- Therian -
Standard Animal

May 16, 2015 at 7:58pm

Wow, Haru, thank you very much. I appreciate all you've said.

Coywolf / Coyote

And no worries! I kind of had a feeling that we were kind of talking past each other, that my actual argument was getting lost in translation somehow. I kept trying to figure out how to express it better...



I'm really happy it finally made sense!

Regarding the discussion, the examples in your last post illuminated the point you're trying to get across, and I actually have to say I agree. Once someone has established what they feel they are, the only thing that is gained from grouping specific kintype into larger sets is easier classification, which ultimately isn't any easier because we still set their specified kintype as a custom title. So you're correct in stating that separating Earth Animals from any other creature that, if real, would be classified by the same standards, is actually detrimental to gaining a better understanding of Therianthropy.

The stigma of real vs mythical directly results from the individual determining what they feel they are, and then us simply grouping that creature, when we should be classifying by the individual's experiences and seeking to understand how/why one individual experiences Therianthropy in that way, while another doesn't. Approaching what we all experience as a study of the phenomenon. Separating these experiences by whether or not the individual feels that their kintype has a level of self-awareness would be more beneficial to a serious analysis of symptoms and reaction than dividing animal from mythical for purely social or simplicity reasons.

Yes! Well said, well said. I'm really relieved that what I have been getting at makes sense now.

That said, I don't feel that the term Therian should be used to at all, if for no other reason than to avoid confusion such as what I just inappropriately reacted to. Feral works for animalistic kintypes, and would include even humanoids if they lack a level of self-awareness or ability for critical thinking. However, finding an appropriate term for the other half of the spectrum is a bit more difficult, as "Sentient" now applies to all living creature that can experience sensations, regardless of capacity for intelligence. Then comes the issue of how such a classification is determined. Mythical vs Non-Mythical is simple (likely one of the reasons it's openly accepted as it takes little effort), but experiencing what we do through a human form can give the illusion of self-awareness to a creature that may not have had it.

This is a really good point as well. The terminology is kind of mixed up now, and has had a variety of connotations and restrictions over time. The terms really would be most useful if they defined animalistic/feral types from the "sentient" (you're totally right, this word has a different connotation these days!) ones.

The odds of totally new terminology coming about to make that distinction are unfortunately low. But the "Earth animals only" restriction on the term therian I think takes us farther away from the sort of meaningful, experience-based classifications that would be more beneficial. I don't think there's an easy solution to the terminology issue, but I'd rather let people use the terms in an experience-based way if they want to rather than exclude them based on kintype.

You're right though that it's still somewhat muddy waters, but ah well! It's a funny kind of experience... hard enough to put in boxes almost no matter what you do. 😊

Thanks again, Haru. I do appreciate what you've said, and it's really cool we're seeing eye-to-eye on it rather than getting confused by one another. xD

« Prev »