

FAQ: About Otherkin

Contributed by Glass
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Q: What are Otherkin?

A: Otherkin are a group and/or subculture of people, primarily based online, who feel that some part of them in some way is not human. There are many explanations within the community as to how this is possible, some of them being spiritual, mental, social, or even genetic. There are many different types of kin- some identify with creatures or beings of mythology and legend, such as Elves, Faeries, Unicorns, ect… while others associate themselves more with animals, plants or other forces/elements/concepts of nature/existence. The term ‘Otherkin’ can also be interchangeable with the term “other soul-ed” and perhaps the second term is the most appropriate, although it is used less often. Within the Otherkin community itself is many sub-groups, such as the vampiric and therianthropic communities, although the communities themselves don’t always agree on this. Otherkin are not to be confused with Furies and Furry fandom.

You may see the wikipedia definition of Otherkin here.

Q: Alright, I like movies, too, but don’t you all think that your taking this to far?

A: Unfortunately, we get this question a lot….and it irks us.

Popular media * does * seem to attract a lot of people who claim to be kin. There are several theories as to why this is: A popular movie will trigger memories and a mass ‘awakening’ in people….or some people are just laying claim to being Otherkin for the sake of being cool. Yes, some people do take movies to far, its certainly possible. But, just as there are some crazies, so, too, are there people who truly hold their spirituality-and their kinship- close to their heart. Some kin do accept that some movies remind them of a past life or previous incarnation, just as if someone had a past life aboard the titanic, watching a documentary on the event would likely trigger an emotional response.

Q: What is the difference between Otherkin and Furies?

A: *facepalms* But seriously. I’ve heard of sites that lay claim to the furry lifestyle being but just one of the broad spectrum of Otherkin. While the two communities do have some things in common, serious Otherkin tend to shy away and even attempt to distance themselves from the furry genre. Among the Otherkin communities, putting on costumes to represent your True Form, (which furies are well known for, as well as the….ehm...’conventions’….) is seen as a cruel and shallow misrepresentation of the true beauty of our souls. It would be like a vampire kin putting in plastic, cereal box fangs and going around with a bad Bela Lugosi accent. While we certainly respect gentler, milder forms of the Furry community, because we understand their feelings of being an othersoul, again, we tend to shy away from the more flamboyant members of this community.

Q: Are you all crazy?

A: Well, I suppose it depends on who you ask. We certainly don’t think so….but….well. Some people tend to disagree. There’s an old saying that crazy people don’t know or think they’re crazy. We all know we’re a little loopy. And that’s okay. We don’t call it crazy, we call it eccentric.

Q: Is this a cult?

A: Absolutely not. Cults often demand absolute, unquestioning belief in and loyalty to a cause from their members. Not only that, but they also often demand a forfeiture of freedoms, money, belongings, etc. for the sake of membership. In no way does this site advocate such actions. We officially condemn cultlike activity from any group claiming to be affiliated with Otherkin. For further information about cults, yow may visit <http://www.sanguinarius.org/ABCDEF.shtml> - this is a cult evaluation form. If you suspect anyone is being drawn into a cult that is proclaiming to be Otherkin- contact the leaders of reputable communities- and as always, we urge anyone who sees this kind of activity taking place to report it to Law Enforcement right away. Cults are a very dangerous thing.

Q: What religion are Otherkin?

A: The truth is that we come from everywhere. Otherkin can be Christian, Jewish, Mormon, Muslim, Pagan, Jehovah’s Witness (never met one of these, tho….>.<) or any other religious belief system. Kin come from many different cultural backgrounds and come from many different countries. This is part of the reason why OKA advocates tolerance and understanding: not only for ourselves as kin, but for the diversity that our members bring to our site. We come from all nationalities, creeds, religions and countries. Our belief that we are Otherkin is not mutually exclusive of our religion.

Q: How does your kinship relate to other people? How do you tell people about being kin?

A: Difficult questions. Our kinship, and indeed our spirituality, enriches our lives in many ways. Sometimes it simply makes us more appreciative of people and events in our lives. Sometimes, it has the opposite effect, particularly with coming into the light to a friend or relative. Kin have had both positive and negative experiences when it comes to telling other people what there are. Even on the internet, we get people who point at us, laugh, call us internet crazies and claim

that we're all a bunch of 'adolescent', or 'middle aged overweight web designers,' (urban dictionary.com) or 'degenerate escapist role players.' (urban dictionary). One site declares that all kin are annoying tree huggers, hippies, and 'Retarded pot smokers'. None of which are true. Kin come from all ages and all walks of life, and it's this biting sort of prejudice that makes us so wary of other people, let alone of telling people what we are. Another site goes on to say that we're lunatics and we make the world a 'scary place to be for our children.' Some kin who have confessed their feelings to their families have been met with absolute love and affection, the family fully accepting and even rejoicing in an other soul making itself a part of that family. Other kin, who are not so lucky, are met with fear. They are belittled, laughed at, even abused physically, for their confessions, and many are even disowned from their homes or thrown out onto the street. Kin in general are 'afraid' of people. This gives some kin what we call a 'hate/fear humans' complex. Unfortunately, this sad and ultimately cruel behavior that tends to fall upon kin is the reason that we are such a guarded subculture. It's also led many communities and groups to become very defensive when confronted by a skeptic as to the nature of their kinship. One of OKA's goals is to overcome this fear and suspicion that seems to have been a reoccurring theme with kin. We're not afraid of people because we're overweight, middle-aged web designers. We fear them because we fear losing our jobs, our homes, and our families if we're found out. Yes. It 'does' happen. So, as a basic rule of thumb, we don't tell people we're kin, which is why it seems, since the advent of the internet, kin have been coming out of the woodwork. Online, it's easy to use pseudonyms and screen names to hide your (pardon) 'human' name, and you don't have to worry about your parents, brother, sister, best friend, or anyone else, calling you a crazy.

Q: How do you know if someone's really kin or if they're just faking it/messing around? What does 'Elven Princess Syndrome' mean?

A: You really don't, and there's no way to tell for sure. Generally, anyone that runs around with latex ears on and bellowing out they're Arwen aren't serious. There have been cases of this. Yes. We call these type of people 'Fluff Bunnies', because their heads are full of stuffing. For people who come onto legit communities saying their Legolas, or Lestat, or any other fictional characters, or who claim they were a 'dragon prince' or a 'great vampire slayer'...we call this Elven Princess Syndrome, and in the case of the latter, they usually aren't taken very seriously within the community, though once in a blue moon, there's an exception to the rule, and in the case of the former, they're kick/banned from the community and used as a prime example of what Otherkin aren't. See example: What Otherkin Aren't

Typically, the only way to determine if someone is genuine or not is to use your head, although for Otherkin skeptics, this might be a little harder. Those people who claim to be Legolas or Dracula, the vampire, usually are fluff bunnies, and the same goes for people who claim to be UBER ELVEN ROYALTY or A MIGHTY DRAGON KING! Also, Role Playing and Dungeons and Dragons terms are a red flag, too, such as if someone says, 'Hi, I'm Draco the chromatic red dragon, and I breathe fire and sleep on a pile of gold..' You get it.

Q: What are the causes/reasons for being Otherkin?

A: There are so many theories on this...listing them all could take a Lifetime. Generally, there are several theories. Reincarnation is the most basic, and the most simple. Then there is Incarnation, which is where the individual believes they were incarnated or assigned to human form by a higher power as a learning experience, for a mission or objective, or even (though rare,) as punishment. Some kin even believe they put themselves here in order to learn what it's like to be human. Some believe it was a mistake in the heavenly assembly line, while other people tend to believe that mythical creatures did walk this earth at one point, and their kinship is genetically inherited. The theories are numerous.

Q: I keep hearing the phrase 'true form.' What does it mean?

A: Kin use this phrase simply in reference to what they believe their soul form is, or what they consider their 'natural state' or energy body. It can be in reference to a form that they relate to the most, either one they had in a past life, one they will have when they depart from this one.

Q: What does 'awakening' mean, and how does it work?

A: We refer to awakening as the time period in which an individual comes to the realization that they are something 'other'. It also refers to the period of time where a kin experiments with discovering their true forms, any memories that accompanies this form or state of being, and coping with such a realization. Awakening can occur at any time in an individual's life, but it most often seems to happen with adolescent and post-high school students. There are rarely any immediate signs that an awakening is impending, but it would seem that children who demonstrate a remarkable strength of imagination at an early age that seems to last through Junior High and High school usually experience a kin awakening. There are speculations as to why, one of the main reasons being children who are born with these miraculous imaginations are kin themselves. Not every child who is imaginative is kin, however, and not every individual kin is necessarily imaginative.

Awakening in and of itself has been described as both a living hell and as having given the individual a great deal of peace and answering many of the person's spiritual questions. Almost all kin are in agreement, however, that an Awakening is an intense period of spiritual growth, discovery, development, and pain, and should not be taken lightly BY ANYBODY. Awakenings are serious.

Q: How would I know if I was kin?

A: Good question. If you can figure out the answer to this one, let us know, k?

But seriously, none of us ever really know. Throughout our experiences, throughout being here incarnated as a human being, we may only receive small signs, usually things that most people would ordinarily just dismiss as unimportant or a coincidence. Its been heard that there are even people who have talked themselves out of their kinship because all their evidence was purely circumstantial. In the end, its just a big a gamble as any spiritual belief: there may never be a way to know for sure. The best way to know is just by listening to your own heart, and if deep down you really believe it, then stick with that.

Q: How would I go about telling someone else about kin?

A: Well, there are lots of ways to do it, just like anything else. As far as OKA's public face goes, we prefer to hold charitable events, even car washes, and just to hand out fliers. Even if only 1 in 10 people come to learn about otherkin, and what it means, then its just one more informed person. Depending on whom you're trying to tell, and why, you can start off with a small event such as this, or, if it's a single person you're attempting to tell; you should start off with the basic questions: is this a good person to tell? Do you think they would take it well, or do you think they would dismiss the subject all together, or even get mean? Why do you want to tell this person, and what would be the consequences both if they went with it an understood, or if they didn't, and everything went wrong? On the good side of it, people would certainly know more about you, and you would be able to talk the subject over with someone else. On the other hand, if they don't respond well to it, you could loose your friends, have vicious rumors started about you, even loose your home or your job. It's happened, not once, not twice, but many times. Weigh your options and reasoning carefully.

Q: Can a person be 'turned' into kin?

A: The vampire community gets this one a lot, and we've gotten it here on OKA once. The general consensus is NO. Kinship is usually viewed as having been with you since pre-incarnation: it is the original shape of your spirit. The exception does seem to be with the vamp communities, where Psychic vampires seem to demonstrate some sort of inability to properly retain and process energy; therefore, they take the energy from others. There are also said to be spiritual scars that a person may bare that makes their spiritual sides incapable in some form or another. So, in this way, if a spiritual wound is grievous enough, it can lead to some forms of energy deficiency. Among the vamp communities, some recognize that a person can be 'turned' into a vamp, but individuals are discouraged from doing this to another person; it's the equivalent of wounding that person. Shamans are said to be able to eventually spiritually develop their spirits to be able to permanently alter their spiritual form to become their totem. However all this is debatable. We'd like to receive more info on this if anyone has it; we admit we're woefully unknowledgeable as far as this topic goes.

Q: What are 'Phantom limbs', and how do they apply to kin?

A: Phantom limbs are a condition that is officially * recognized * by science. Wikipedia defines phantom limbs: "A phantom limb is the sensation that an amputated or missing limb is still attached to the body and is moving appropriately with other body parts (Mitchell 1871; Melzack 1992; Ramachadran & Hirstein 1998). Approximately 50 to 80% of amputees experience these phantom sensations in their amputated limb, and the majority of these people report that the sensations are painful. Other sensations include warmth, cold, itching, squeezing, and burning." The scientific explanation for phantom limbs states that the cause of phantom sensations is the firing of electrical signals in the brain, and the consciousness: in layman's terms, your brain got so used to the limb being there, when its gone, electrical signals from the brain continue to fire towards the limb- the brain doesn't know that the limb isn't there.

The phantom limb phenomenon reported by otherkin can be explained by saying that the cause for the sensations occur in the spiritual body and manifest in the current consciousness. The theory goes on to say that your energy body always stays the same, regardless of the physical body you are in. Since body, mind and spirit are all so closely tied to one another, the energy of the spiritual body manifests as sensations in the body, which are perceived by the brain. The difference between spiritual phantom limbs and 'clinical' phantom limbs is that spiritual phantom limbs have had no physical substance in this incarnation. Phantom limbs are rarely visible, and they pass through object much like a fictional ghost does. These Phantom limbs are felt by the kin individual in question as an itching, burning, tingling, or tightening sensation, or even a sensation of movement, such as a tugging at the shoulders for wings or a tail moving for a wolf-kin. There are also circumstances where phantom limbs respond to solid physical objects, such as knocking things over or causing a person to get caught in a door. There are also instances where * people * and crowds unconsciously respond to a phantom limbs. Dragon kin are renowned for this: sometimes the sheer size of a dragon kin has been known to leave them with plenty of space in a crowd, and the unconscious flexing of wings has caused more the one person to fall as though physically struck.

For an excellent illustration on otherkin phantom limbs, visit this Therithere comic.

Q: Can you tell me about physical shapeshifting?

A: Here at OKA, we hold the belief that physical shapeshifting isn't possible. Lots of fluff bunnies lay claim to the ability to be able to shapeshift, but we have yet to see it, and on this subject, we're skeptical.

Q: I've heard something called 'The Veil' referred to on several otherkin sites. What does this term mean?

A: The veil is a concept used by kin, and even some members of the magical community, to describe what separates science from magic and myth, the 'real' world from a magical reality where kin being in their true forms is possible. Although not official, the kin community has its own prophecies about a 'falling' of the veil and a resumption of kin to their natural state or true forms. It may come out of a desire for the community as a whole to be more recognized by the world...and by recognized, we don't mean in a white padded wall kind of way.

Q: What are 'traumatic memories' and what do they have to do with being kin?

A: It's a common phenomenon for many kin to remember their own deaths, the destruction of their homes in the past, spiritual wars, and all manners of events. These memories often manifest as dreams in the early stage of awakening, and are, of course, very upsetting to the particular person experiencing these memories. Though some kin may recover in time, not all do. This is where you tend to get kin who are, dare we say, more bitter than the rest, and for good reason. How would you like to remember how YOU died?

Q: What are Otaku-kin?

A: Otaku kin are those individuals who claim to have past lives as major characters from realities derived from Japanese Manga. And who claim their spiritual selves are manga-esque. OKA, however, does NOT recognize Otaku as legitimate kinship. We don't think you were Inuyasha in a past life.

While OKA and its members do attempt to be open minded, we genuinely feel the concept of being a manga persona in a past life is a little far fetched, and a debasement of true spiritual kinship.