

A Short Introduction to Folcinteric Nonhumanity

Who-is-Page 2/17/2021

Folcinteric nonhumanity both seeks to fill in the lexiconical gap that I had originally hoped for the nonhuman and alterhuman communities to fill with the term “theriomorphic” and denotes personal specifics to my nonhumanity that I see falling more and more out of commonality within alterhuman and nonhuman circles. This isn’t a term I am suggesting for general use within the otherkin and therian communities (though it is certainly open for individuals to utilize if they find it accurate and useful!), but is rather a term I strive to define and place outside of the typical narratives and rhetoric of them. While I may reference aspects and vocabulary of both communities in order to better “place” folcinteric nonhumanity in a conceptual sense, this is merely to make my standpoints on what defines or does not define folcinteric nonhumanity clear.

Folcinteric nonhumanity is an interesting conundrum in which one's nonhumanity is inseparable from that which is claimed as one of the cornerstones of humanity, that which separates "the apes from the angels": culture and religion. Folcintera are intertwined with the liminality humankind obsesses over, with their monsters and their nightmares, their saviors and their dreams. There is a reason that the word "folk" prefaces all else in the word, even coming before the word "monster": It is because folcintera are not disconnected from humanity, some sort of level above being that can choose or not choose to interact with those below-- rather folcintera are directly shaped and formed by human cultures and folklore. Mythos is not some sort of static entity. It is created and maintained, intentionally fluid in design and rigid in it's longevity for the communities that it is a part of. Folcintera are inescapably linked to the landscape of liminality and the ways it is weaved into human stories and emotions.

Lived Mythology

Religion and culture feel inappropriate to define as “fictional.” Was mythology created by humans? Yes, of course. But is it fictional? Perhaps not. Within the realms of folcinteric nonhumanity, I instead put forth the idea of a type of nonhumanity largely

formed around a “lived mythology”; that is to say, a personal and outside mythological narrative that is real and therefore “lived” because human beings make it so.

Humans are shaped and shape the world they live in in turn, and folcinteric nonhumanity is directly affected by those cycles and the narratives that form from them. It is an identity that exists in “our past, our present, and our assumed future” (WTNV), created from a multiplicity of modes of understanding, some of which are intertwined uniquely with stories or themes that have existed long before the nonhuman in question and will persist long after they are gone.

This longevity within and permanence of the lived mythology that folcinteric nonhumanity is a part of is not something that should be overlooked, because that shapes folcinteric nonhumanity on a fundamental level. While one may be most certain of the very literals of their species identity, of the biological facts that cannot be removed from their species (or an equivalency), one is still affected by or chooses to embrace the effects of the non-literals of their species. That unique space, the being of one thing and the being of an identical, starkly different but still very “real”, other, is where folcinteric nonhumanity resides.

To Both Be and Not Be: Culture that Shapes You

Folcinteric nonhumanity, as its name suggests, has its roots within folklore, myth, and legend. Not only may a folcintera’s “species” originate from myth, but what truly demonstrates this identity’s link to folklore is how the explanations that one harnesses to explain or understand themselves will reside within a personal mythological narrative that exists alongside or will intersect with existing, outside legend. Folcintera exist both within and outside of the mythology they originated from simultaneously, acting as both a carrier for the folklore and a catalyst for its evolution, even if only within personal or extremely localized narratives and understandings.

Nonhuman identities held by folcintera may have “biological realities” or “canonical realities” that cannot be argued against, in which one’s existence may be solidified to a specific, niche form of creature or being-- but folcintera are not their singular species in

its most literals, rather, they are both their species *and* the mythology surrounding their species, or their species *and* the common cultural themes surrounding their species.

“In the culture I exist in, that I grew up in--so, the Southern United States--the canine psychopomp that first comes to the mind in terms of American folklore is the black dog, the graveyard grim, the black shuck. And I am not- I don't look like any of these dogs, and I don't do the same function as any of these dogs I'm reasonably sure, just going based off of species build and instincts. But... I *am* those dogs. In the culture I was raised in, in the minds of the people around me, in the minds of people who will be here long after I am gone, I will be a black dog to them. So therefore I am a black dog, even if I'm *not* a black dog.” (Who-is-Page, explaining the personal cultural intersections of his identity.)

In folcinteric nonhumanity, the prevalent lore within the culture that one was raised in has the capacity to directly affect their perceptions and understandings of their nonhumanity. While it may not shape one's phantom limbs, internal instincts, or animality as its core, it is still the lens through which one tries to understand all of those in connection with the “self” based on both when and where they exist.

Animality versus the “Animal Self”

Folcintera experience animality, but not an “animal self,” as it were. The nonhuman and the human occur simultaneously, with no clear, measurable degrees of distinction between the two. There are no levels of separation between the “human self” and the “animal self”, nor on-and-off modes of integration-- instead, there is just the diverse individual, and “self” in its entirety, a disorganized archive of the intransigent scraps that are welded together into one moving, conversing, playing, fighting, instinctual and intelligent, whole.

Animality within the realm of folcintera is definable as any of the following:

- ☛ Instinctive qualities that are well outside the realm of typical human behavior, or are assigned as being such.
- ☛ To think, and feel, and be, and act as a nonhuman.

This identity is punctuated by a constant undercurrent of nonhumanity-- it defines and understands its existence through animality and nonhumanity first and foremost. The default mode of being for a folcintera is as an animal-human, or as singularly animal; an undiluted human side or self is simply non-existent within the realm of this identity. This phenomena manifests in ways such as semi-permanent phantom limbs or a phantom body and a consistent animalistic mental perception of themselves and the world around them. Nonhumanity in this identity is ever-present and always-majority.

All of this is not to say that folcintera lack a specific species identity, and instead rely wholly on the nebulous ideas of animality and culture for their nonhuman identity. Folcintera identify as a singular entity or type of entity (such as, for example, a clade), but also acknowledge, incorporate, and even embrace the surrounding themes and lore which are related to their specific identity on a personal level.

Unconscious vs. Conscious

Folcintera experience what will be referred to as an intrinsic, involuntary form of nonhumanity. That is to say that this nonhuman identity, at its core, is an essential part of what makes up someone's "self," and that it cannot be removed or heavily modified based on the flimsiest of whims. One cannot voluntarily shape the ways in which their nonhumanity manifests, repressing certain aspects while making other portions flourish.

This is not saying that a folcintera's nonhumanity must be "au naturale" in the sense that it was something someone was born with, or something that someone has always been. Rather, it is saying that your overarching nonhumanity--whatever its origins or whatever path led it to becoming part of you; whatever its level of fluidity or rigidity--is

not something you can simply shelf for a week, month, or year. Whether it is something that one claims to have developed and cultivated, or something that one claims has been a part of their individuality since their personhood first came into being, the most important part of folcinteric nonhumanity is that it is a central, immovable pillar to who and what you are. Folcinteric nonhumanity is a part of someone on a fundamental level, unchanging in the fact of its existence and presence in someone's everyday life and interactions with the world around themselves.

The cultural and mythological aspects of folcintera follow within similar lines of thought. It does not fully matter whether someone has consciously or unconsciously incorporated the myths and lore local or relevant to them within the understanding of their nonhumanity-- all that matters is that it has become a part of their nonhumanity that now exists beyond their complete control, and that they cannot completely remove their nonhuman self-image from the cultural and spiritual stories, themes, and general understandings that have intertwined with it.

The Limits of Folcintera

To be quite clear: there are virtually no limits to what ones' species identity can be within folcinteric nonhumanity, so long as that species identity is inarguably non-human and the identity is connected to one's personal mythos and outside mythos as well. Divine, cryptid, "earthly", and literal fictional species are all considered legitimate species categories within folcinteric identities. The concept of lived mythology referenced earlier extends not only to superstitions and stories resonating in the modern day from hundreds of years ago, but to *any* sort of narrative that is "lived" and made real by humans.

To use Pokemon as an example: Pokemon have cemented themselves into both larger global mythological narratives, as well as into many individuals' personal mythos. In addition to that, Pokemon-identifying individuals also have their canonical realities and even canonical mythos to incorporate into their identity. It is in no way absurd to assume that one could not take their Pokemon species identity and have a multi-layered

understanding of themselves: a level of understanding within their personal mythology; a level of understanding within the very literal interpretations of their instincts, phantom limbs, etc.; a level of understanding within their canon; a level of understanding within their local culture; a level of understanding in emotional relativity to “earthly” or spiritual counterparts.

In viewing a theoretical Pokemon folcinteric identity at its most base, simplified components, it is easy to capture an understanding for why this identity is so broad in its categorization-- because “lived mythology” is a category which defies intense scrutiny and compartmentalization. When something is made real simply by a group’s will to make it so, how is one to put limits on such? Attempting to do so is reductionist, ignoring nuance and diversity in favor of convenience, and is additionally ultimately a hopeless endeavor. To attempt to curb what mythology counts as “real” mythology within folcinteric identities goes against the incredible personal nuance each folcinteric identity holds within it. Folcinteric nonhumanity seeks to embrace that nuance, individuality, and diversity, to celebrate it and take pride within it rather than water it down for digestibility.