

## **On Theriomythics, Divinity, and a Mythical Ternary**

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Something that I have noticed about theriomythic identities is that they often straddle the line between the otherkin, therian, and fictionkin community. This is to say that this specific form of identity seems to traditionally be used by individuals who would, on a basic level, be considered to be otherkin due to identifying on a non-physical level as something partially or entirely non-human--and yet, due to their own experiences and understanding of their identity, find the term otherkin lacking in some manner.

This can be for any number of reasons, but perhaps the most often one cited is that individuals feel that their non-human identities are more animalistic, or even feral, to the point of being much more akin to a therian's experience rather than the more observably-sentient kintypes that most otherkin tend to associate with. I believe that this says a lot on a majority of the kintypes we see within the otherkin community; many kintypes are of species which utilize language, tools, and communicate in, if not ways near identical to that of humans, then in ways at that are at the very least reminiscent of them. It makes sense that those who find a hard time relating to a majority of the otherkin community rhetoric surrounding non-human identification would seek to utilize something more close to home with what they experience, which, in this case, manifested as the term 'theriomythic.'

With that in mind, however, I want to give spotlight to an alternate theriomythic experience that may be thought of in passing, but has yet to be spoken of in-detail: some theriomythic identities and their relationship with religious mythos. While most people would be content to simply say that theriomythics live in a liminal space between the otherkin and therian communities, I think that that is simplistic and ignores much of the experience of those theriomythics who identify as religious creatures, and who may very well have similar experiences to that of fictionkin as well.

Oftentimes, we enjoy the ternary of individuals either identifying as an extinct or an extant species, as a provably-fictitious species, or as a species that does not exist and has never existed within our current understanding of the world, universe, or dimension we

live in. This is simplifying it to a great degree, but that is the general underlying gist of our expectations within the otherkin community and the boxes we have constructed accordingly. The problem arises when people have a hand (or paw) in each of the most distinguishing parts of those boxes.

For theriomythics with primarily religious, divine, or mythical kintypes, this is easily within the realm of imagination. After all, where does the line between mythology and fiction get drawn? Does it depend on the individual in question, and their personal beliefs regarding their kintype and the beliefs associated with it? Additionally, if the individual holds significantly strong religious or spiritual beliefs to the point of genuinely believing that their kintype exists, even if not on a physical level, where does the line between therian and otherkin get drawn? What about religiously significant animals that are just that: indistinguishable from their mundane counterparts save for non-physical attributes that cannot be explained through mere physical characteristics? These aren't new questions; there has been discussion centered around these before, on more personal individual levels. Even despite that, I still don't think that we, as a community, have a solid grasp on where we stand in these questions nor a good way to address them and form language around them. Elitism and attachment to the mythical, strict ternary of otherkin-therian-fictionkin are still rife within a majority of individuals who fall into one, or more, of those categories on some level, and it is up to us to recognize that and work to change those existing attitudes.

With that said, it's important for the label theriomythic to exist and continue to be considered a valid form of identity in its own right, and it is equally important that we not try to box the term into something merely in-between therian and otherkin. Better yet, theriomythics of all shapes and sizes should remind us as a larger community to widen and diversify our rhetoric. There is no acceptable ternary of experience that exists here; non-humanity and non-human experiences exist on spectrums, and no two experiences will ever be fully alike.