

Planetary Model of Alterhuman Identities

I could have sworn I had posted about this before, but apparently not, so here we go. While questioning my faun identity a year ago, I ended up using a metaphor of solar systems and planets to describe different kinds and impacts of nonhuman identity. I posted about it on the Alt+H forums at the time, and wanted to also share here and see what discussions and developments come up. To be clear, these are not identities in themselves, but a metaphor for exploring how identities relate to one another.

Identifying-as identites (therian, otherkin, various linktypes) are stars/suns. They can have different features. Just as a star can be different sizes, colors, densities, people can have varying 'types with different features. For example, my dog theriotype features phantom, mental and envisage shifts, pattern noemata, and behavioral urges. Someone else's type might come with past life memories, species dysphoria, etc. The reason these identities are stars are they are central- they have a certain gravity. Often, other things relate to them or they have a central/critical role in the overall picture.

Paratypes are satellites (planets, etc.) Like suns, planets can be wildly different from one another and have all sorts of features. But what they share in common is that they all orbit the sun. A paratype is usually related to an existing 'type, just as planets orient to, center on, and are moved by their sun. One can use moons, etc. to reflect multi-layer relationships.

Otherhearted/kith identities are planetary systems without stars. Otherhearted experiences can be just as complex, large and important as 'kin experiences, and I wanted to reflect that. There are a lot of astral bodies that meet the definition of planets (or have a similar mass to stars) but which aren't in orbit around a star. If I recall correctly, part of the original coining of 'paratype' compared the feelings to kith/hearted-like feelings. Thus an otherhearted planet can resemble a paratype planet, but is independent and moves in it's own right, without being tied to another identity.

Cameos are comets (or other passing astral bodies). They pass through a given solar system, they might even loop around a few times recurrently, but they are not a stable, lasting fixture.

On voluntariness: I have not made a voluntary/involuntary distinction here, and this is deliberate. For purposes of this model, the type of identity matters, but not it's origin. A mandmade satellite will behave in orbit the same as a natural one (e.g. a moon). They might have different features, but they function and relate to other another and other bodies in the same way.

On questioning: This metaphor can extend into questioning. If one has an unknown astral body, one can

try to identify it by its features (e.g. size, density). Often, astronomers discover new planets or stars by seeing their gravitational effects on other bodies. Likewise, one can reach conclusions about an identity by how it intersects with others.

For an example: For a long time I thought I had one dog kintype, with sheep as a paratype, and goats as a secondary paratype off of sheep. (Dog as sun, sheep as planet, goat as moon). Relating to other half-humans like fauns, mermaids, and centaurs I considered a general, broad connection to all alterhumanity. But this did not accurately reflect my feelings: I felt much more strongly connected to fauns > centaurs and minotaurs > everything else. And my love of goats didn't always seem to go through sheep as a middleman. This helped me realize and embrace my faun identity, where I could have two suns, and goats/centaurs became paratypes of faunness, with sheep as a paratype to both kintypes.

I'll include my own diagram in a reblog.

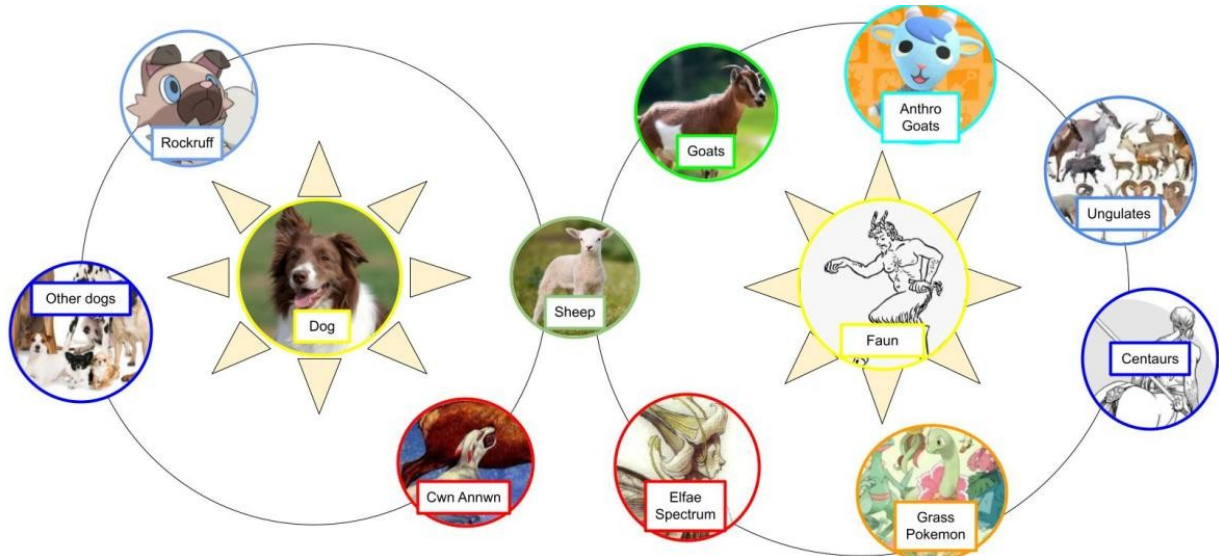


Figure 1: Image Description A diagram of a solar system with two suns. Each sun and planet is depicted as a photo of a creature, with a label. The first sun is "dog" with surrounding planets "Rockruff" "Other dogs" and "Cwn Annwn". The other sun is "faun" with surrounding planets "Goats", "Anthro goats", "ungulates", "centaurs", "grass pokemon" and "elfae spectrum". The planet "sheep" lies in between both suns, on the circle of both orbits.

For dogs, I identify as a border collie.

Other dogs (AKA other breeds of dog) feel more like a paratype than a kintype. Family and like-me, but not me.

I separated out Rockruff, even though it logically fits under "other dogs", just because it's a particularly intense/powerful paratype.

Cwn Annwn (or related beings like cu sidhe) are of particular note. The white and red color scheme

matches my fur noemata. Also, as a fae dog, they ping some points of similarity or overlap with feeling fae from my faun identity. Still much more rooted in dog-ness, but the proximity is there.

Sheep is definitively a paratype for both identities. As a dog I'm a herding dog. I also have herding associations as a faun and associate sheep with goats. Sheep are important to me twice over and, as a paratype, feel like a powerful hearttype.

For the faun-circle, goats are obvious. This applies both to regular and anthropomorphic goats. A lot of anthro goat characters (e.g. from Undertale, Animal Crossing, The Owl House, Kipo, etc.) activate faun feelings for me because it's fundamentally just another way of experiencing "goat-person". Ungulates generally- cows, deer, basically anything with horns and/or hooves- will set off phantom shifts for me. Centaurs (though i also could have included minotaurs) are a near-neighbor paratype where they can evoke similar feelings of "hoofed person" or "half-ungulate person". Grass pokemon broadly are a paratype for the seasonal and nature-associated aspects of my faun type. I see myself as a faun of the Spring Court. Visually, incorporating aspects of nature into appearance (e.g. grass mixed with fur, naturally growing flower crowns) feels more right and correct for my faunself. Pokemon and creatures like them, where some elemental aspect is evident in the creatures body design, ping those feelings for me. It is of course doubly so if the pokemon is also an ungulate (deerling and gogoat are particularly fitting). As a faun, I consider myself part of what I have seen others call the "elfae spectrum" of elves, fairies and nature spirits. So, a lot of those creatures activate feelings of kinship, belonging, family and similarity to me. As with pokemon, these feelings are particularly prominent if the fae in question is depicted as looking partially plant or nature-related, as is the case with sprites and elves from the Spiderwick series, among others.

I tried to visually depict some of the proximity and relationships between paratypes. For example, Cwn Annwn and Elfae are the same color and close to each other, despite being on different orbital circles, because they have fae-ness in common. Grass pokemon are near fae for their overlaps/similarities, goats are near sheep, and anthro goats and ungulates are near goats. It's not perfect (ungulates could be right next to goats as much as anthro goats can) but it gets across vaguely how similar or unrelated different paratypes are.