SCRIBBLES AND BITS

QUICK'N'DIRTY PLURAL HISTORY... PART 1 (1811-1980ISH)

QUICK'N'DIRTY PLURAL HISTORY... PART 1 (1811-1980ISH)

MAY. 28TH, 2020 10:25 PM

👤 **LB_LEE**

Quick'N'Dirty Plural History (see also: Part 1; Part 2; Part 3; Part 4)

Summary: "I may not be *multiple*, but I'm certainly *plural*! " - Jaye

Word Count: 3200 of at least 9000
Notes: This one won the Patreon vote by a landslide! This is the textual essay version of my video presentation for the Plural Positivity Conference, and sorry guys, even with the "quick and dirty" bit, it's going to be long. Also, I can't lie, most of my citations and sources for the early folks I only know about thanks to Baldwin's *Oneselves*.

We've seen online plural groups rise, fall, and disappear into the ether over the years. So much of our history is so ephemeral, and those who forget are doomed to regret. When we remember our history, we learn from its successes and failures, build on its foundation, and take comfort in knowing we're not alone. So let's talk plural history!

We're using "plural" as an umbrella term to describe more than one person in a body, but that covers a huge swathe of cultures, time periods, places, and pissing contests. One person could never cover them all, and our ignorance is profound. Tulpas, metaphysical multiplicity, otherkin, daemonism, religious and non-medical cultural frameworks of plurality, just about anything outside the USA... we don't talk about them here not because they don't exist, aren't plural, or aren't important, but because we ourself don't know much about them. Our meager start is just that: a start.

Reading this essay, you will encounter folks you think don't belong under the plural umbrella. Rather than debate who to include, focus on how people decide what plural is and how those ideas change. The umbrella is constantly changing, and it mostly exists for narrative convenience. Even when plural communities share a time, place, and identity, they often operate in parallel, ignorant of each other's existence, reinventing the wheel and never realizing that their pet bugaboos aren't universal. One place's wank is another place's "what?"

Even though it's over-represented in discussions on plural history, this essay's focus is going to be most on medical multi circles (Multiple Personality Disorder, Dissociative

Identity Disorder, Dissociative Disorder Not Otherwise Specified, Otherwise Specified Dissociative Disorder, and the pissing contests around all of the above), followed by groups that formed in backlash to medical multi but still used it as a framework (empowered multiplicity, natural multiplicity), and soulbonding. These are the groups we were in, and they're the ones we know; they're not the be-all end-all of plurality by a long shot.

We can't talk about where we are now without discussing how we got here. So let's do a 3000 word Cliff Notes rush through it!

Pre-DSM-I Plurals

More than one person to a body is not a new thing. "One body gets one person/soul/mind/personality forever," isn't a scientific idea; it's a cultural one and not universal. Different cultures have their own definitions of personhood, selfhood, souls, spirits, and what the appropriate numbers are—in Judaism, people get an extra soul on the Shabbat; the Iroquois have the gannigonr-ha and the erienta (Mann, 2004); and then there's the citations on the "soul dualism" article on Wikipedia. Trying to define which is plural and what isn't would take a whole other essay to cover, but we want to break this idea that plurality was invented by (or belongs to) white medical personnel and the people they treat.

So Mary Reynolds wasn't "the first multiple"; there's no such thing. (And she might not be considered multiple anymore herself; a childhood textbook of mine recategorized her as "conversion disorder.") But she's been called the first multiple (Baldwin; Wallace et al), probably because she was a white woman seen as suffering a medical problem, so let's talk about her.

Reynolds's case was reported in a few places from the 1830s on, and some of the details vary, but the basics (as reported in Mitchell, 1889) are: in 1811, mopey Mary Reynolds went into a very deep sleep, and woke up with no memory and a buoyant new personality who didn't recognize Mary's family as her own. These two states (as Mary herself referred to them) had no shared memory, always switched in her sleep, and did so for decades, until she settled permanently into her cheerful second state when she was thirty-six years old, in 1829. She died in 1854. Like many early medicalized multiples, she reported no trauma, though a century later, a therapist argued that early religious persecution in childhood qualified (Goodwin, 1987).

After Reynolds, more multiples (or people categorized as such) started cropping up among white society. While it's risky to try and lump them into groups after the fact, there are a few types that share characteristics... and yes, a lot of them aren't considered multiple nowadays.

For instance, there were some folks whose "switches" altered less their personality than their memory. Some of the more famous ones wandered off, "woke up" somewhere else, and got upset about it. (These wanderers are now called psychogenic/dissociative fugue cases.) Ansel Bourne was the most famous and only had the one big switch recorded, though it was apparently enough to scare the bejesus out of him (James, 1890, pg. 391-393). Following a severe head injury in World War I, "C. J. Poulting"/"John Charles Poultney" (names in quotes are pseudonyms) switched multiple times, leading to multiple stints in the British army, being mistaken for American and shipped back there, only to be taken in as the long-lost relative of Seventh Day Adventists, which he didn't seem thrilled about (Franz, 1933). George Robertson, from 1901, seems to have been even more variable, probably not helped by multiple head injuries, and his switching led to him being

arrested for desertion from the US army (Baldwin, 1984).

There were also people who didn't wander off, and merely suffered intense (though hopefully somewhat temporary) memory loss probably due to brain damage, either from head injury like Reverend Thomas Hanna (Unknown, 1904), or gas leak, such as "Mr. S" (Dana, 1894), who Baldwin calls Peter Scott. These folks, after the whack on the head (or gas inhalation), lost access to most of their memories and had to be retaught. If they were lucky, the amnesia wore off; if they weren't, they were stuck relearning everything, though more quickly than the first time around.

And then you have the case of Alma Z., from 1893 (as recounted in Sidis and Goodhart, 1904). The personalities of Alma—No. 1, Twoey, and No. 3, AKA "the Boy"—apparently got along not just with each other, but with their corporeal circle as well, and apparently had some measure of co-consciousness. At one point, their doctor describes taking Numbers 1 and 3 to an orchestra—Number 3 is in charge, but Number 1 especially wants to hear the music, so they switch, leading to this exchange:

"'So No. 1 came to hear her favorite concerto?' [No. 3 asked.]

"I replied, 'Yes; how did you know it?'

"'Oh, I was here and listened to it, too.'

"'Where were you?' I asked.

"'I sat on the front of the box. I saw you speaking to her [No. 1]. How greatly she enjoyed the music!'"

These multiples were a variegated lot. There was a lot of overlap with sleepwalkers, amnesiacs, and what nowadays might be framed as trance states. The words used to describe their condition varied too! Plumer (1860) and Mitchell (1889) call Reynolds "a case of double consciousness," James calls Ansel Bourne "a case of alternate personality of the 'ambulatory' sort" in 1890, Dana uses "double consciousness" to describe Peter Scott in 1894, while Cutten calls John Kinsel a "double personality" in 1903, and Sidis uses "multiple personality" for Hanna and "manifold personality" for Alma Z. Come 1908, Morton Prince is already complaining that "cases of this kind are commonly known as 'double' or 'multiple personality,' according to the number of persons [headmates] represented, but a more correct term is disintegrated personality, for each secondary personality is a part only of a normal whole self" (pg. 3). Good to know that bickering over multi terminology was a thing even a hundred years ago! But this was before the creation of the DSM-I in 1952, made in part to help standardize things.

Furthermore, multiplicity (or whatever you prefer to call it), had some intersections with what would now be considered religious or supernatural. John Kinsel, for instance, wasn't just an impressive sleepwalker, but known for navigating the world perfectly with his eyes tight shut, and his "asleep" self was apparently prone to reciting endless streams of crummy poetry (Cutten, 1903). Both Bourne and Reynolds became (possibly psychosomatically) paralyzed or deaf or blind, only to then miraculously recover (Bourne, 1858; Mitchell, 1889). But none hold a candle to the spiritualists.

Covering spiritualism would be a book all on its own, and I know very little about it, so the very short version is: in 1848, the young Fox sisters started trolling their guardians by faking rapping sounds as spirit communication and created a religious movement in

the process. For our purposes, the most relevant part of spiritualism was its belief that the dead (or spirits) could contact the living, bestowing helpful advice and support. The spirits could communicate in various ways, such as making rapping sounds, moving objects… or by taking over their human channels directly, through automatic writing or speaking aloud. In other words, using modern slang, the spirits could front sometimes, and since said spirits were the dead, they were adamant about being separate people, with separate life stories and experiences from their mediums.

Probably the most famous of these mediums perceived as multiple, "Hélène Smith" (real name Catherine-Elise Muller), had a book written about her; the English translation is titled From India to the Planet Mars, (Flournoy, 1900), which contains Muller's illustrations of Martian landscapes and depictions of the Martian script, which Flournoy (a professor of psychology) broke down as French-derived. (Muller was French.) But while she was possibly the most famous and had the most unusual of other-worlds, she wasn't the only one. Other spiritualist mediums hosted cross-ethnic and cross-gender spirits, seemingly more often than other plurals we've seen around this time, and they seemed more likely to emphasize worlds and experience outside the corporeal.

While plurals (or plural-ish folks) were described or noted in the USA during this time, proper explanations as to why were light on the ground. Childhood trauma or abuse was mostly unstated or ignored, though it's not hard to at times find strong implications—Ansel Bourne, for instance, self-reports that his father died when he was seven, and that he was living in poverty and had to leave school to work in the factories from the age of thirteen on (Bourne, 1858, pg. 5). "V. L." (who Baldwin calls Victor Laval—don't know where he got the name from) was "born of an unmarried mother, who was 'addicted to an open life of debauchery, and of an unknown father, he began to roam and beg on the streets as soon as he could walk" (Sidis and Goodwin, 1904, Chapter XXIII, Part III, paragraph 21), while George Robertson apparently was on bad terms with his father, to the point that he left home at fourteen and at twenty-one was dealt a heavy blow to the head while fighting with him (Baldwin, pg. 28—see Gilbert 1902 for the citation he gives, which I've been unable to dig up). Those are the earliest references we know about.

But abuse, even child or sexual abuse, was not an unknown political cause at this time —it was more of a black cause, wrapped into antislavery and antilynching activism (see McGuire, 2010). After all, the slavery mindset is an inherently abusive one—it makes people into things, to be used and abused at whim. If trauma does indeed cause some forms of multiplicity, then historically black frameworks of plurality just begs for discussion.

Medical multiplicity was overwhelmingly applied to white folks, but fairly gender-balanced until around the turn of the 20th century, where women started overtaking the men. Part of this may have been that spiritualist mediums tended more towards women. Though we're less sure about this, so take it with a grain of salt, medical multiplicity also may have started becoming a "white lady" thing around the time it became a trauma thing.

The MPD Movie Machine

You know what we really have to thank for the popular conception of multiplicity today? Movies. Books were big, but movies really had the oomph.

In 1886, the Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde came out, and like it or not, became an indelible part of America's cultural narrative about multiplicity. Just about

every well-known multiple gets compared to them sooner or later, even as early as 1904 (Unknown, 1904), and this was only the start of a longstanding tradition blurring fiction and reality.

In 1954, Shirley Jackson wrote The Bird's Nest. It was a twisted family drama involving a system of five, and in April 1957, it came out in movie form, called Lizzie. In the movie version, the titular multiple is only a system of three—a shy retiring woman, the bad girl who likes sleeping around, and the well-adjusted woman who becomes the last headmate standing. If it sounds familiar to the characterization of Eve White, Eve Black, and Jane in The Three Faces of Eve, it's because that book and movie were also made in 1957; according to the US Copyright Office, the book was copyrighted January 15th, a few months before Lizzie, and the movie came out in September, less than six months after. Who was riding whose coat-tails?

Chris Costner Sizemore, by the way, the actual Eve, later went public in saying that the Three Faces of Eve was never accurate—her headmates came in rotating rosters of three, but there were over twenty of them. She ended up writing three of her own memoirs to try and correct the misconceptions (Strangers In My Mind, I'm Eve, and A Mind of My Own) but when the movie rights came up, Fox said they owned the film rights to her life story, past, present, and future (Brozan, 1989). One of Sizemore's headmates (no longer in existence) had signed over the rights to their therapist in the 1950s, and though they settled out of court, the possible movie future was tanked. So not only was the Three Faces of Eve fictionalized, but that fiction trumped the real life of the multiple in question! Get used to these creepy interactions between patient and therapist and salesman, not just fiction and reality, because it'll be a theme, oh yes.

This was in the time of the DSM-I, where multiple personality (or "dissociated personality") was considered a subtype of "dissociative reaction." In 1968, the DSM-II came out and renamed it "hysterical neurosis: dissociative type," which shows its genderedness; hysteria was (and is) traditionally applied to women. From here on out, male multiples are exceptions to the rule.

In 1973, Sybil comes out, and it gets its own very popular movie in 1976. The book is the first place we've seen people using "multiple" as a stand-alone noun; Sybil herself uses it in a joke about her cat. Until a better citation comes up, we'll credit her with the coinage. It spreads out into more common use from there on out (such as in Newman, 1977). Though Sybil notes a black male multiple named Jonah (with headmates King Young, Usoffa Abdulla, Sammy, and Jusky), who was studied thoroughly, there was no movie or pop cultural depiction, and they fell into comparative obscurity (Brandsma and Ludwig, 1974). This too will become an ongoing theme, of white multiples being given disparate prominence, to the point that it becomes considered "a white woman's affliction" (Young, 2017).

In June 1977, "Henry Hawksworth's" The Five of Me comes out, possibly riding the coattails of Sybil. Hawksworth was a violent rapist (Newman, 1977, paragraph 2) and used multiplicity in his defense against a drunk driving charge, claiming that since his drunk-driving headmate no longer existed, he couldn't be charged. It too got a made-for-TV movie (with the same title) in 1981, which is the same year as the release of...

The Minds of Billy Milligan, by Daniel Keyes. At least it didn't get a movie. (Though it's in production hell and has been for over a decade. Apparently Joel Schumacher was set to direct it!) Milligan robbed and raped three women in October 1977, got caught, pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity due to being multiple, and ended up acquitted (though hospitalized). We're not sure whether Hawksworth's book influenced Milligan's

defense or whether Milligan's arrest spurred public interest and got Hawksworth's movie made, but the stories are similar enough to each other (a male multiple rapist who uses multiplicity in a legal defense) that it seems unlikely to be pure coincidence.

It's around this time, in 1980, that the DSM III gets made, along with the diagnosis of Multiple Personality Disorder, reflecting how the condition is coming more and more into the public eye. Cross-gender and cross-ethnic alters are noted in this edition of the DSM, and it also states outright that mostly women get MPD... despite the earlier gender parity. (Race is downplayed.)

1980 is also when Michelle Remembers gets published. Though not a multi book itself, it follows a lot of the same tropes: a bestseller about gruesome child abuse where the patient develops an enmeshed relationship with a saintly therapist who's involved in writing the book (and in this case, marries the patient/other author). It's debunked and doesn't get made into a movie, apparently due to Michelle's father threatening to sue (Allen and Midwinter, 1990, paragraph 15). This coins the term "ritual abuse," which becomes its own thread of the medical multiplicity narrative.

But that narrative is becoming its own beast. It's based on profit and the dramatic rules of fiction, not reality as told by the multiples themselves. Pop cultural multi books and movies become their own genre with their own rules and conventions (the therapeutic journey, the return to singlethood as happy ending), their own stock character types—the saintly therapist, the evil alter, the hapless suffering host, the well-adjusted final product. It's no coincidence that Chris Costner Sizemore's books aren't as well known as the Three Faces of Eve, or Jonah as well known as Sybil; they don't fit the narrative, and the money doesn't get thrown behind them.

Through these pop cultural depictions (along with a renewed social awareness and interest in child abuse), more and more people are hearing about MPD, and more and more people are diagnosing it. This leads to an "epidemic" of MPD diagnoses in the 1980s (leading into the '90s); even as early as 1984, people were noticing the increase (Baldwin, x). The trauma histories being reported in said pop cultural depictions are also getting more and more gruesome—what probably started as a sales concern of "if it bleeds, it leads" required stiffer doses of horror to make an impression on jaded audiences. Sizemore, in the 1950s, "just" reported deaths in her family. Sybil, The Five of Me, and The Minds of Billy Milligan go to physical abuse, with Milligan reporting being buried alive. By the 1980s, intense child abuse is a given, preferably sexual; it's hard to find an MPD memoir without gruesome detail.

The backlash is also thunderclouds on the horizon. Medical multiplicity, as "white lady thing," is also becoming a second wave feminist thing, associated with the (latest) rise in popular awareness of rape and child abuse, and the opposition is bound to show up. There are plenty of easy targets, what with the codependent patient/therapist relationships and the racism—perversely, the erasure of the multiples of color who do exist make it easier for critics to pretend that they don't exist at all and medical multiplicity is just "bored white housewife syndrome."

It's in the eye of this building fecal hurricane that medical multiples start finding each other, building community, and that's when the real fun begins.

Continue to Part 2!

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A short digest of a bunch of old multiples of yore that's out of print. Read this instead of Wallace et al; it does about the same job, but more thoroughly and with citations, and they mention a lot of the same people, making us suspect that they had similar inspirations.

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CURRENT MOOD: EXHAUSTED
CURRENT MUSIC: BOOTS RANDOLPH – "YAKETY SAX"

TAGS: ⊕ LB MAKES, LB MAKES:ESSAY, PLURAL:TALES OF YORE

◀ 💗 ✉️ ▶

6 COMMENTS REPLY

Flat | Top-Level Comments Only

Date: 2020-05-29 04:23 pm (UTC)

From: BLUE_MOUSE

Yesss it's here! Awesome! THANK YOU! I'm excited to read Part 2
later!
(Y'all mind if I post an excerpt + link on a Tumblr blog post?)

LINK   REPLY   THREAD   HIDE 1 COMMENT

Date: 2020-05-29 05:57 pm (UTC)

From: (ANONYMOUS)

Sure, go for it! If it's public it's fair game unless we say otherwise.

LB, not logged in

LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT

Date: 2020-05-29 06:10 pm (UTC)

From: STARFALLHAVEN

Oooh, very nice! This is a really good resource!

LINK   REPLY

Date: 2020-06-02 05:58 am (UTC)

From: SORCYRESS

This was really cool to read, thank you! I'm looking forward to
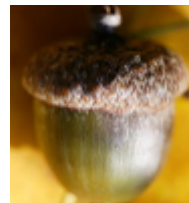part two!
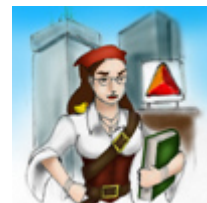
LINK   REPLY

Date: 2022-08-22 09:10 pm (UTC)

From: ACORN_SQUASH

Oh, wow! I've read enough Arthur Conan Doyle to be familiar
with Spiritualist practices, but had never thought to connect

them with plurality before. That makes a lot of sense.

LINK   REPLY   THREAD   HIDE 1 COMMENT

DATE: 2022-08-23 12:24 AM (UTC)
FROM: **LB_LEE**

Sneak: How we define "plural" or "multiple" changes quite a lot from time to time, place to place, and even just person to person! Just in the past fifty years or so, we've watched Mary Reynolds and Ansel Bourne go from THE multiples everyone references to no longer being considered multiple at all! And because we are often changing along with public opinion (or aren't around long enough to see the changes at all), we aren't aware of just how big and random those changes are.

The definitions are constantly changing.

LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT

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6 COMMENTS   REPLY

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PROFILE

LB_LEE
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PLURAL HISTORY PART 2: THE MEMORY WARS

PLURAL HISTORY PART 2: THE MEMORY WARS

JUN. 30TH, 2020 06:20 PM
👤 **LB_LEE**

Quick'N'Dirty Plural History, part 2 (see also: Part 1; Part 2; Part 3; Part 4)

Summary: ""One case is an oddity, two is a coincidence, and three is an epidemic." --Carol Tavris, "The Widening Scientist-Practitioner Gap," *Science and Pseudoscience in Clinical Psychology*, 2003, pg. ix.
Word Count: 3200 of at least 9000
Notes: This one won the Patreon vote by a landslide! This is the textual essay version of my video presentation for the Plural Positivity Conference, and sorry guys, even with the "quick and dirty" bit, it's going to be long.

Pre-Internet MPD/DIDish Community: Support Groups, Newsletters, and BBS (1980-1995ish)

In the early days, "multiple personality" was a super-vague category, covering everything from fugue to amnesia to channeling, but as the years passed, the definition narrowed, and more and more people were kicked out of the box (including many of the "classic" cases like Bourne and Reynolds). In 1981, with the DSM-III, Multiple Personality Disorder became a formal, codified diagnosis, and people diagnosed with it started building their own groups.

The first record I personally have of MPD folks getting together on purpose is a support group in Cleveland in 1980, which lasted for at least nine years (Many Voices, 1989 February, pg. 7). However, it didn't take long for multiples to search for community without medical oversight. *Speaking for Our Selves* (AKA S4OS) was allegedly "the first newsletter for individuals with dissociative disorders" (The Awareness Center, "Remembering Lynn Wasnak," 2013). It was created "at the 1985 meetings of the International Society for the Study of Multiple Personality [now the International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation]," when "a group of multiple personality patients announced the creation of a newsletter" (Becker, 2004, pg. 24, citing Kenny, 1986, pg. 174). Its purpose: "to give people with multiple personalities a written forum for learning from each other about their experiences and to educate helping professionals about the diversity and range of experience of people who have multiple personalities. [...] It is vital that people with multiple personalities have our own forum to present our view of our experiences, fears, dreams, and hopes—to SPEAK FOR OUR SELVES" (S4OS I:4, pg. 1)The first issue, according to the U.S. Copyright Office, came out in October 1985, and it ran for nine issues before shuttering in September 1987 "due to a personal crisis in the life of the editor" with 691 subscribers (Humphrey and Dennett, 1989). Unfortunately, the archive is overwhelmingly lost; only the fourth issue has been scanned and put online, far as I know. (See citations if you want it.)

There was also a support group in Akron, Ohio that started in July 1987, another two in Cincinnati and New York City in 1988, and presumably tons more we don't know about (ibid). Most of these support groups left no record, and since anonymity was a premium, they've vanished into the wind. However, the 1988 NYC group left behind a "Twelve Goals for Multiple Personalities," clearly based off the 12-Step model, which include the goals "understand and work with our personalities instead of fighting with them," "stop abusing our personalities," and "encourage communication, cooperation, and assistance" (Many Voices, 1989 June, pg. 6).

One thing that may have inspired these goals of mutual cooperation and harmony is The Troops for Truddi Chase's *When Rabbit Howls*, from 1987. In one sense, it's yet another white female multi trauma memoir that, yes, got a film adaptation (a two-part miniseries in 1990). However, it did have a few things that made it notable. The Troops are the earliest source I've found so far of the term "frontrunner" (which later seems to have gotten reverse-engineered to "front" and "fronter"). They didn't restrict themselves to a vessel name, had no desire to return to singlethood, and talked about a rich inner world, full of in-system power struggles, communication, and relationship dynamics—all of which the Spiritualists had done before them, but the Spiritualists were no longer considered multiple, as far as I know, and had been erased from the conversation. The Troops brought that conversation to the MPD table, and people took notice.

MPD groups had a lot of cross-pollination with other support groups: incest or abuse survivors, 12-step, women's groups, and so on. There were also conferences, but it's tough to differentiate multi cons for shrinks vs. cons for multiples vs. more general women's or survivor cons. Apparently it was just as confusing and frustrating to people at the time; Many Voices devoted a whole issue to it, with one multiple named Dorothy P. advising, "don't go to an MPD conference unless you are prepared to tune out the things you don't like. Therapists attending the conference aren't expecting clients [multiples] and won't cater to our needs and vulnerabilities" (February 1991, pg. 6). Conversely, Lynn Wasnak reports that "professionals who support closed conferences [no lay multiples without special permission] are concerned about clients [multiples] who might abreact [relive abuse memories] in public; about inappropriate behavior that would force conference attendees to switch unfairly from their 'learning mode' to their 'helping mode' to resolve a crisis" (ibid, pg. 1; emphasis theirs).

You might notice I'm citing *Many Voices* a lot. It was a newsletter for "clients with MPD and Dissociative Disorders," created in February 1989 by multi Lynn Wasnak, allegedly in response to the shutdown of *Speaking for Our Selves* (The Awareness Center, 2013). *Many Voices* ran continuously six times a year until mid-2012, at which point Wasnak was taken down by terminal sickness, dying in 2013. In her will, she stipulated the whole archive be put up for free reading for everyone, making it an invaluable archive. Thanks to Many Voices, we have a few early records of...

• "Several Kids Inside Syndrome" or SKIS, an informal term used in one support group for folks who had several inner children needing help in therapy but didn't see themselves as multiple (December 1990, pg. 3).
• Multiples who claimed no history of family abuse or trauma (June 1992, pg. 4).

• Nonhuman headmates, including a "white lioness" named Sangei (June 1992, pg. 1), and Starflower, who was kinda a cross between a starfish and an octopus (pg. 2).
• This is also the first place I've seen multiples self-declaring as "systems" (August 1992, pg. 10), though it was used for years prior by medical personnel (see Kluft, 1988), usually in the specific phrasing "system of alters."
• Romantic and sexual relationships between headmates (October 1993, pg. 2 and 8), including queer, kinky, and non-monogamous relationships. Though we'd bet our left arm that such relationships existed long before this, it's the first record we've been able to find of anyone talking about it, and even though it's the Love and Sex issue of a multi newsletter, people still seem hush-hush and anxious about it.
• Merchandise, nonprofits, and groups made by and for multiples, including a nonprofit called the MPD Consortium that was hoping to provide housing and rehab service for up to eight multis. No clue what became of them. (June 1993, pg. 18)

Many Voices also gives record of possibly the earliest form of computer-accessed multi community: BBS! (AKA Bulletin Board Services, kinda proto-forums or very slow-motion chat rooms, accessed via modem.) The first one we have record of is one from December 1991 called Mars Station, which was a US board for sexual abuse survivors (Many Voices, December 1991, pg. 6). Apparently it may have run until 2004 too (760 Area Code BBSes Through History, n.d.)! But take that with a grain of salt, the records are poor.

Other BBSes with multis that we've heard of (but have scant records of) include the Love Galaxy (private correspondence, 1992), Maxie's Toy which may have run from 1989-1998 (private correspondence, 1992; 209 Area Code BBSes Through History, n.d.), Fire Chat (private correspondence, '92-'94; 804 Area Code BBSes Through History, n.d.), M_P_D (EchoList, December 1995), and SIP_MPD (ibid). Some were new age health BBS, others were specifically for MPD, while others might've been general purpose and multiples just happened to congregate there.

It's in these old BBS that I first find the use of the word "singlet," which was apparently coined by Astraea's ex-husband, "B.C.", (private correspondence, October 1992). The word spreads through Astraea and their later online glossary to all sorts of places, such as alt.support.dissociation, Dark Personalities, and so on. We've also seen "singleton" but apparently by the late '90s some folks found it derogatory, leading to a short-lived more "politically correct" version, "singletype" (Dark Personalities, 2001 May 19).

So MPD (and MPD-ish) multiples are starting to come together as an identity, with their own jargon, ways of relating to each other, and cottage industries. But they aren't the only ones building community at this time. So is the backlash.

The Memory Wars (1984-2000s)

There have been (long, soul-crushing) books written about the memory wars. It's hard to distill into something quick and simple, but we can't talk MPD/DID history without it, so hold your nose, pull on your shit-wading boots, and get ready to dive. (And if you want more in-depth stuff, read Elizabeth Loftus's Witness for the Defense, Margaret Thaler Singer's Crazy Therapies, and Ross Cheit's the Witch-Hunt Narrative. Enjoy that thousand pages of suffering!)

So, as popular awareness of MPD grew, more and more people were getting diagnosed. Since MPD was supposed to be the rarest thing ever, and was becoming increasingly associated with extreme child abuse, this put therapeutic institutions in a bind: had there really been so many multiples running around unnoticed? If not, where were they all coming from? And what to do about it?

The legal system and law enforcement also weren't prepared for the special problems of dealing with young children in abuse cases. By its nature, abuse is a private, hidden thing; often the only people who can say it happened are the victim (in this case a child) and the abuser (usually an adult, usually in better mental condition). If the abuse happened early enough, the statute of limitations would run out before the victim reached adulthood—or even puberty. Some of these kids were too young to speak; others were hindered by lack of vocabulary or understanding. All were small, fragile, and at the mercy of the adults around them. How to respond to these children? How seriously to take them? Emotions and stakes were high, and inevitably, as the euphemism goes, mistakes were made.

Probably the most infamous of these cases (and arguably the one that started it all) was the McMartin preschool trial. It started simply enough in 1983, when a mother called her son's doctor concerned that he may have been raped. An investigation started, involving more and more children (culminating at forty-one complainants, with hundreds more interviews) and more and more aggressors (seven defendants, with apparently over fifty suspects). When the news leaked out a few months later, everyone wanted a piece of it, and a seven year circus commenced, ending with zero convictions and a bad taste in everyone's mouths. General opinion afterward was that the whole thing was a shitshow.

Ross Cheit goes through the case in laborious, agonizing detail (The Witch-Hunt Narrative, chapter 2). He probably gives the most credence to any of the McMartin claims that I've seen since the trial ended in 1990, and even so, he makes it clear there were problems of overdiagnosis in medical evidence, interviewer bias, and parental interference. It was a mess, and it proved the perfect hook for the backlash.

Now, the backlash was going to happen, because it always does. Norms and tech may change, but the tactics remain reliable and predictable: denial ("it didn't happen"), minimization ("it only sort of happened"), and justification ("it happened, but it's okay"), with a good side helping of attacking the victim and claiming them the true persecutor ("this jerk is trying to ruin my life!"). There's even an acronym for it: DARVO (for Denial, Attack, Reverse Victim and Offender). And what's stood out to me in my research is how consistent it's been over the past century, even with the demographics of victims and attackers changing! McGuire describes the same tactics from white men raping black women in the 1940s as Scully and Marola describe from black and white incarcerated rapists in the 1980s. Racism or misogyny may justify the violence, but they're just swapped in and out as needed to bolster the tactic, which remains the same. Different poisons, same glass.

In this case, the poisons in the glass were ableism and the thingification of children. If the victim in the case was still a child, then they were lying, misled, or misunderstood; overly seductive or sexually aggressive; or otherwise an acceptable target. (It is no coincidence that one of these backlash organizations, The National Center for Reason and Justice, focuses on freeing convicted child molesters from prison, even undeniable, exhaustively documented cases like Father Shanley. If children are things, to be used at whim by adults, then it's easy to argue that the sexual exploitation of children isn't a serious concern.)

If the victim was an adult, then by necessity they were reporting abuse that happened years or decades prior—and sometimes

that abuse had been forgotten during those years. The backlash's most original move was taking the old standby of denial and putting a new spin on it: "it didn't happen; the memories of abuse have been fabricated." Thus the term Memory Wars.

Not all of these adults reporting their abusers were multiple, not all multiples reported abuse, and neither group necessarily lost a traumatic memory only to remember it later, but all were often lumped in together, because it was convenient. It fed into existing cultural stereotypes of hysterical women, attention-seekers, lunatics so ill that they could not be trusted to state their experience. At times, the backlash could even feign concern for the helpless dears: "it didn't happen… because this person has been manipulated or brainwashed by an unscrupulous therapist into remembering it like it did."

And this was not a totally baseless claim! It's not at all hard to find multiples or their therapists self-reporting super dubious, creepy behavior! (For instance, Joan Frances Casey's autobiographical the Flock discusses "reparenting" therapy by Casey's therapist and her husband, who treated the Flock as their own child and spent hours every day with them. Therapist Ralph Allison self-reports exorcising his multi patients—see his paper, "If In Doubt, Cast It Out?" And if you really want to go down a rabbit hole, Google Colin Ross's malpractice lawsuits.)

However. The backlash organizations that formed didn't actually care about therapeutic overreach and abuse. The proof is in their actions. None of them, far as I know, ever attempted to regulate therapeutic behavior—indeed, the False Memory Syndrome Foundation's Elizabeth Loftus served on the advisory board until it closed December 31, 2019 (False Memory Syndrome Foundation, n.d.), two decades after she resigned from the APA to avoid an ethics investigation and four years since the report on it came to light (Hoffman, 2015, pg. 484, footnote 2350). The ethics investigation was based around complaints filed by lawyer Jennifer Hoult, who stated that Loftus had misrepresented the details of her legal case against her sexually abusive father, in the interest of forwarding the False Memory Syndrome narrative, and that upon receiving the ethics complaints, Loftus then informed Mr. Hoult about them, who then sued Ms. Hoult for libel, and the False Memory Syndrome Foundation added their own harassment campaign (Hoult, 2005 and 2014). If the False Memory Syndrome Foundation were truly so concerned about therapeutic misbehavior, they never would've tolerated it from their own.

Instead, their actions focused on legal protection of the accused and harassment of accusers or their therapists—sometimes to the point of restraining orders (Calof, 1998). The False Memory Syndrome Foundation never gave criteria for the syndrome it claimed was scourging the country, but it still spun itself as a scientific organization super-effectively; Peter and Pamela Freyd created it in 1992 after their grown daughter privately accused Peter of abuse, to which they responded by trying to sabotage her career (Dallam, 2002). The Witch Hunt Information Center… well, it's there in the name (Harris, 1997). The National Center for Reason and Justice's focus has already been discussed.

As scientific organizations, these people were failures. The only one I know of who did any substantial research on the memories they disavowed was Elizabeth Loftus. But these orgs were fantastic at spin. Their debunkers tended to be academics, writing for academic publications, while they themselves focused on more popular mainstream venues. Perversely, they made themselves popular in skeptics' groups because they played to bias, despite their lack of scientific rigor, and from the '90s up through the mid-'00s, it was damn near impossible to read anything about MPD/DID without having to also dig through False Memory Syndrome talking points. It cast a long shadow on medicalized multiples from this time, including ourself, and just about every trauma-influenced multiple of a certain generation has a story about it affecting them.

All of this is a bit ironic, since traumatic amnesia was studied in combat veterans back in the '40s (as quoted in Freyd 1998), apparently without controversy. Going through all the research is beyond the scope of this essay, but the very basics are: traumatic amnesia exists, false memories exist, and so do "recovered memories." Have you ever forgotten where you put your keys, searched everywhere in despair, only to suddenly remember? Congratulations: you've recovered a memory. It's apparently impossible to prove the difference between false and real memories without outside corroboration, but some traumatized, later-remembered memories have apparently been corroborated in a legal court (see Cheit's Recovered Memory Project). Our brains are squishy, fallible chunks of electrified meat and at the end of the day, we have to make our peace with that.

Oh, and in the midst of all this bullshit, the DSM changes Multiple Personality Disorder to Dissociative Identity Disorder in 1994, hoping that will calm things down. It doesn't really work; the "multi trauma memoir" does fall from popularity, but that's probably due to rigid genre norms and the fad running its course, and the Memory Wars continue for roughly another decade. (The NCRJ still exists today, and the FMSF only shut their doors at the end of 2019.)

But even as the war rages, plurals keep making community anyway. Enter the Internet.

(A Brief Aside: the 1994 DSM IV and the MPD/DID Change

A lot of multiples had passionate opinions on the diagnosis change from MPD to DID—just check out the Many Voices or alt.support.dissociation arguments from 1994 to see what I mean. Some felt that DID was a euphemism, a way to say, "oh, you're not even another personality, you're just one dissociated one." Others saw DID as a less sensational term and hoped it might make people less scared of them.

Personally, we think that the name of the diagnosis is less interesting than how important it was to people. Even by this point, people were equating their diagnosis with identity. They were taking these diagnostic changes not just as a bureaucratic change, but a personal rejection of who they were. Even though, if you ask me, doctors shouldn't be given that kind of power in the first place.

Continue to

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Current Mood: sore

Tags: ⊕ LB MAKES, LB MAKES:ESSAY, PLURAL:TALES OF YORE

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5 COMMENTS   REPLY

Flat | Top-Level Comments Only

Date: 2020-07-01 12:46 am (UTC)
From: TALEWISEFELLOWSHIP

Thank you for releasing this! We were discussing the memory wars with someone earlier today in fact (and recommended Cheit's book)

--Akira

LINK   REPLY

Date: 2020-07-01 06:53 pm (UTC)
From: WRITERKIT

And the false memory people didn't even need to do any of the things they did to accomplish their stated goals. Uncorroborated victim testimony isn't sufficient for "beyond a reasonable doubt" *anyway*, whether repressed memories are involved or not. They didn't have to make a complicated argument about the validity of false memories to discredit the cases where therapists overreached; they could totally have gone after the kind of horrifyingly unethical behavior by the *prosecutors* that happened in McMartin (Lying about what the accusers had said! Giving immunity to a known perjurer!) or the media figures who had conflicts of interest without going after victims at all.

(Incidentally, the first result when I Googled Colin Ross appears to be trying to pick up where the FMSF left off, except with less of a science vibe and more of a "this website really should belong to the Illuminati" vibe.)

LINK   REPLY

Date: 2020-07-03 01:14 pm (UTC)
From: BLUE_MOUSE

Thank you for the writeup!

Link Reply

Date: 2020-08-02 12:00 am (UTC)
From: 🧑 CRISSES

"It cast a long shadow on medicalized multiples from this time, including ourself, and just about every trauma-influenced multiple of a certain generation has a story about it affecting them."

For realz. What was interesting is finding out that not only were there harassment suits, but there were (we have from private anonymous convo) a good number of MPD & trauma specialists from this time were harassed, death threats, tormented pets, etc.* the word on the street of course is that FMS(F) is all protecting abusers. Seeing how high up Epstein and Trafficking Island caters to, it's no doubt that FMS(F) (both the idea and the org) served Someone Important™ and or many but it was ®Convenient.

Pervasive abuse of children is worth being able to sweep under the rug. Worth a lot to the right people.

*Convo mentioning how many have PTSD now of their own and are quite twitchy about certain topics.
Edited (fix quotes, add footnote) Date: 2020-08-02 12:02 am (UTC)

Link Reply Thread Hide 1 comment

Date: 2020-08-11 03:56 pm (UTC)
From: 🧑 LB_LEE

Yeah, I think I cited "Practice Under Siege," from Calof, I think, about the harassment campaign the FMSF embarked on him. Such class.

Link Reply Thread from start Parent

◀ 💝 ✉️ ▶

5 comments Reply

Flat | Top-Level Comments Only

PROFILE

LB_LEE
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PLURAL HISTORY, PART 3: USENET AND ITS SPIN-OFFS AND SOULBONDERS

JUL. 30TH, 2020 08:47 PM

👤 **LB_LEE**

Title: Plural History, Part 3 (see also: Part 1; Part 2; Part 4)
Series: Essay
Summary: "Welcome to the jungle, everyone." --Wednesday
Word Count: 2700
Notes: Ahaha, remember when this was going to be a two-part essay? Sorry guys. It's going to be four; no way could I cram in LJ-multiplicity, its downfall, and the exodus to tumblr and the genic wars. As usual, this essay was sponsored by the Patreon crew. Also, the (much shorter) video version of this essay went up while I was busy loony-braining. Thanks to our wonderful little studio audience!

Usenet: ASAR, ASD, and their spin-offs

The first place online (as opposed to BBS) that I've seen medicalized multiples congregating on is Usenet—specifically, alt.sexual.abuse.recovery, AKA ASAR, which was already in full swing by December 19, 1991 (which is when the Google Groups records start). ASAR was big enough to spawn its own domain, asarian.org (Fuzzy, 1994 December 15), which was owned by a multiple (Astraea, 1998 January 15) and hosted other multiples' webpages, including Vickis' Wonderful World of the Midcontinuum, the first version of Astraea's Web I've been able to find, and Households for Equality, all of which we'll come back to.

Although many multiples were on it, ASAR wasn't multi-specific, so on August 28, 1994, a poster named Jonathan Grobe created alt.support.dissociation, AKA ASD. Grobe writes, "this newsgroup was originally going to be to discuss JUST multiplicity (aka MPD aka Multiple Personalities aka Multiple Personality Disorder aka Dissociative Identity Disorder) [...] [but] someone mentioned calling it alt.dissociation and including other dissociative disorders as well as MP. I thought this was a wonderful idea, because many people who aren't 'really multiple' experience the same types of problems and handle their dissociative states in a very similar way. So, with that in mind, alt.support.dissociation was born." (Grobe, 1994). ASD is still sporadically active today, making it the longest continuously running multi group I know of, of any kind.

Just about every plurality community builds its own norms and rules over what is "acceptable" or "real" plurality, and ASD is no exception. While focused on dissociation, there is some ambivalence and flexibility over whether that requires

trauma or dysfunction. For example, within less than two weeks of its creation, a poster named Leigh Ann appears, stating, "I was told a.s.d. was to be a support newsgroup for mp's [multiples] or those who dissociate, regardless of how dysfunctional they are or are not. [...] I do not consider myself to be disordered or broken" (1994, September 6). And a day after that, the first version of the ASD FAQ, made by Discord and the Sapphire Gazelles, gives space for non-abused multiples in the case of those raised with dissociative caregivers (1994, September 7). Eight months later, the FAQ has been expanded to make room for multiples who come to their multiplicity via role play, "alternate social structures," or "identity games" (Discord and Sapphire Gazelles, 1995, May 14).

Probably inspired by online support group norms, ASD and ASAR also build a culture of trigger warnings, which require warning for intense material, and "splats," the censoring of words that might be triggering. (In the course of my researches for this essay, I found everything from "rape" to "trauma" to "parents" disemvoweled— written as "p*r*nts" or "tr**m*.") One rando on Fanlore describes the atmosphere as "constant lengthy discussions, often involving vituperative language, refractive accusations and dogpiling, about who had triggered whom and which members were 'unsafe'" (Unknown, n.d., paragraph 8).

Some multis get so sick of these endless trigger fights and smothering "safe space" debates that they leave and create their own groups. This includes Discord, one of the creators of the ASD FAQ; they leave ASAR in disgust on January 7, 1995 (see Sikorski, 1995) for greener pastures, like Sanctuary (Sikorski, 1994)—which sadly, I know little else about (Yavie, 1997). There's also alt.abuse.transcendence, which splits off ASAR on June 20, 1994; creator Wednesday describes it as a "group I proposed a little while ago for the discussion of alternate models of understanding and dealing with abuse in all of its manifestations (sexual emotional physical mental ritual...). It's the no-spoiler [splat/trigger warning] zone, basically. The group is designed to be dangerous space rather than safe.... discussing BDSM, NLP [neurolinguistic programming], magickal/shamanistic approaches, cutting, nontraditional therapies and models... Welcome to the jungle, everyone."

There's also Dark Personalities, made by the Anachronic Army in 1998 (Anachronic Army, 2000, October 2, footer), known for its cage fight atmosphere—no warnings and embracing of headmates who were considered too "dark" or "demonic" in more traditional support atmospheres. In their own words, "If you are a multiple who requires trigger warnings and spoilers in order to function, go somewhere else" (Anachronic Army, 2000, October 19).

Dark Personalities is not, as far as I know, the source of the "empowered multiple" or "natural" multiple idea, which comes up by 2000, but they certainly help spread it through headmate Sharon's essay, "The Empowered: A New Brand of Multiple" (Anachronic Army, 2001 April 14). The term itself is coined by Shaytar (and possibly their housemates, Bekaio/Bekariso) who apparently never intended to start a movement and seem a little exasperated at the explosive response. Shaytar member Jeren Tay'avamar explains their frustration at trying to exist online as a multiple who had not been diagnosed with MPD/DID, were outside the medical system, and had headmates who weren't created by dissociative split: "Therefore, in the eyes of many in the community, our multiplicity was suspect. And we were tired of feeling like we should 'prove' how MPD/DID we were" (Shaytar, 2001, April 12). They separate MPD/DID from their multiplicity, which is "natural, as a way of life, not a disorder or something to be cured or healed from. [...] Not *better*, not *superior*, not *more advanced*. **Just Different**" (ibid, emphasis theirs).

The term causes controversy, to say the least, which will be repeated almost verbatim fifteen, twenty years later in "the Genic Wars." Jeren Tay'avamar is prescient when they say, "What it comes down to, in my opinion […] is a debate about language. Because some people have a different definition of two words - empowered multiplicity - they are seen as unsettling, if not downright dangerous. Somehow, by the way they use language, they are seen as invalidating a whole other group of people who choose to define the same words differently" (ibid).

The empowered multiples aren't perfect, of course. Ableism still rears its ugly head; Sharon of the Anachronic Army writes, "Empowered multiples are employed and do well in the marketplace," (2001, April 14), while Shaytar emphasize their education and employment status: "We are a *high-functioning group of individuals* who just happen to all share one body" (emphasis mine, Shaytar, 2001, March 3). But this is a nigh-universal problem in plural circles, the need to prove that one is a healthy, productive member of society (and not like those other bad multiples). It's nigh-impossible to find any plural who doesn't fall into this now and again; we certainly have!

Dark Personalities's other notable contribution to online plural culture is their big glossary of multi terminology, which Lancers/Pavilion Hall and then Astraea will later lift and edit (Dark Personalities, 2001, May 19; Astraea, 2003, January 11; the Lancers version is lost). And speaking of Astraea…

Astraea are jerks (Lee, 2020, January 9) but it's impossible to talk about online plural history without them. They gain online precedence by hosting the ASD FAQ on their site, Astraea's Web, which existed by April 22, 1997 (Jackie). Astraea's Web becomes a clearinghouse for information on multiplicity, mostly made by others, at times badly sourced and giving Astraea disproportionate credit.

For example, the Multiple Code expresses a lot of info about a multiple, condensed into an esoteric string of text. The Consortium created it (2001, June 13 and August 2) with nineteen different sections, all with at least five options, plus wild cards and modifiers (and some sections, like "Job" and "Species", had dozens). When the Consortium and their website disappeared by 2003, Astraea picked the code up and put it on their own website with the claim that they made "edits and updates" (2004, April 27). There was exactly one change: the addition of the modifier "Vanilla Sex, no kinks" to the sexuality section (2004, May 5). They made no additions of any substance for two years (2007, April 23).

Of more interest is Vickis. They join ASD and coin the term "midcontinuum" in 1997 to describe "those who do not fit all the DID diagnostic criteria" (1997 January 25). In other words, people who are in-between multiple and singlet, have the then-diagnosis of Dissociative Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (DDNOS), or don't fit in the "acceptable" box. Vickis make it clear that this does not apply solely to medicalized plurals; they state "we begin to wonder whether 'plurality' and 'dissociation' are actually two different things. And we take as our starting point that plurality is not the problem" (1998, January 15). Vickis' website, the Wonderful World of the Midcontinuum, starts collecting stories from other midcontinuum people, many of which are still of interest and relevant today. In a singlet world, it is all too easy to over-correct and focus on the most multi of multiples; we ourself are guilty of this. Vickis are an unusual instance of a plural fighting for fluidity and spectrum, and it's fitting that the Wonderful World of the Midcontinuum is also the first place I see someone using "plural" as an umbrella term for multiples, midcontinuums, and other box-breakers. As far as I know, Vickis seem to be responsible for first attempting to create a plural umbrella outside of diagnostic terms.

Unfortunately, Vickis' embrace of fluidity is not shared. Dark Personalities, in their glossary of plural jargon, list midcontinuum, but with the criticism, "many people feel the idea of a continuum to be inaccurate, [and] many are seeking a new term instead of mid-continuum" (2001, May 19). They do not succeed, but Astraea and Pavilion Hall will later on, erasing and reappropriating Vickis' contributions for their own devices.

Chris Roche (who I know nothing about, asides from their plurality) sends out the first official email for Households United for Equality on February 13, 1999 (Astraea, 1999, November 17). HUE is "a proactive educational network devoted to correcting public misconceptions about multiplicity and to help protect multiples through education and awareness and hopefully through a legal defense fund" (ibid). Astraea host the initial web page, and Vickis design some logos; future goals include a bigger website, pamphlets, and a mailing list (ibid). It never does anything that I know of after March 9th, and it may seem like a blip on the radar, but it'll be reprised in a couple years, with Pavilion/Lancers.

Meanwhile, other non-medical plural-umbrella groups are forming in their own places, completely independently, who've never heard about any of the "empowered multiple" fights.

Sidenote: Plural Otherkin

Okay, so, otherkin (non-human-identified) multiples exist and have for decades, but I know very little about them. They seem to have had their own hangouts on IRC, mailing lists, Yahoo, all this stuff that I don't know much about. The little exposure I've had is from the paper magazine Kinships, the "first in print magazine for Otherkin and 'other people who exist anyway'" (Joyner, 2006 May 10). Kinships ran for seven issues, printed mostly from October 2000 to December 2001, with the last two printed around 2007. At least two pretty high profile otherkin multis contributed: Crisses, creators of United Front Boot Camp and Kinhost (Crisses, n.d.; 2001, February 24) and Arhuaine and Casteylan/Casteglan of downtide, who created the Otherkin star (Various, 2001 fall, pg. 9; Arethinn n.d.)! So there's a huge gaping void in my knowledge.

Soulbonders

Meanwhile, the soulbonders are also forming. Creativity and artwork interacting with plurality has been a thing since at least the Spiritualists and the "heteronyms" of Fernando Pessoa, and probably much farther back than that. But "soulbonding" as a term to describe fictional characters as autonomous entities comes from Amanda Flowers on the private mailing list Just for Writers, AKA JFW, sometime in the mid-'90s —the dates I've got range from 1996 (Amorpha, personal communication) through 1999 (Eclective, 2001, June 26). The term then spreads via Elective's website (2001, June 26) and Kurai's list of soulbonders (2000, December 7), which runs from 2000-2003 and is then picked up by Nichole who adds oral histories through 2005 (2005, December 4). Laura Gilkey (AKA Half-Esper Laura) also seems to have helped spread the term with her fictionpress story, The Trinity (2002).

That same year, someone creates the Livejournal soulbonding community (soulbonding, 2009 January 1). At first, there isn't much overlap between LJ-soulbonding and LJ-multiplicity, but folks start crossing between the two by December 11, 2003 (bekkypk), and the two communities have more and more cross-fertilization as time goes on. The incomplete overlap invites soulbonders and multiples alike to question their respective ideas of what's acceptable or "real". The classic soulbonder

interacts with their characters internally, but the characters don't front or interact with daily life. But what happens if the characters do? What's the difference between a multiple making "fiction" about their headmates and a soulbonder who talks to their characters? An old chestnut about people with DID (which I haven't researched but am dubious of) is that they're unusually creative, so should soulbonding really seem so separate a phenomenon? It's not hard to find MPD/DID multiples with deep internal attachments to works of fiction—we're one of them, and so is Madison Clell, who "developed an elaborate imaginary world as a child. 'Every year I started to write it, but thought it sucked. I'd wait and try it again the next year. I thought for sure by fifth grade I'd have it,' she says. […] Once I knew that these fantasy characters were actually alters, I knew that I couldn't go back and do this as a fantasy epic" (San Francisco Examiner Staff, 2007).

Questioning one's experience, reality, and sanity is a harrowing experience, never mind the implications that crazy/sane and singlet/plural may not be strict binaries. Despite (or maybe because of) their similarities, soulbonders and multiples sometimes sneer at each other. Kurai, when taking down their list, remarks on how what used to be fun turned into "a big, scary, monster of un-fun-ness, especially by people who are taking it WAY too seriously […] This is NOT MPD. If your SBs [soulbonds] routinely take control of your body during offline situations, then you need help. You have a problem" (2001, October 18). Meanwhile, Riesz of Eclective explicates the issue that some multiples take with soulbonders: "the majority of SoulBonds originate not from spirit walk-ins or other planes of existence, but from things that nobody 'in their right mind' considers real. Books, plays, movies, comics, television. In fact, this is the main bugbear that some Multiples (and the majority of 'normals') have with SoulBonders - 'how can they be real people when they're just characters from some cartoon?'" (Eclective, 2002 September 18).

Like all plurals, soulbonders are easy to make fun of. A number of well-known mockeries pop up online: the FF7 House cult warning page from around 2005 (Unknown, n.d.), Fandom Wank's Snapes on an Astral Plane (narcissam, 2006, October 22), and Encyclopedia Dramatica's Soulbonding page (2008, August 26). Perversely, though, public excoriation may have help raise soulbonding's profile, introducing the concept to a new audience—everyone loves a trainwreck. We know at least one plural who has privately admitted that their gateway to recognizing themselves was through the mockery groups.

Soulbonders at this time frame or perceive these mockery posts as an us-vs.-them thing: "jerk singlets are infiltrating our groups to make fun of us!" And this was not a baseless concern (Encyclopedia Dramatica, 2006 March 3). But the reality was more complicated: often, soulbonders and other plurals used mockery communities to shame, abuse, and police each other. Wondershocked gets a lot of soulbonders put on Encyclopedia Dramatica and ridicules people's openness on the Internet… while at the same time claiming to be plural in private conversations with those same soulbonders (Lee, 2019, April 18 and July 21). Shoiryu lists herself on Kurai's soulbonder list (Kurai, 2000 December 7), but as far as I can tell, she's also a Fandom Wank mod at the time of the Snapes post. Chronic plural predator Draven has no problem outing a soulbonder ex on Fandom Wank as punishment for trying to escape (Lee, 2018, pg. 82-87). And plenty of plurals (publicly or privately) read the mockeries and laugh along as a way of whistling in the dark—"at least we're not like these dorks!"

But we are. Every single one of us.

--continue to Part 4, which is the end!

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CURRENT MOOD: EXHAUSTED

TAGS: ⊕ LB MAKES, LB MAKES:ESSAY, PLURAL, PLURAL:TALES OF YORE

◀ 💗 ✉ ▶

74 COMMENTS   REPLY

Flat | Top-Level Comments Only | Expand All

DATE: 2020-07-31 01:34 AM (UTC)
FROM: 👤 HUNGRYGHOSTS

I think Dreamwidth ate your formatting. D:

Probably inspired by online support group norms, ASD and
build a culture of trigger warnings, which require warning
material, and "splats," the censoring of words that might
triggering. (In the course of my researches for this essay, I
everything from "rape" to "trauma" to "parents" disemvo
written as "p*r*nts" or "tr**m*.") One rando on Fanlore de
atmosphere as "constant lengthy discussions, often involving
vituperative language, refractive accusations and dogpiling, about
who had triggered whom and which members were 'unsafe'"
(Unknown, n.d., paragraph 8).
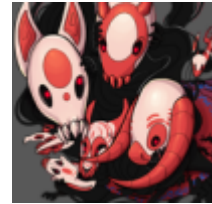
Some multis get so sick of these endless trigger fights and smothering
"safe space" debates that they leave and create their own groups.

Holy fuck. *Holy fuck*. Have you seen how most plural Discord servers are set up
nowadays?
Edited Dᴀᴛᴇ: 2020-07-31 01:36 ᴀᴍ (UTC)

Lɪɴᴋ   Rᴇᴘʟʏ   Tʜʀᴇᴀᴅ   Hɪᴅᴇ 35 ᴄᴏᴍᴍᴇɴᴛs

Dᴀᴛᴇ: 2020-07-31 01:43 ᴀᴍ (UTC)
Fʀᴏᴍ: **POLYFRAZZLEMENTED**

And Tumblr, before that. "DNI if you have the name X, you
kin character Y, or you like the color blue! It makes me
unsafe!"
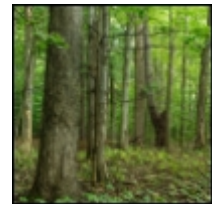
Lɪɴᴋ   Rᴇᴘʟʏ   Tʜʀᴇᴀᴅ ꜰʀᴏᴍ sᴛᴀʀᴛ   Pᴀʀᴇɴᴛ   Tʜʀᴇᴀᴅ   Exᴘᴀɴᴅ   Hɪᴅᴇ 10
ᴄᴏᴍᴍᴇɴᴛs

Dᴀᴛᴇ: 2020-07-31 01:47 ᴀᴍ (UTC)
Fʀᴏᴍ: **LB_LEE**

You know, the lines in the sand may change, the players
and faces, the language... but the pissing contest rages
eternal nevertheless.

Perhaps it's overly optimistic of me, but I kinda hope that by showing how
cyclical and repetitive these fights are, folks will calm down a little.

Lɪɴᴋ   Rᴇᴘʟʏ   Tʜʀᴇᴀᴅ ꜰʀᴏᴍ sᴛᴀʀᴛ   Pᴀʀᴇɴᴛ   Tʜʀᴇᴀᴅ   Exᴘᴀɴᴅ   Hɪᴅᴇ 3
ᴄᴏᴍᴍᴇɴᴛs

(ɴᴏ sᴜʙᴊᴇᴄᴛ)

FROM: 👤 **WRITERKIT** - DATE: 2020-08-01 11:24 PM (UTC) - Expand

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(NO SUBJECT)

FROM: 👤 **CRISSES** - DATE: 2020-08-02 04:27 PM (UTC) - Expand

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(NO SUBJECT)

FROM: 👤 **LB_LEE** - DATE: 2020-08-02 10:27 PM (UTC) - Expand

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(NO SUBJECT)

FROM: 👤 **HUNGRYGHOSTS** - DATE: 2020-07-31 01:55 AM (UTC) - Expand

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(NO SUBJECT)

FROM: 👤 **POLYFRAZZLEMENTED** - DATE: 2020-07-31 02:04 AM (UTC) - Expand

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(NO SUBJECT)

FROM: 👤 **CRISSES** - DATE: 2020-08-01 09:26 PM (UTC) - Expand

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(NO SUBJECT)

FROM: 👤 **POLYFRAZZLEMENTED** - DATE: 2020-08-01 09:31 PM (UTC) - Expand

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(NO SUBJECT)

FROM: 👤 **CRISSES** - DATE: 2020-08-02 12:05 AM (UTC) - Expand

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(NO SUBJECT)

FROM: 👤 **WOLFY_WRITING** - DATE: 2020-07-31 02:14 AM (UTC) - Expand

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DATE: 2020-07-31 01:44 AM (UTC)

FROM: 👤 **LB_LEE**

FEH! It was one of my quotations from a Useneter who used brackets instead of parenthesis. I corrected their formatting for them and I think it works now. Sorry about that, and thanks for the catch!

I missed the plural Discord wanks, but hahaha, the more things change the

more things stay the same! WAIT TILL YOU READ ABOUT EMPOWERED MULTIPLICITY FRIEND

LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT   THREAD   EXPAND   HIDE 21 COMMENTS

(NO SUBJECT)
FROM: HUNGRYGHOSTS - DATE: 2020-07-31 02:00 AM (UTC) - Expand

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(NO SUBJECT)
FROM: LB_LEE - DATE: 2020-07-31 02:21 AM (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
FROM: POLYFRAZZLEMENTED - DATE: 2020-07-31 04:33 AM (UTC) - Expand

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(NO SUBJECT)
FROM: STEALTHSYSTEM - DATE: 2020-08-02 04:11 AM (UTC) - Expand

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(NO SUBJECT)
FROM: LB_LEE - DATE: 2020-08-02 09:00 PM (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
FROM: CRISSES - DATE: 2020-08-01 09:31 PM (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
FROM: LB_LEE - DATE: 2020-08-08 12:51 AM (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
FROM: WRITERKIT - DATE: 2020-08-01 11:33 PM (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
FROM: LB_LEE - DATE: 2020-08-02 10:34 PM (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
From: 　WRITERKIT · Date: 2020-08-02 11:03 pm (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
From: 　LB_LEE · Date: 2020-08-06 07:59 pm (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
From: 　WOLFY_WRITING · Date: 2020-07-31 02:23 am (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
From: 　LB_LEE · Date: 2020-07-31 02:38 am (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
From: 　WOLFY_WRITING · Date: 2020-07-31 04:11 am (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
From: 　SINISTMER · Date: 2020-08-01 09:06 pm (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
From: 　CRISSES · Date: 2020-08-01 09:34 pm (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
From: 　LB_LEE · Date: 2020-08-08 12:59 am (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
From: 　STARFALLHAVEN · Date: 2020-07-31 04:00 pm (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
From: 　HUNGRYGHOSTS · Date: 2020-08-01 05:20 pm (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)

FROM: 👤 **STARFALLHAVEN** · DATE: 2020-08-10 03:45 AM (UTC) · Expand

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(NO SUBJECT)

FROM: 👤 **KJORTEO** · DATE: 2020-08-12 07:22 AM (UTC) · Expand

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DATE: 2020-07-31 03:29 AM (UTC)

FROM: 👤 **STEALTHSYSTEM**

Not in plural servers but there was this really badly traumatized group we used to know, and they actually appologized for "Making us switch" and we were just so gobsmacked, like "Guys, you didn't triffgger us because you were talking about pink bunnies. I just like pink bunnies more than Michie. It's ok!"
Luke

LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT

DATE: 2020-07-31 08:36 AM (UTC)

FROM: 👤 **TALEWISEFELLOWSHIP**

My reaction exactly!!! The resemblance is uncanny

--Hikaru

LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT

DATE: 2020-07-31 01:38 AM (UTC)

FROM: 👤 **STEALTHSYSTEM**

Heads up, guys. There's a messed up tag somewhere, and it's preventing us from reading the second half of the essay. Just wanted you to know. We're finding this really really fascinating.

LINK   REPLY   THREAD   HIDE 1 COMMENT

DATE: 2020-07-31 01:43 AM (UTC)

FROM: 👤 **LB_LEE**

FEH! It was one of my quotations from a Useneter who used brackets instead of parenthesis. I corrected their formatting for them and I think it works now.

LINK REPLY THREAD FROM START PARENT

DATE: 2020-07-31 05:15 AM (UTC)

FROM: 👤 SILVERCAT17

"Astraea are jerks (Lee, 2020, January 9) but"

I love this

LINK REPLY THREAD HIDE 2 COMMENTS

DATE: 2020-08-02 09:11 PM (UTC)

FROM: 👤 LB_LEE

On the one hand, I didn't want this essay to be about Astraea. But at the same time, I couldn't NOT mention them, and I don't want people thinking they were all good and shiny.

Their site is the easiest place to find some of the data that I share in my history posts, but that's because they're like a strangler fig who at least in some cases seem to have choked out the original source! (And the secondary zombie source that is Astraea's Web is so badly sourced that I can't really use it on its own; I have to go digging through archives and zombie back-ups to find the proper citation.)

On the surface, Astraea's Web is a good site with a lot of good resources... but it exists in part because Astraea helped crush the people who MADE those resources, so their site is all that's left standing. And I couldn't really talk about that in the essay itself (it's overlong already) but I had to say it SOMEWHERE.

--Rogan

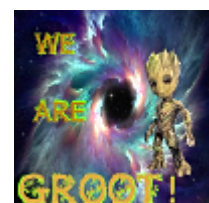LINK REPLY THREAD FROM START PARENT THREAD EXPAND HIDE 1 COMMENT

(NO SUBJECT)

FROM: 👤 SILVERCAT17 - DATE: 2020-08-03 03:26 AM (UTC) - Expand

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DATE: 2020-07-31 06:09 AM (UTC)

FROM: 👤 MIRROROFSMOKE

That's a blast from the past! We actually knew of a few of the folks you mentioned. And I don't mean the ones like Shoiryu, but this was still before our time.
Tempus

LINK REPLY

DATE: 2020-08-01 09:39 PM (UTC)
FROM: CRISSES

Thank y'all so much for making us no more than just a footnote
in passing in this. So funny. We cracked the F up. People want to
fangush at us sometimes it's like oh heck no, have you MET us?
ROFL Well whatever y'all think about us, likely wrong, and we
piss poop and fart like everyone else so let's move on how can I help you. lol
Actually people in here are thinking we should memorize that and actually say it
like that. lol Like we'll be at the Plural Events table next year or something and try
that out. See how it works. If it doesn't make someone laugh, even if it has to be
us, we should pack the table up and leave. lol

LINK REPLY THREAD HIDE 15 COMMENTS

DATE: 2020-08-01 09:47 PM (UTC)
FROM: CRISSES

Ok, so that said we still have all the archives from the
Otherkind-Hosts email list, and this old brain whatever it can
remember, and are so very willing and sometimes able to
help document more of the stuff that has gone on. Mostly we
have access to (thinking) Some of the evolution of the otherkin community
from 1998-2005 and the founding/evolution of the Otherkind-hosts email list on
Yahoogroups (via Onelist and some other site before that everyone kept
gobbling up sites fancy that) — and have contacts from the Otherkin
community pre 1998 if that's needed such as Rialian from the Elven Realities
email list, who may have contactsfrom Elvenkind-Digest. I may have Elvenkind-
Digest emails for some period too. But I think someone first called us a Host at
Walking the Thresholds I because we kinda burst into the community, found out
there was an in-person gather, bundled our partner & 6 month old younger son
and our Pennsic camping gear and drove like 6 hrs into the wilds of Southern
rural PA (USA) just outside Maryland to hang out with strangers in the woods
really quickly. lol So there was hardly an introduction before trusting that
these people who said they were elves and otherwise weren't axe murderers.
And people are afraid of folk with DID?!?!! :)

LINK REPLY THREAD FROM START PARENT THREAD EXPAND HIDE 3 COMMENTS

(NO SUBJECT)
FROM: LB_LEE - DATE: 2020-08-23 10:10 PM (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)

FROM: 👤 **CRISSES** - DATE: 2020-08-23 11:40 PM (UTC) - Expand

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(NO SUBJECT)

FROM: 👤 **LB_LEE** - DATE: 2020-08-24 04:36 PM (UTC) - Expand

---

DATE: 2020-08-01 10:04 PM (UTC)

FROM: 👤 **CRISSES**

Read more of the page. Plural-on-plural wankery. Ok, so psychology touts how PLASTIC brains are then (a portion thereof) shits on us and says that we can't exist. And so on. Fukkemall. (say it out loud if you have to) — we exist. We are multitudinous. We've been there for millenia, showing up as "voices" and given religious context, we've inspired authors, we've created wars I'm sure, inspired dozens of fun and funny idioms (and sometimes not funny), and undoubtedly every invention of Leonardo da Vinci was born of some separate entity in that weird brain, and we're not going away. They already tried that. Here we are. I think there's plenty of civilizations that even gave us seats of power — some still kinda do so long as we stay within the lines of their prescribed sanctions of what is "acceptable" plurality and not waver from it. Pope has a dedicated sacredly sanctioned red phone right to some superior power or other.

Uh hopefully cursing is ok here. Hopefully we're among friends. LOL *looks around the room* lol I don't really care — but the wankery has to go.

Oh before I hit post — the one thing we didn't inspire is the book The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. That was someone drinking a 5-Hour Energy + Insta-Testosterone potion and unleashing their inner beast. Every Jekyll/Hyde trope since being wrongly attributed to plurals...

LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT

DATE: 2020-08-02 04:18 AM (UTC)

FROM: 👤 **STEALTHSYSTEM**

That made us laugh! LOL!

LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT   THREAD   EXPAND   HIDE 6 COMMENTS

(NO SUBJECT)

FROM: 👤 CRISSES - DATE: 2020-08-02 04:19 PM (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
FROM: 👤 STEALTHSYSTEM - DATE: 2020-08-02 10:59 PM (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
FROM: (ANONYMOUS) - DATE: 2020-08-03 01:20 AM (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
FROM: 👤 STEALTHSYSTEM - DATE: 2020-08-03 01:51 AM (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
FROM: 👤 CRISSES - DATE: 2020-08-03 06:26 PM (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
FROM: 👤 STEALTHSYSTEM - DATE: 2020-08-03 07:01 PM (UTC) - Expand

DATE: 2020-09-01 04:39 AM (UTC)
FROM: 👤 LB_LEE

Apologies for not sending this in response to your email; it's not working at the moment.

Crisses, after giving it some thought, part of why we don't want to work with you on Kinhost's wiki is, we don't like your public behavior. Specifically, how you treated Owls here and here.

Everything we have seen of Owls is that they are doing good work, and they are relatively new to the community. You have been around a lot longer, and you chose to commandeer their post about headspace to make it about their tag usage. When Owls and others gave what appears to us a completely reasonable explanation, you continued harping, and you never apologized for your behavior.

We appreciate the work you do but prefer not to work with you. We wish you luck in your endeavors.

LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT   THREAD   EXPAND   HIDE 2 COMMENTS

(NO SUBJECT)

FROM: (ANONYMOUS) - DATE: 2020-09-01 12:16 PM (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)

FROM: (ANONYMOUS) - DATE: 2020-09-01 12:18 PM (UTC) - Expand

DATE: 2020-08-05 01:37 AM (UTC)
FROM: 🔵 BLUE_MOUSE

Super interesting! Also, the video came out pretty good! Did y'all
see the comment by Elliott batTzedek (on the video) about how
they were around when FMS started up, and a little bit of insight
from them?
Edited DATE: 2020-08-05 01:38 AM (UTC)

LINK   REPLY   THREAD   HIDE 2 COMMENTS

DATE: 2020-08-08 01:03 AM (UTC)
FROM: 👤 LB_LEE

I did! I didn't know about the lawsuits, I don't think, but the
part about the FMSF being the abusers lobby, oh yes, I knew
about that; I did a super-brief sum-up in the Research Part of
All In The Family, which I didn't want to reprise. They were
really scummy people.

LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT   THREAD   EXPAND   HIDE 1
COMMENT

(NO SUBJECT)

FROM: 👤 LITHOPHILES - DATE: 2020-08-25 09:55 PM (UTC) - Expand

DATE: 2020-08-12 07:43 AM (UTC)
FROM: 👤 KJORTEO

Celine: Can confirm that highly targeted subcultures in the
Encyclopedia Dramatica and Portal of Evil days had ways of
using resources like said sites to devour their own. No one has
both the inside dirt on a high-profile furry and the motive to
spill it quite like other furries who tried to commission them once and got burned,
exes in the fandom who had a falling out, or the like. I am absolutely not surprised
to hear that other picked-on groups were doing the same thing.

The gatekeeping re: soulbonding perplexes me, because there's kind of a fuzzy line
between making contact with a headmate who isn't a character at all, and

soulbonding one of your own characters. Like, okay, I can see having a system member from an established canon being a little different, I guess, but if your OC starts talking to you, do they have to make their overall debut for even *existing* at the same time as their first words to you, or if you've ever so much as drawn a picture or roleplayed as them or whatever even once before speaking to them then they're automatically no longer valid, or...?

We weren't *directly* connected to Otherkin plural communities back in the day, but as an old-guard furry I had my share of run-ins with Otherkin in general (who were a distinctly different *thing* and the two camps even had somewhat of a rivalry at the time.) These days, if you're looking for the intersection of Otherkin and plurality, a great place to start is in the Postfurry movement/community. For back in the day... well. I spent a lot of time in alt.fan.dragons back in the Usenet days, and I have a few stories I could share.

LINK   REPLY   THREAD   HIDE 5 COMMENTS

DATE: 2020-08-13 02:45 AM (UTC)
FROM: 👤 LB_LEE

The gatekeeping re: soulbonding perplexes me, because there's kind of a fuzzy line between making contact with a headmate who isn't a character at all, and soulbonding one of your own characters.

Admittedly, these days, in more tumblr-inflected plural circles, I think they've kinda dealt with that by erasing the old concept of what I knew as "insourced soulbonds" (AKA: headmates of your own characters). Now the concept of "fictive" seems to be explicitly outsourced (other people's characters--Bugs Bunny, Othello, etc.) and insourced fictives are considered to just be... I dunno, labeless "normal" headmates, which to someone from our online generation is just WEIRD.

if your OC starts talking to you, do they have to make their overall debut for even existing at the same time as their first words to you, or if you've ever so much as drawn a picture or roleplayed as them or whatever even once before speaking to them then they're automatically no longer valid, or...?

I THINK the question was often treated as one of autonomy, how dependent they were on the story. For example, us non-fiction headmates (like me, Rogan) often got shoehorned into stories because we couldn't fathom us as anything but "characters missing a story." But these efforts were pretty much always failures that puttered out within a couple pages, and none of us ever said, "oh yes, that story was MY LIFE, man!" While our fictive people have, "Wow, that's uncanny, that IS my life, sort of, run through a game of Fiction Telephone..." reaction. (And then there are a couple oddballs who seemed to bounce in-between; we're still figuring THAT out.)

That said, except for those oddballs, every single one of our fictives, the story came first before we met them; that was HOW we met them.

LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT   THREAD   EXPAND   HIDE 3 COMMENTS

(NO SUBJECT)
From: KJORTEO - Date: 2020-08-13 05:56 am (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
From: LB_LEE - Date: 2020-08-13 11:44 pm (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
From: LITHOPHILES - Date: 2020-08-26 06:03 am (UTC) - Expand

Date: 2020-08-26 04:47 am (UTC)
From: LITHOPHILES

These days, if you're looking for the intersection of Otherkin and plurality, a great place to start is in the Postfurry movement/community. For back in the day... well. I spent a lot of time in alt.fan.dragons back in the Usenet days, and I have a few stories I could share.

Wow! That's a blast from the past. We knew some former alt.fan.dragons posters on LJ, who told us a few things about the factionalizing in the Otherkin community and the crossover with the furry community. We were also on Usenet when alt.horror.werewolves got invaded by trolls, and although we were never involved in that group, we were in a couple groups that got flooded with crossposts from the trolls. The general attitude from bystanders seemed to be "but these people DESERVE to have their community wrecked and be mocked because they're SO CRAZY." And we were like "but why? Just because of something they believe about themselves?"

I'm kind of curious about what stories you have to share, but it's up to you, of course.

Can confirm that highly targeted subcultures in the Encyclopedia Dramatica and Portal of Evil days had ways of using resources like said sites to devour their own. No one has both the inside dirt on a high-profile furry and the motive to spill it quite like other furries who tried to commission them once and got burned, exes in the fandom who had a falling out, or the like. I am absolutely not surprised to hear that other picked-on groups were doing the same thing.

We've found out in recent years that there were more soulbonders and multiples browsing ED and PoE, and later on Fandom Wank, than we ever knew. I guess some people's reasoning is... how better to disguise where you're really from by continually insulting the community you're writing about? And yeah, Portal of Evil was a big thing in some of our fandom communities from around 1999-2002, and a certain number of people would do spite submissions of other fans' personal sites. We saw people openly admit to submitting sites by people they didn't like, on mailing lists and similar. In 2000 or 2001 someone submitted

a couple of multiples' personal websites, which put the general plural community on their radar, and then the Soulbond Sanctuary messageboard got submitted in 2002. (We definitely recall some Memory Wars-related arguments making their way onto the PoE messageboards too, with some people claiming to be psychiatrists or that their parents were psychiatrists or similar.)

We tried to stay away from ED, but some people pointed us towards specific entries a couple times. Shoiryu had an entry there, and some people who had been close to her in the past confirmed that it had to have been written by someone who knew her, probably one of the many people she had a falling-out with. The thing is, there were quite a few people/systems we could have done the same thing with if we had wanted to, but we didn't want the bad karma. It wasn't so much that we thought people had found out we'd written an article about them and retaliate, it was more that just through writing it to work out a petty grudge, we would perpetuate the idea that it was acceptable to do this to people at all. I guess the best way I can put it is "do you want to help create a world that will return your kindness to you, or a world that will come back to haunt you?" (Also we saw someone take out a weird, disproportionate grudge against one of our friends by inventing a long convoluted story about them that made its way onto ED as "Sarah Saga." That is not the kind of thing we want to even think about putting into the world.)

-Riel

LINK REPLY THREAD FROM START PARENT

DATE: 2020-09-15 03:30 PM (UTC)
FROM: HUNGRYGHOSTS

Also, I was doing a reread of this series and had two suggests/notes:

- Looks like this one is missing the link to part 4?
- It's pretty easy to miss the links to the next parts amidst the citations, could we suggest bolding them + moving them above the citations and after the main body of the text for greater visibility?
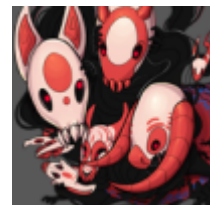
LINK REPLY THREAD HIDE 1 COMMENT

DATE: 2020-09-24 11:56 PM (UTC)
FROM: LB_LEE

Changes implemented! I gave them chunks of white space to help set them off. Thanks!

LINK REPLY THREAD FROM START PARENT

DATE: 2024-10-27 09:27 PM (UTC)

FROM: **NUMINOUSDREAD**

I was wondering if there were plural groups on Usenet, given I've recently downloaded an academic book the role that the Internet played in creating a transgender social movement, which mainly looks at Usenet (and I also stumbled upon the blog of a nonbinary person who created alt.support.intergendered). I appreciate you taking the time to write this series; seems like a pretty heady undertaking. Usenet groups in particular seem tedious to navigate.
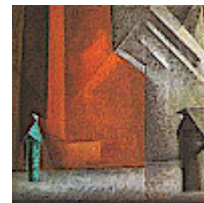
LINK   REPLY   THREAD   HIDE 4 COMMENTS

DATE: 2024-12-01 08:07 PM (UTC)
FROM: **LB_LEE**

Yes, there were a good few! And I bet I know which book that was.

Honestly, I found Usenet not as bad as digging through Twitters or Facebooks. Now THOSE I absolutely HATE going through, it's horrendous. At least Usenet TIMESTAMPS shit.

LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT   THREAD   EXPAND   HIDE 3 COMMENTS

(NO SUBJECT)
FROM: **NUMINOUSDREAD** - DATE: 2024-12-08 10:30 PM (UTC) - Expand

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(NO SUBJECT)
FROM: **LB_LEE** - DATE: 2024-12-09 12:47 AM (UTC) - Expand

(NO SUBJECT)
FROM: **NUMINOUSDREAD** - DATE: 2024-12-09 03:53 PM (UTC) - Expand

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◀ 💗 ✉ ▶

74 COMMENTS   **REPLY**

Flat | Top-Level Comments Only | Expand All

PROFILE

LB_LEE
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QUICK'N'DIRTY PLURAL HISTORY, PART 4 (LJ, THE GENIC SLAPFIGHT, AND THE END!)

AUG. 31ST, 2020 11:53 PM
👤 **LB_LEE**

Quick'n'Dirty Plural History, part 4 (Livejournal and the Genic Slapfight) (see also: Part 1; Part 2; Part 3)
Summary: "All of our multiples out there, we all love you, all three of us!" --doublegearsystem, AKA protomagicalgirl
Word Count: 3000
Notes: IT'S FINALLY OVER! As always, this post was paid for by my lovely Patreon supporters. Honorable mentions for things I wish I could've mentioned but ran out of time/juice: The In Essence Pledge; Blackbirds and their Laymen's Guide to Multiplicity; the DSM 5 and tumblr's OSDD fixation; the idiosyncratic tumblr interpretation of structural dissociation; how "multiplicity" was originally an umbrella term, only to then get considered too narrow so "plurality" became the umbrella term, only for other people to start defining that too narrowly.

LJ-multiplicity, Pavilion Hall, and Pluralanon

On December 23, 2000, asrai-d, an otherkin (asrai-d, 2004, October 27) non-MPD multiple (asrai-d, 2004, June 16; 2000, November 6) creates the multiplicity community on Livejournal, hereafter referred to as lj-multiplicity (multiplicity, 2020 March 30). As far as I know, it's the biggest and most active of the plural umbrella groups on Livejournal. It's a mixed bag: its public tags include "fictives," "gateway system," "median," "midcontinuum," "mpd/did classic," "multiples without mpd/did," "multiples in-system," "non-trauma multiplicity," "otherkin," "self-recognized multiple," "soulbonds," and "walk-ins" (multiplicity, N.D.). A lot of Pavilion Hall's members either come from there, or end up there.

Remember Households United for Equality, that plural activist group that didn't come to anything? Well, in June 2002, Pavilion Hall is the new activist group devoted to "raising public awareness of healthy multiplicity through positive activism" (Pavilion Hall, n.d. A). Lancers Hill is ostensibly their more active arm, but both Pavilion and Lancers have the same theories, members, and web domain before being merged, so for all practical purposes they are the same group and will be called Pavilion Hall together from here on out. At its dubious height, there are 24 claimed members (Pavilion Hall, 2003 April 23), but apparently at least two were sockpuppets (Amorpha,

2017, September 22); the relevant members for this discussion are Blackbirds (who currently host the Pavilion Hall website), Astraea, and Phoenix, the latter of whom I know nothing about.

Like HUE before them, Pavilion Hall achieves little of substance. They are a Potemkin activist group and while ostensibly still active today with 70+ members (Pavilion Hall, n.d. B), what little they did do mostly takes place from June to December 2002 (Lee, 2019 March 13). Their sole lasting contribution to plural culture online is to erase Vickis and "midcontinuum" in favor of "median," a shorter word with worse baggage and (eventually) an identical definition.

Part of the loveliness of midcontinuum is its spectrum and fluidity—and that is exactly what Pavilion Hall takes umbrage with: "Mid-Continuum was designed to be loose, and therein lay the problem - it was entirely /too/ loose. [...] It was used to describe a massive 'shades of grey' area between singlet and multiple. Unfortunately, there was no clear idea of where these 'shades of grey' actually ended, though they began at anything more than single[t]" (Phoenix, 2002 December 13). Blackbirds come up with their own definition, "median," using Pavilion's abstruse, metaphysical philosophy of fires, or "primal sources of vitality and inspiration. They're your who-you-are, your True Name. [...] People have described fires as sources of creativity, pillars of strength, centers of emotional and spiritual refreshment, places of rejuvenation, people who are inspiring rolemodels [sic] to others in their plural group...in other words, a fire is a source of energy" (Lancers, 2003 August 4). So, in other words, a fire could be anything from a role model to a solar panel. They thus define medians as "one body with many people, [who] also possess a single fire, embodied in a person within the group. [...] Everything in that group is dependent on that one person" (ibid).

Obviously, this is confusing nonsense, and even Pavilion Hall seems to have realized it. Within a few months of Pavilion Hall's defining the term, Astraea puts the term "median" in their copy-paste of Dark Personalities' glossary, copy-pasting the Anachronic Army's definition for midcontinuum and reapplying it to the new term (compare Anachronic Army, 2001, May 19 to Astraea, 2003, January 11). In a perverse twist, they then complain that even though the terms are defined identically, midcontinuum isn't fluid enough. "Midcontinuum is helpful, but it's rather too limiting [...] you're still left with plurality as a linear continuum, with singlethood at one end and multiplicity at the other. The concept is thus two-dimensional" (Astraea, 2007, June 26). Perhaps they realize how absurd this complaint is, because later, they change their story: "The reason we chose median, a word suggested by the Blackbirds, was that it seemed to encompass multiples who did not dissociate in addition to those who did" (2008, May 11). This is equally nonsensical; I've never seen anyone arguing that "midcontinuum" is only for dissociatives or non-dissociatives—while I have encountered multiple medians who felt they didn't count because they didn't have the "one main person everyone else relies on" set-up. So the creation of "median" seems to be more about erasing Vickis' contributions and claiming credit for their work, rather than any logic.

In similar mean-spiritedness, Pavilion Hall also lifts Vickis' use of "plural" as an umbrella term, but attempting to redefine it (unsuccessfully) as only applying to multiples without MPD/DID. "Plurality and MPD should not be confused for one another. [...] Plurality is a functional, non-disordered state of being: MPD is a nonfunctional disorder, which may require therapy and perhaps integration" (Pavilion Hall, 2003, July 15).

Whatever the reason Pavilion Hall were gunning for Vickis, but in this one petty way,

they succeed. "Median" has spread, while "midcontinuum" (and its originator) has been mostly forgotten. Vickis mysteriously disappear from the Internet, and we're all much the worse for it.

(Sidenote: Strikethrough)

On May 29, 2007, Strikethrough happens. Other people have gone way more into depth about Strikethrough (see Fanlore, n.d.), so I won't rehash in detail, but the short version is: a right-wing Christian group calling themselves Warriors for Innocence get on their high horse about Livejournal being a haven for child pornography. In the interests of "protecting children," they get Livejournal to mass-delete over 500 accounts for having sexual crimes (like "rape") listed in their interests, which includes sexual abuse survivor groups and Harry Potter porn fanfic writers. Ten years down the line, pretty much everyone agrees that Warriors for Innocence (and LJ's complicity) was far more successful at scaring off writers and sexual abuse survivors than protecting children in any way. A lot of people bolt for Dreamwidth, which is created by former Livejournal staff using the site's old open-source code.

This does not directly influence the plural communities on Livejournal, as far as I know, but it's considered the start of the end of Livejournal, and a lot of plurals leave in the general exodus.

Gee, thank goodness everyone learns their lesson and this never happens again!

Pluralanon

Lj-multiplicity is already starting to lose steam due to Strikethrough, but the coffin really shuts with pluralanon, in January 2011. But before we talk about pluralanon itself, we have to talk about the lj-multiplicity social norms.

By 2011, Astraea is the head moderator and the sole maintainer of lj-multiplicity, but even though they're passivity personified, not to mention abusing all the other moderators at this time (personal communications; Plures 2020), the group culture that results is far from an Astraea-only or Livejournal-only problem. Any plural who's been in enough of groups has encountered an atmosphere like that of 2011-era lj-multiplicity, where a facade of get-along chumminess conceals a sea of seething resentments, patrolled by sharks who everyone knows are problems but don't dare boot (either because they run the place or attack those who they catch warning about them), leaving newcomers to fend for themselves. Except in the most flagrant, obvious cases, if a problem gets reported, the mods do nothing; at best, they encourage everyone to get along. The victims, realizing there's no point in turning to the mods, mostly go silent and disappear, though a few become cage-fighters who rip the face off of anyone who looks at them funny. (After all, the mods won't stop them!) Others learn exactly who they're allowed to bully and how, knowing that they'll never face consequences. Everyone else just looks away and pretends nothing's happening, trying to avoid the negativity, not realizing that their avoidance contributes to it. Most people pretend that as long as they keep their heads down and don't make waves, they'll be safe, and the unpleasantness is mostly suppressed... until, of course, an outlet appears.

Pluralanon is an anonymous Livejournal account created supposedly to be an anonymous place to discuss plurality; instead, all the festering resentment that's been seething under the surface of lj-multiplicity erupts in a geyser of blood, bile, and suicide jokes. (No, I won't cite those; go to pluralanon.livejournal.com and trawl it yourself.) After all, everyone knows they're unlikely to be caught and that the mods

won't stop them. And while previously, people were able to believe in an us-vs.-them of singlet trolls harassing plurals, pluralanon makes it clear that the harassment is coming from within. Some of the personal attacks are vague or could've been gotten from public sources, but others are specific and personal enough that I feel safe saying there was at least one inside man—after all, how would anyone know or care of a random new account's existence without someone playing herald and telling lj-multiplicity about it (and then members of lj-multiplicity joining the fray, giving pluralanon momentum)?

A healthy community could've shrugged off pluralanon; instead, all hell breaks loose. Trust in the community and the mods is broken, and a community like lj-multiplicity can only exist with trust—otherwise, why not just hang out with the trolls and cut out the middle man? Despite lj-multiplicity pulling on more moderators and trying to correct course, the comm is killed, and though it still exists, it's now only a shadow of its former self.

Nowadays, it seems unfathomable that lj-multiplicity made it a whole decade before something like this happened. But that's because in the wake of Livejournal's demise, everyone flees to tumblr (after a short stop at Dreamwidth). (Except the tulpamancers, who are busy building on 4chan and Reddit around this time.)

(Sidenote: Tulpamancers)

Okay, this is another huge gap in my knowledge. The concept of a "tulpa" was apparently an obscure Tibetan term, yoinked about a century ago by the theosophists, which through a long game of Western occultist telephone became this very western concept of a sentient thoughtform (or headmate) deliberately created for labor, companionship, and so on. There's also pop culture influence—a 1999 X-files episode called "Arcadia" and a 2006 Supernatural episode called "Hell House." So the tulpamancer community probably has roots further back than I know, especially seeing as they may have spawned up around the 4chan /x/ board. The best date I've been able to get in a quick rush is "2009ish." They really like My Little Pony. On October 3, 2009, the Reddit tulpa board is created. On 2012, I see them on Livejournal, but only in X-Files or Supernatural fandom terms (into-the-woods, 2012); they never appear on lj-multiplicity, as far as I know, perhaps because the community was mostly dead by that point.

This is the extent of my meager knowledge of the tulpa community. Probably an actual tulpamancer has made a much better history, sorry.

The Genic Slapfight

No, I won't dignify the Genic Slapfight by calling it a war. On the surface, it's just another silly plural sandbox fight, this time fought over the legitimacy of how one became plural. The suffix "-genic" is used here as a synonym for "-originated" or "-based." Thus, "traumagenic" plurals source their plurality to trauma; "endogenic" plurals don't. (This is an oversimplification; I've seen a lot of logical contortions as people try to redefine the terms so as to keep themselves comfortable in the face of changing realities.) So on one level, the Genic Slapfight seems to be just another iteration of tensions between "empowered multiples" and "survivor multiples," or "natural multiples" and "trauma-based multiples," or "MPD/DID/DDNOS/OSDD multiples" and "those fakers over there." However, unlike other online turf wars, the Genic Slapfight grows legs and somewhat spreads off tumblr, where it originates.

I've met people who are under the impressions that the Genic Slapfight is longstanding

and global, but that's bull. It started on tumblr, and I've found no sign of its existence earlier than August 2014.

On August 7, the Lunastus Collective (formerly known as Trash Can Collective) post on Tumblr that they are "being told that using those terms [multiple and multiple system] is appropriative of the DID community [...] Being told [natural multiplicity] can't possibly be a thing, and it's trivializing DID folks to say it happens" (2014, August 7). To avoid spurious claims of cultural appropriation (and oh, we'll get to that), they come up with "words to use for 'multiplicity', without using the word 'multiplicity', 'plurality', or anything relating to that" to describe plural experience, by necessity abstruse and esoteric. The most successful of these terms was "endogenous," which at some point later was changed to "endogenic."

Unsurprisingly, the trolls claiming trivialization and appropriation aren't satisfied. They promptly use Lunastus Collective's own terminology to create the term "traumagenic" and then continue claiming that any other existence of plurality is ableist/appropriating/trivializing/otherwise proof that the plural making the claim is a Bad Oppressor.

This argument is nonsense, and it shouldn't pass a basic sniff test. So how does it manage to spread off of tumblr, to the point that I now have to field personal questions about my origins in real life conventions? Well, first, let's talk about the design of tumblr itself, and its contrast with Livejournal.

Livejournal is designed to be a diary on the Internet; there was no one-click reblogging (at least, while we were there, from 2007-2014), and by the time we joined it in 2007, users could control exactly who read what. Tumblr, however, is designed to share something as quickly as possible, and privacy was never a consideration. There are no filters, no locks; it's all public 24/7 (until it adds chat capacity and locked accounts, the latter of which never works well). Due to tumblr's reblogging system, removing a post is nigh-impossible; even if the original is deleted, the reblogs will still exist.

Furthermore, tumblr throws people together in a way Livejournal never did. Livejournal Lars can easily run his blog without ever encountering other people; indeed, that's the default starting state. On tumblr, however, other people's posts and accounts are constantly getting recommended through the algorithm; avoiding other people is hard. And a post that gets big (for instance, by evoking outrage) gets spread to more and more people, even when it's wrong, and the more people reblog and try to correct it, the higher its profile becomes.

On Livejournal, reblogging wasn't a thing. Even the biggest, most popular post required active searching, while if a tumblr post went viral, there was no escaping it!

The Genic Slapfight, at its base, is another iteration of, "the only legitimate plurals are traumatized/medicalized." However, it adds a new twist to the business by dressing this idea up in pseudo-academic terms that can only come from the stuff-in-a-blender kludge that is Tumblr "social justice." Now the argument is roughly, "the only legitimate plurals are traumatized/medicalized, and anyone who claims otherwise is appropriating, ableist, or otherwise a Bad Oppressor."

This is nonsense. A diagnosis is not a culture, and ergo, it can not be culturally appropriated. And if one uses "appropriation" as a euphemism for theft, it still isn't applicable, because you can't steal a diagnosis or disease! You can fake it, lie about it, be wrong about it, but you can't steal it. And to consider an entire state of being, itself with a long, variegated history, to be oppressive to the disabled unless it is

experienced in a medically-authorized manner… needless to say, this flies in the face of everything the disability liberation movement strives for. Ditto the idea of "trivialization," which implies a certain level of suffering must be performed in public for the sake of disabled people everywhere.

But breaking all that down, as I've just demonstrated, requires a long dragging explanation of things like cultural appropriation and disability liberation. It's clunky, and it risks the (much shorter, snappier) response of, "that you are arguing with me only proves my point." Who wants to read three paragraphs of grinding academic theory that isn't even being cited correctly in the first place?

But the Genic Slapfight isn't just cynical, twisted, and theoretically incorrect; it's factually incorrect. "Traumagenic" as an identity couldn't have existed before 2014, because the Lunastus Collective hadn't created the -genic terms until then! And the older terms like MPD/DID/DDNOS/OSDD and "trauma-based" are not the same as "traumagenic." The cultures around them are different, the identities are different. (Just try going to a DID conference like Infinite Mind or IGDID and say the word "endogenic.") These jerks are the newcomers to the party, and here they are claiming they own the whole place!

But they don't. Plurals have existed for a long time, in all sorts of different ways, from all sorts of walks of life. The claim that we are solely created by trauma is a recent and far from universal social belief, and it isn't supported by any research that I know of.

At least the pendulum seems to be swinging a bit in the other direction. On January 18, 2019, a Youtuber with the handle of hbomberguy runs a livestream of him playing Donkey Kong 64 to raise money for charity (and to spite a transphobic comedian). In it, a speed-runner going by protomagicalgirl (now doublegearsystem), discloses their plurality to thousands and thousands viewers, saying, "We should do a formal introduction—for those who don't know us, hi! We're protomagicalgirl, a plural trans speed-runner, […] I see some plural gang in the chat! Can we get some more plural gang in the chat? All of our multiples out there, we all love you, all three of us!" (Harvey, 2019)

#Pluralgang becomes a hashtag on Twitter, side-stepping the genic slapfight, and creating its own plural umbrella, building on the legacy of Vickis twenty years prior. May we continue building in that direction.

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TAGS: ⊕ LB MAKES, LB MAKES:ESSAY, PLURAL:TALES OF YORE

◀ 🐾 ✉ ▶

30 COMMENTS　REPLY

Flat | Top-Level Comments Only

DATE: 2020-09-01 03:08 AM (UTC)
FROM: 👤 BLUE_MOUSE

Congrats on finishing the series! Also, I remember the live-streaming event last year (it got some attention when AOC

popped in). I didn't know about that #pluralgang origin or that there's a whole thing on twitter now. Neat!

Not to overwhelm but do y'all foresee updates to this series as oth moments happen in the future? (More entries? Or a single "updates entry, compiling info of note?)

LINK REPLY THREAD HIDE 3 COMMENTS

DATE: 2020-09-01 03:31 AM (UTC)
FROM: 👤 **LB_LEE**

Lol god I hope not, making this series of essays was a BEAST. And also, I feel like we've become increasingly stodgy and outdated as the Internet has moved along. There are so many huge, huge gaps in our knowledge, because we're still at heart a Livejournal rat in the day of Twitter and Discord; we don't know how to find ANYTHING on those platforms, and they're increasingly where plurals are going.

I dunno that I could stay relevant; I feel like my age and obsolescence showed just in this series!

--Rogan/Miranda

LINK REPLY THREAD FROM START PARENT THREAD HIDE 2 COMMENTS

DATE: 2020-09-02 01:45 AM (UTC)
FROM: 👤 **BLUE_MOUSE**

Fair! Maybe people who are Twitter and Discord knowledgeable can give an update, much later.

LINK REPLY THREAD FROM START PARENT THREAD HIDE 1 COMMENT

HI! ITS MUCH LATER (FOR THE INTERNET). :P

DATE: 2023-04-07 04:09 AM (UTC)
FROM: (ANONYMOUS)

Apologies as we have a new account here but not the energy to log in, Are Lins

Um, wanted to mention for "the record" our admitedly very rough discord perspective.
The best place to start for a look at newer plural communities is probably "Plural Hub" a large hub-discord (its main purpose is to link/hub to as many inclusive- as described in the OP- plural stuff as possible) .

The biggest note we'd feel that seems to be growing in visibility would be introjects and maybe system travel/hopping.

Both are incredibly noteworthy and impactful aspects of plurality when relevant, and we feel are more popular with the younger, 'grew with the internet' community.
Otherwise Healthymultiplicity, for example, would probably mention either in greater capacity (in our opinion). Kind of uh, makes an impact if say donkey kong shows up in your system one day yo paraphrase a meme we saw.

Otherkin/Alterhuman are also probably worth mentioning: those communities appear to be sharing resources/connections more and more heavily with anti-sysmed plurality, which makes a lot of sense given how common alterhuman plural people seem to be- us included we.. think.

Although they/we(?) have their own history that could probably take as long to go over as above

LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT

DATE: 2020-09-01 03:17 AM (UTC)
FROM: FEOTAKAHARI

I just looked up Double Gear System. Their Twitter is suspended, and even though they have a thousand YouTube followers, none of their videos are more than a week old. What on Earth happened?
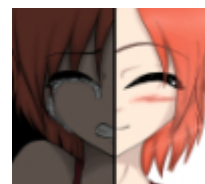
LINK   REPLY   THREAD   HIDE 4 COMMENTS

DATE: 2020-09-01 03:33 AM (UTC)
FROM: LB_LEE

Well, it seems they have big harassment campaigns devoted to them on KiwiFarms and Reddit (unsurprising--they're trans and multiple in public), so they may have been Gamergated.

Also apparently people are saying they cheated in speedrunning? But that might be a Gamergate-style excuse to hang the harassment on, and I really didn't want to have to go digging just to do the equivalent of rub salt in my eyes. I wanted to end the essays on a happier note, you know?

LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT

DATE: 2020-09-01 06:50 AM (UTC)
FROM: (ANONYMOUS)

They were never suspended! They moved to 👤**excogs**, and the suspended accounts (👤**protomagicalgirl**, 👤**doublegearsys**) were placeholders pointing to the new one. Though, last I heard, Alexis says she isn't plural anymore? She's mostly FFXIV posting these days.

LINK REPLY THREAD FROM START PARENT THREAD HIDE 2 COMMENTS

DATE: 2020-09-01 02:04 PM (UTC)
FROM: 👤**STARFALLHAVEN**

Huh, really? We follow them on Twitter and they still occasionally make references to plurality, although no one really signs their names or anything.
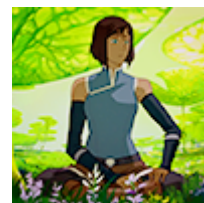
LINK REPLY THREAD FROM START PARENT

DATE: 2020-09-01 07:53 PM (UTC)
FROM: 👤**LB_LEE**

Well, I'm glad Alexis is okay and still around! And plural or not, the accomplishment remains!

LINK REPLY THREAD FROM START PARENT

DATE: 2020-09-01 05:09 AM (UTC)
FROM: 👤**HUNGRYGHOSTS**

IT'S DONE IT'S DONE IT'S DONE

THE EVIL HAS BEEN SLAIN
NOW ITS SPIRIT SHALL LIVE ON IN THIS TINY FROG

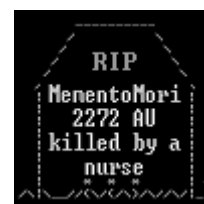(seriously, holy cow! four essays on plural slapfighting, what a marathon!)
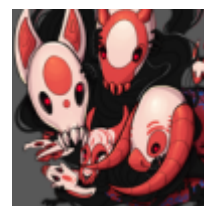
LINK REPLY THREAD HIDE 1 COMMENT

DATE: 2020-09-01 05:16 AM (UTC)
FROM: 👤**LB_LEE**

THE CURSE IS LIFTED!

Seriously, this wasn't as bad as Cultiples of course, but man did it take way more of my time and labor than I thought it would! At least it'll be useful to others, hopefully!

--Rogan

LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT

DATE: 2020-09-01 08:40 AM (UTC)
FROM: (ANONYMOUS)

Hi! I won't attempt to construct a detailed history of the tulpamancy community, but I can provide some additional info. We've been around for a few years, with growing disillusionment.

First, the origin of "tulpa" as a Tibetan term is *mostly* a myth. This paper examines the etymology of the term in its paranormal sense but is equally relevant here: http://web.archive.org/web/20170315081818/http://orig04.deviantart.net/4cb5 /f/2017/074/5/4/tracking_the_tulpa_by_nobillis-db2d2iw.pdf Some prefer "parogenic" to sidestep the whole appropriation issue but it's slow to catch on.

Second, r/tulpa was created in 2009, but r/tulpas is *much* more active and was created in 2012. There are other notable communities, such as the tulpa.info forum (2012.)

Third, MLP was a huge influence early on, but that has waned. The community at large has gone through periods of influx from other fandoms, such as Undertale. (I don't think any fandoms are dominant right now.) Also, the Supernatural episode has some lasting influence in the form of a 'tulpa' symbol, though it isn't the only symbol in use.

If anyone has any questions, I'll be checking back here.

LINK   REPLY   THREAD   HIDE 9 COMMENTS

DATE: 2020-09-01 03:55 PM (UTC)
FROM: TALEWISEFELLOWSHIP

thanks, that pdf looks really neat!!

--Hikaru

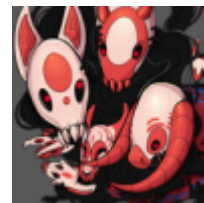LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT

DATE: 2020-09-01 04:39 PM (UTC)
FROM: HUNGRYGHOSTS

Hi, fellow tulpamancy-community-disillusionment-corner-goer!

We wouldn't mind if the community came up with something else, although we're not sure another -genic label is the way to go. We think

the whole cultural appropriation debate over "tulpa" is already misguided at best and downright malicious at worst, though. As far as we're concerned, the word itself isn't the problem so much as falsely claiming Tibetan roots to legitimize the practice.

LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT   THREAD   HIDE 4 COMMENTS

DATE: 2020-09-01 04:51 PM (UTC)
FROM: 👤 TALEWISEFELLOWSHIP

I agree with this 100%, it feels like people on both sides of the cultural appropriation debate misrepresent the tibetan connection and misunderstand the word's origins, and I think that does more damage than just simply using the word (which apparently isn't recognized by most modern tibetan buddhists anyway)

what's also funny to me is seeing people claim that tulpamancy is "appropriating buddhist culture" without even mentioning esoteric Tibetan Buddhism specifically; thereby betraying a misunderstanding of how broad Buddhism as a whole actually is. Imagine explaining all this to my partner's dad, a Japanese soto zen practitioner. He would have absolutely no idea what a tulpa is, and no context for understanding any of it!

--Hikaru
Edited DATE: 2020-09-01 04:56 PM (UTC)

LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT   THREAD   HIDE 2 COMMENTS

DATE: 2020-09-01 06:13 PM (UTC)
FROM: (ANONYMOUS)

> I think that does more damage than just simply using the word (which apparently isn't recognized by most modern tibetan buddhists anyway)

That's fair, but the fact remains that 'tulpa' was adopted *with intent to* appropriate, and continuing to use the word in light of that just feels icky IMO.

LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT   THREAD   HIDE 1 COMMENT

DATE: 2020-09-01 07:41 PM (UTC)
FROM: 👤 TALEWISEFELLOWSHIP

I'm not convinced that that was the intent (because I think people rarely intend to [mis]appropriate even if they are in fact doing so),

either way the word is stuck for the time being,
for better or worse, and I have no desire to criticize
for their use of it, just for spreading misinformation
mentioned.

We haven't yet had a chance to read the pdf, but I h
reading it we'll be more informed on how and why the word tulpa
became a fixture in the western occult

--Janusz

LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT

DATE: 2020-09-01 06:19 PM (UTC)
FROM: (ANONYMOUS)

Oh hey! Yeah, that's always been strange to me. Why point to obscure
religious practices when you can just ask almost any writer/roleplayer who
gets a bit *too* into developing their characters?

LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT

DATE: 2020-09-01 07:56 PM (UTC)
FROM: LB_LEE

Oh hey, it's Joseph P. Laycock again! I read his paper on
Otherkin Ontology and really liked it! *yoinks and downloads*

Thanks for the info and corrections, anon! Really appreciate
the info!

LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT   THREAD   HIDE 2 COMMENTS

DATE: 2020-09-01 09:10 PM (UTC)
FROM: (ANONYMOUS)

No problem, we really appreciate the work you do here! *fades back into
the shadows*

LINK   REPLY   THREAD FROM START   PARENT   THREAD   HIDE 1 COMMENT

DATE: 2020-09-01 09:34 PM (UTC)
FROM: LB_LEE

Anons like you are the loveliest surprises.

DATE: 2020-09-01 03:56 PM (UTC)
FROM: 　TALEWISEFELLOWSHIP

Thanks for writing this series!!!!

One minor detail: hbomberguy did the donkey kong stream to spite Graham Linehan (aka glinner), who is a comedian, not a politician! He is a very sad man who's so obsessed with hating trans people that he got banned from twitter for being such a raging transphobe, and certainly not remotely funny. But before that, he did some transphobic shit, so hbomberguy owned him by raising over $340,000 for Mermaids, a UK charity for trans kids

--Hikaru
Edited DATE: 2020-09-01 03:59 PM (UTC)

DATE: 2020-09-01 07:56 PM (UTC)
FROM: 　LB_LEE

Thanks for the correction! Serves me right for not double-checking. :p Fix made!

DATE: 2020-09-01 08:23 PM (UTC)
FROM: 　TALEWISEFELLOWSHIP

happens to the best of us!

--Hikaru

DATE: 2022-04-29 04:23 PM (UTC)
FROM: (ANONYMOUS)

Hi, I'm a tulpa who's been trying to better understand the plural community and get involved and I wanted to quickly say thank you for the great and easily readable history essay. It's taught me a lot and I'm glad that I came across it.

On a sidenote if you ever want to fill in that knowledge gap on tulpamancy I'd reccomend tulpa.info, it's a forum so it's easy to figure out and has archived a decade of tulpa history.

LINK REPLY THREAD HIDE 1 COMMENT

DATE: 2022-06-23 04:27 PM (UTC)
FROM: 👤 LB_LEE

Thank you, friend! Honestly, this essay series was so much work that I'm in no hurry to build more, especially since we've never been a tulpamancer or in that subculture. Would love to see someone who IS from there write a history, though!

LINK REPLY THREAD FROM START PARENT

DATE: 2022-12-22 07:16 PM (UTC)
FROM: 👤 MINT_PHALANX

5 February 2019: Stronghold System creates The Plural Association.

September 2022: Astraea's Web is suspended. (We learned about it on the 26th when looking for the original Multiple Code.)
Edited DATE: 2022-12-22 07:17 PM (UTC)

LINK REPLY THREAD HIDE 3 COMMENTS

DATE: 2022-12-22 11:00 PM (UTC)
FROM: 👤 LB_LEE

Adding these notes are much appreciated, and a really good idea! Thanks, 👤 **mint_phalanx**!

LINK REPLY THREAD FROM START PARENT THREAD HIDE 2 COMMENTS

DATE: 2022-12-24 11:49 PM (UTC)
FROM: 👤 MINT_PHALANX

You're welcome.

Date: 2023-01-10 01:30 am (UTC)
From: 👤 LB_LEE

Astraea's Web, by the way, seems to be back up now.
Ran across it while updating this post to reflect my
new data from S4OS.

◀ 💗 ✉ ▶

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LB_LEE
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