Soulbonding

Collected Early Documents

1998-2004

The following documents were retrieved on Friday, May 27th, 2022 from HTML in the subdomain Soulbonding, on Tripod, in an archived form.

If you try to visit the site by going directly to the homepage, or even through the normal archive-y way, you're met with a screen and graphic explaining that the site had moved to another (now defunct) domain. Nevertheless, almost all of the content is intact and accessible if you visit the pages directly. I am reproducing it in this document because the formatting and advertisements on the shaky Tripod site make reading it difficult. That, and I bet Tripod isn't long for this world.

None of this text was written by me (besides this part), and all attempts to contact the original authors have been stymied by the fact that this was written circa *summer of 2002*, if not earlier. There are references here that many younger soulbonders may not understand. The 2000s were a very different, very unique time, especially for nerds like me, and that included many of us soulbonders. Expect references to geeky flash animations, manga, Japanese snacks, and more.

Some of the perspectives we see in these documents will not mesh well with accepted views within today's soulbonding communities. I'm preserving the documents not because they're necessarily stellar advice for soulbonders, but because they were important to me (and others) as an early exploration of the concept. Take much of it with a grain of salt. I, in *particular* disagree with a ton of what these earlier authors had to say about the sudden interaction between multiplicity and soulbonders nowadays, for example. Things change.

This site was very influential amongst us early soulbonders, so I am preserving it here. I am (for better or worse, and hopefully it is the *right decision*)

treating this as "abandonware" of sorts, I suppose. If you are the original author of this, or even part of it, and would prefer it removed, contact me immediately and I'll comply as best I can. These essays were meaningful to me and many other people, but I want to be respectful of the authors, who were rather friendly, welcoming, and inspiring.

In those early days, many fanfic writers, bloggers, and other online writers would use their real name instead of a pen name; we see this in the *original* site a couple times, or so it seems. Here, I've reduced those instances to initials because I know the internet has changed since then, and it is very possible these individuals no longer want their legal names directly associated with this.

Besides the text from Tripod, <u>visit Fictionpress for a speculative fiction/ dystopian short story</u> about soulbonding written (by Laura G) in 1998, which originally appeared on several sites and helped to popularize the terminology. The story itself originally included a short, simple tabletop RPG system meant to supplement existing White Wolf RPGs, albeit allowing players to take on soulbonds and portray them, etc. I've a copy of that, but it's not in a sharable format currently.

Without a *doubt*, this PDF is a mess, but hopefully more legible than the original materials from 2002. I've tried to keep it as organized (and as true to the original site's organization style) as possible, but given this is a PDF, there are limitations to that. Consider this perhaps subject to future updates.

Curatrix, writing on Friday, August 16th, 2024

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Introduction to Soulbonding

If you will practice being fictional for a while, you will understand that fictional characters are sometimes more real than people with bodies and heartbeats."

—Richard Bach, "Illusions"

A disclaimer: This introduction, while attempting to cover as broad a range of experiences as possible, reflects only my own standpoint and opinion on SoulBonding. The experience is not alike for everyone, or indeed anyone; if you find yourself identifying with some of the concepts presented here, but disagree with others, you may want to try some alternative perspectives or, better still, write your own essay for that section and share your views with others.

SoulBonding. An esoteric word with a funky capital in the middle (or not, depending on how you choose to spell it - either way is acceptable). It's a term you may have heard tossed around the net quite a bit - or maybe this is your first encounter with it. Either way, what does it mean? What's it all about? And what's all this talk of characters in people's heads?

As proposed by Laura G, an encompassing, dictionary-style definition of SoulBonding is:

soulbond: v. to form and/or experience a robust mental or empathic connection with one or more fictional characters.

Or to put it in prose: ever been so connected to an "imaginary" person, whether your favourite comic-book superhero, the tragic nemesis of a Shakespearean play, your fictionalised interpretation of a famous author or an enti-

ty of your own creation, that you literally couldn't get them out of your head? That you felt as if in some way, whether silent and unmoving or active and participating, they were with you or by your side? That their worlds and experiences were a personal story that they shared with you - or that their journeys were more than merely stories, but that to the both of you, they were as real as any other?

This is what we call a SoulBond. Or a Soulbond. Or soulbond. Or possibly muse, or "imaginated lifeform", or whatever other term you prefer to use. It doesn't really matter what you call it; only that you are not alone in the experience.

The "mental or empathic connection" mentioned by Laura - the "link" you have to the character - is sometimes one-way, a feeling of looking in on their world and observing them or moving beside them, without being noticed or acknowledged. This is often the experience had by people when they first SB in their childhood, or when a connection to a SoulBond isn't particularly strong, though for some people this may be their primary way of SoulBonding, and of course there's nothing wrong or "lesser" about that. The most common experience of SoulBonding, however, is as a mental or emotional "presence"; you may feel unusually affected by the character's emotions, have the experience of "seeing things through their eyes" and knowing how they'd react to a certain situation, hear or see them comment on and observe the world around you, hold personal conversations with the character themselves or simply be aware of their "presence" beside or within you. Ultimately the best way to describe the experience, trite and provoking of insanity-related comments though it may be, is of "having the character in your head".

SoulBonds are related to, but distinct from most other types of mental and empathic connection (multiplicity, channeling/telepathy, spiritual contact

etc.) in that they have "fictional" origins - whether characters from external fictions (TV, movies, video games, comic books/manga, novels/short stories, plays, fanfiction, etc. - known as outsourced SoulBonds), internal fictions (your own stories or imagination - known as original SoulBonds), or less commonly, internalised/fictionalised "versions" of Earth-world people (authors, band members, etc.). However, many may argue that this distinction is a rather artificial one, believing that what we consider "fictional" is just a channeling of worlds and existences outside our own experience (see Theories of SoulBonding); and there are occasions where the line between "fictional" and not does blur, such as a "character" who appears in your mind without provocation or conscious thought and is not from any recognisable fiction. But generally speaking, a SoulBond can be roughly defined as a person who you connect (or initially connected) to via a fictional, imaginary or inspirational source, as opposed to astral travelling, channeling, spirit walk-ins, mental "splits", conscious creation of entities for specific purposes, and so forth.

Beyond this basic concept, SoulBonding experiences vary widely. Some people envision their SBs as living solely within their own story-worlds, continuing their lives as normal with you as an extra friend (or barely-tolerated acquaintance) in their world. Other people have what's known as a "mindscape" or "soulscape", their own inner/other "world" or "place" where SoulBonds may live, or just come together to interact outside of their own story-worlds. Still others may see their SBs existing in spirit-form in the world around them; sitting on park benches or standing at bus shelters. For yet others it may be a simple "empty space" or "grey area" within the mind, or a feeling that the character lives within you and alongside you, peering over your shoulder at the world outside. Some SBers experience a combination of these interactions. And yes, some SoulBonds are capable of "fronting", or having bodily control - either briefly or for extended periods, either with con-

sent or autonomously, either with you at their side or entirely on their own - but that's something for another essay.

Some SoulBonds will voice their own preferences for things, or make them felt silently; they may like certain types of food, or enjoy a particular genre of book or movie (and yes, SoulBonds sometimes even gain their own SoulBonds this way!), and encourage you to try those. Some have phobias or dislikes that their SoulBonders are (or should be) respectful of. Some are wild jokers; some are pensive and serious; many are neither, depending on the original character's personality. Some may have an interest in the Earthly world; some may shun and fear it, or refuse to believe in its existence entirely, maintaining that their existence is the reality and yours the fiction. Some have horrific pasts or emotional wounds, and need to be treated with tenderness and care; others are headstrong, belligerent, comfortable in their skin; still others are daydreamers, or poets, or just ordinary highschoolers (though of course, in fiction, no highschooler is ever too "ordinary").

Some may be confidants or mentors, guardians or guides, encouraging you and providing a means for you to explore your own self and examine your motives. Some may reflect a person you'd like to be, or a side of yourself that you have difficulty expressing; your darkness, or even your light. Some may be lovers; some may just be friends. Many are all of these or none of them, but simply individuals with whom you happen to share mental or emotional space, regardless of physical location. You may not even like them all the time. But your SoulBonds, being that they were the ones you felt a special connection to out of all others, will probably tell you something about yourself - your dreams, your desires, and who you truly are. And in turn, you may find that you touch something unique in them that no one else could reach.

Theories of Soulbonding

What are SoulBonds? Where do they come from? For those who look at Soul-Bonding on a superficial level, the answer seems simple; they're in your imagination. The SoulBond is the "next step up" from the imaginary friend, an adult playmate for those who have no other, for the lonely, the disillusioned, the overcreative who have nothing else to channel their energies into. But to anyone who SoulBonds themselves, such a simple answer can't explain the uniqueness of these people that share the mind and body, who live their own lives, speak their own thoughts.

One theory that once used to be popular, and probably originated from the old Multiple Personality Disorder idea (or else was just suggested because it seems simple and obvious), is that a SoulBond is just you personifying a part of you which you refuse to acknowledge or which might need an outlet. An angry SB, for example, may represent repressed anger, or be a sign that you need to learn to express yourself more in that regard. A related theory is that SBs correspond to parts of ourselves, so that one SB may be a personification of our studious side, another our playful side, etc. This oversimplistic theory, needless to say, holds little truck wth most genuine SBers and their SBs, who feel insulted that they should be classified as "personality fragments" or Freudian symbols of repression. There are some genuine cases where an SB has come along almost solely to help the SBer in some way, to force them to accept something about themselves that they couldn't before, and then simply faded back into the two-dimensional blackness.

But this, while a possibility, really does represent only a small minority, and doesn't possibly begin to explain the breadth and depth of emotional

connections that SoulBonders can experience. There are also cases where an SB will be a reflection of some part of yourself - not a cardboard-cutout "avatar" for some small, stereotyped section of your personality, but someone who arrives because they are drawn to a particular part of you or because a particular part of you attaches to and finds empathy in them. But this is really no different than the way any other two people are drawn together in life - because they share commonalities. It's not unusual for the people in your social circle to reflect various aspects of your own personality, and it's the same for SoulBonds. But this still goes no further towards explaining their origins.

Next, the scientific tack. While I've never heard this quoted elsewhere, the idea did occur to me that the personalities of SoulBonds could be considered a sort of "neural set", created by overly dwelling on that person or character and imagining how they'd interact with the world, to the extent where the pathways representing those personality traits are formed in the mind. It's true that, since presumably all are using the same brain, SoulBonds will have their own oft-used neural pathways within it just as we do - the ones that tell Kirika to curl up and hug herself when she feels cold and alone, for example, or tell her hearing to sharpen and her eyes to dart at the slightest suggestion of activity outside her peripheral vision. We've actually had experiences ourselves which seem to suggest this possibility - when another person fronts after one person has been fronting for a long time, it sometimes takes them a while to "kick in" and start thinking and behaving in their own way, as opposed to adopting the mannerisms and habits of the previous person. For example, after Kirika has been fronting for a while, traces of her body language will often remain for a short period, and I might find myself slipping into using a slightly higher, softer voice or reflexively uttering Japanese (and no, that's not actually something I do as a matter of course. I will consciously say things in

Japanese to sound "cool", I admit it, but I don't slip into it naturally in the way I would if it was my mother tongue).

However, to say that SoulBonds are a set of neural pathways is to ignore the fact that surely some force, energy or spirit must be using these pathways to create the impression of a SoulBond? If we say that we are using the pathways ourselves, how can we simultaneously be being Kirika and being ourselves? That's only to use a two-person example - there are often at least one or two others hovering around frontspace who'll come if you call, and then of course you've got the peanut gallery - the miscellaneous background gathering who'll occasionally chuck out suggestions and comments. It's not that busy for everyone, and it's not like that for us all of the time, but it happens, and to explain it as having a lot of extra neural pathways doesn't really work. Surely you'd only use some at a time, as and when needed? And surely your various neural sets don't talk to you and go off and live lives independently of each other, and have completely different personalities, likes and dislikes, or sit on your shoulder like the 50's cartoon angel and devil consciences saying "I think we should do this right about now"? Does the psychology-studying part of your brain start carrying out chi-square tests on nominal data while you're trying to watch a movie? Maybe if you're thinking obsessively about an up-and-coming assignment, but does it do this of its own accord? Separately from you? While still allowing you yourself to watch the movie (relatively) without distraction? And similarly, how can people talk to their SBs after an extended period of time away and find that things have happened in their lives, that they've been off in whatever world they normally live in doing all sorts of things, that while you've not been paying attention they have continued to exist, not simply powered off and lain lifeless like a computer on standby? True, this isn't the case for all SBs and all SBers, but it's the case often enough that it can't be dismissed. For that, there'd have to be several separate

sources of energy within the body to use those different portions of the brain independently. Several spirits. Several souls. Several people.

Which brings us to the idea that SoulBonding is about more than one spirit, thread, strand of "person-stuff" within a single body (and of course for many, it's more than strands). And this in turn brings us to the two most prevalent theories of SoulBonding, which deal with where these souls originate from and how they get into the body.

In many natural multiple systems, the "gateway" or "portal" system is often spoken of. This is the idea of the body as a portal to other worlds/dimensions/planes/existences; that somehow, it is possible for an Earthly person's mind, body and/or soul to "connect" with these places, usually without knowing it, and for people to then enter the body through such a portal. This has much in common with traditional (pre-psychology) theories of multiplicity, such as possession and channeling spirits (in former times, shamans would reputedly invite spirits to possess them, the better to share their knowledge, power or whatever else), as well as connecting to many modern spiritualist ideas of multiple/infinite realities and communicating with other realms and planes. If an infinite universe were to exist, by definition it would have to encompass every situation and scenario that is possible within whatever rules the universe runs on (and realistically an infinite universe couldn't have rules, it would literally have to encompass *everything*, but a more likely possibility is a transfinite universe - not infinite, but vast enough that we cannot possibly comprehend its scope or measure it with any calculating device). Therefore, it would not be the case that the world of Anne of Green Gables, or Rurouni Kenshin, or Suikoden, may exist; it would have to exist on some plane, world or dimension, and not just one but incalculable numbers of them, to encompass every possible eventuality. Within the concept of an infinite universe, there is a world identical to this one in every way, except for the fact that I

stopped typing this five seconds ago and decided to actually do some college work. There is another world identical to this one in every way, except for the fact that an ant chose to walk one step left instead of one step right on May 23rd, 1976. There is a world whose only difference from this one is that, in between my typing "this" and "one", a four-year-old child in New Orleans thought of the word "bee" instead of the word "horse". For every possible alternate course of events, even as unimaginably minor as one molecule of air moving 0.0000000000000001mm in another direction, there would have to be another plane of existence where that event actually took place; and in conjunction with the "butterfly effect", where one flap of a butterfly's wings in Tanzania can result in a tidal wave off the east coast of Japan or a joke 5000 miles across the globe, every one of these unimaginably minor happenings would in turn have the potential to bring about an unimaginable number of changes, which would cause the branching off of an equally unimaginable number of parallel dimensions. And then, of course, you would get to worlds where so many things were so far removed from what we experience now that you would have the world of Noir, and the world of Sandman, and the world of the Matrix (where, of course, all of this is just artificially-generated ones and zeros. Of course, all of this that you're reading now is just artificially-generated ones and zeros, but that's beside the point.) And those worlds would have their unimaginable numbers of branchings-off due to unimaginably minor events, and what you'd end up with is a trillion billion dimensions with Kirika in, more than enough for everyone on this planet and many other planets besides to connect with a unique version of her if the gateway were to be opened. How in fact this opening of a gateway would occur is another debatable point; at least in the case of SoulBonding, the likely explanation is that the connection in this world with an on-screen/in-book scenario that matches up closely enough to that real, existing world is what causes the di-

mensional rift, and allows the two worlds to connect. Of course, if that TV series or book or play was in fact inspired, not by sheer imagination but by the author's spiritual connection to one of these alternate planes in the first place, then the link would already be there; and while the one particular "world-version" that the author connected with would already have a link to that person, there'd be this multitude of near-identical world-versions running alongside it, through which we ourselves could reach out to our "own" personal Sanosuke or Frodo Baggins.

This concept has been moderately well-received in fiction circles, even so far as to see it used on Star Trek; the idea that when we write or create fiction ideas, we do not in fact "imagine" these stories and scenarios but in fact channel them from alternate realities, where such things actually exist. It's also a popular belief for SBs themselves to hold; that they came to this world through a door or portal, or that the author/fan stumbled across their world and forged a connection. Of course, some people reject this idea utterly on the grounds that it renders the concept of imagination meaningless; if everything we "think up" exists somewhere else, and we are not really thinking it up but channeling it from other dimensions, then there is no such thing as imagination, and we create nothing that does not already exist. Obviously, while this belief works for some it does not for others, and thus, there is a second theory.

The concept behind this is that SoulBonds are real and do exist on such alternate planes, but that these planes are in fact created by us - by the depth of our own imagination of them, belief in them, and love for them. When we "latch onto" a character that we truly connect with in whatever respect, who sings to our hearts enough to inspire such powerful emotions as joy, despair and love within us, the sheer force of such "thought-energy" is enough to birth an entity on some non-corporeal plane. With enough energy poured

into it, this entity can move from being a two-dimensional shell that simply mimics the character it resembles, to a living, thinking, feeling lifeform with its own will, its own mind, its own capacity to think and feel. The maxim of this theory is "if you believe it, it is real" - a concept found particularly in much classic and modern children's literature, such as Peter Pan (where a fairy died for every child who didn't believe, and the power to revive Tinkerbell lay with the beliefs of children) and the Neverending Story (where the entire world of Fantastica/Fantasia was born and shaped from the dreams of physical-world people). This theory also has its own basis in ancient spiritualities; there is a belief in some Eastern religions, such as Tibetan Buddhism, that people can create and shape "thought-forms" that take on a spirit-realm life of their own as animals, mythological creatures, or other people. Additionally, there is the traditional Japanese belief that runs through many of the culture's stories; that a doll, if truly loved and cared for as a person, will develop a soul of its own. Obviously, then, the question of how the connection between you and the spirit-world person formed isn't there; you were the one who gave them life, therefore they are linked to you, your soul, and your imagination.

This theory tends to view these "imaginatively-created people" in terms of "archetypes"; the original character, as existing in the story itself, is the archetype, the "parent-entity" which forms the basis for all subsequent "reality-versions" thereof. The archetype is a mould from which each person's individual interpretation of that character is cast, a "master copy" if you will; while in essence everyone is presented with the same (or a near-identical) casting, it's their choice to take that character from the limited existence that they currently have as a mere reproduction, and shape them in their own hands to give them life and personality. Some people never take their model out of the box; they never connect with them enough to envision them as anything oth-

er than a doll on a shelf. Others, however, take their characters "out of the box", and add detailing, change little things about them, flesh out their histories and personalities, give them new changes of clothes and new situations and experiences to try out, and bring them to life. Simultaneously, there is a sweet idea that the more the archetype-mould is used with love and care, to create reality-versions that will be truly appreciated and given life, the stronger it becomes in itself, as an entity; but when the mould is used thoughtlessly and haphazardly to create inferior, half-realised clones, it becomes weakened.

Obviously, we can't ever truly know where SoulBonds come from; we can only theorise about their origins, and in that, really, they are no different from any of us. How is any spirit brought into this world; dreamed up by a creative god, by infusion of life-essence into a biological shell, by sheer random chance? All that can be ascertained is that SoulBonds, in their capacity for individual thought, action, belief and feeling, are real, and have life. And sometimes, maybe that's all we need to know; but, curious creatures that we are, that's never something that will stop us from searching.

Soulbonding and Multiplicity

For newbies to the online SoulBonding community, the conflicting information surrounding that hairiest of chestnuts SBers face - the idea of "multiple personalities" - can be confusing to no end. On the one hand you have "straight-up" SBing pages proclaiming "We're not disordered! We're not MPD/DID! We're not insane!", and on the other, you have sites like this one, who appear to argue that the two theories are not so very far apart. So what's the truth?

Firstly, SoulBonders are not "insane", "disordered" or "MPD", because plurality in general is not insanity, disorder, or a case of "those multiple split alter personalities that make people stab their mothers on made-for-TV movies". I'm not aware of the definition that the DSM-IV (the diagnostic manual for psychological abnormality) gives for "multiple personality disorder" - or dissociative identity disorder, as it's now called - but I'd place a moderate amount of money on the bet that it includes the words "unnecessary suffering" and "maladaption to society". These two criteria - harm to the individual, and harm to society - are they keystones of all true "disorders". DID/MPD sufferers, those who require true therapy and help, require it because they are - as the name implies - disordered, and suffering. They may have undergone childhood abuse. Their "personalities" are harmful, fractured, bitter, self-destructive and ill-adapted to cope with society. They don't co-operate, and lose vast amounts of time in "blackout periods" because of it, sometimes even waking up in different parts of the country or even the world.

Unless this sounds like you, you are not disordered. Therefore, you do not suffer from a "multiple personality disorder".

These things are not the case for SoulBonders (although it's entirely possible for a SoulBonder, like any person, to have suffered abuse, the proportion of SBers who haven't strongly suggests that this is not the cause), and they are not the case for many multiple systems. There are myriad sites (Astraea's Web being among the most comprehensive, and the group frequently seen as the "patron saints of non-disordered multiplicity") belonging to people who identify as many spirits, souls, entities, energies, or just plain ol' people in one body, yet who live normal, healthy, comfortable, job-holding, educated lives as a group. They are not in therapy. They are not disordered. They do not have abused six-year-olds in their head who post to Usenet with things like "i luv teddie beares and big huggs i live in a magickal land with uny corns and raynbows" (and admittedly the spelling and grammar of this stuff is usually ten times worse than that, but I don't have the inclination to even attempt to reproduce it). And most importantly, they do not have "personalities", or fragments, or "alters" that permanently embody a single emotion and can't be anything else ("oh, that was my angry personality, please ignore him!"). They have people. Full stop. Period. Their lives may not be wonderful and special and (dear Goddess, take me now) Magyckal, but guess what, they're living normal Earthly lives in the normal Earthly world (and possibly, their own worlds as well) and doing a damn fine job of it, thank you very much.

I don't mean to be egotistical by using ourselves as a case study, but: I'm the "main frontrunner" in a system of 14. I'm not always the person in charge of the body. There are people in this system as young as nine years old. Yet none of them type like pseudo-pop-Wiccan EverQuest players with an always-on ADSL connection, abuse does not in any way feature into my background (hell, most of my family don't often use swearwords stronger than

"hell"), and we're heading off to university in a few months' time to study Japanese (can't wait... ::bounce:: XD). Despite a few "teething troubles" with people when they first fronted (which is to be expected), and despite some bouts of unwarranted angst (which was largely first-love-based), I'm/we're currently on a straight run of As, and hoping to pass this year's finals with similar grades. A bit geeky and studious, maybe, and we don't bake apple pies or own a dog, but while we're maybe not the "normal" occurrence in society, we're hardly unfit to cope within it.

However, being reassured that "having more than one person in your body is normal" often isn't that reassuring, with fairly good reason. The majority of people don't want more than one person in their body. (As one of our non-SBer friends says, "There's only enough room for me in here!".) They don't want to lose that control. They don't want to have to deal with people, real, fully-fleshed-out people who they can't get away from. And arguably the reason so many people put "I'm not MPD!" disclaimers on their sites is that the notion scares them.

Even if putting such a generalised slur on multiple systems isn't exactly thoughtful, they've got good reason to feel that way. It is scary. When suddenly other people in the body want to use the body, when you realise you have to relate to these people as people instead of as character-entities or abstract creations, it's disconcerting at first. Suddenly there are other feelings you have to take into account, other lives you have to exist alongside. It's hard, because it's life, but it's not an idea most people want to entertain.

The point is, though, that most people don't have to. SoulBonding, if placed on a continuum scale between "single person" and "multiple system", starts off somewhere in the middle. It's not the same thing. That doesn't mean that SoulBonding isn't similar in many ways to other forms of plurality, or that some SoulBonders are not multiple, or that some multiples are not Soul-

Bonders. However, it does mean that not all SoulBonders are multiples. The majority probably aren't. Many people's SoulBonds can't, won't, or just don't have the inclination to interact with the physical world in any way; depending on your theory of SBing, they either aren't strong enough or they aren't close enough. They stay "back". They stay SoulBonds. Not everyone who Soul-Bonds is going to start having Kenshin taking over their head in the middle of a conversation and spouting Meiji-era Japanese, nor having Haruka suddenly decide that she wants to buy a Ducatti and take up Earth-world racing, oh, and get herself a cute green-haired chick to hang off her arm while she's doing it.

The best way to look at it would be a Venn diagram - click here to see a painfully basic example. While SoulBonding and multiplicity may overlap, in the majority of cases, the groups are fairly separate.

And ultimately, even if SoulBonds can become very close to you (well, that's the definition of SBing, after all ^^;), and can become very real to the point of being real, and all this can be frightening and confusing and can make you feel like you're going insane - like any other relationship, isn't it also so very beautiful? I've known many people who wanted to destroy their worlds and their SoulBonds because they felt they were becoming "too" real, that this was all wrong, that this was all insanity. I was one of them. In the end, those people kept their worlds, and were happier people for it. Whatever the myriad causes of plurality in general, SoulBonding is about reaching out. It starts with an emotional connection between two people. A bond, hence the name. It's a joining of minds, of hearts, of souls. Whatever problems it may bring, whatever trials it may involve, the relationship between 'Bonder and 'Bonded is - in the majority of cases - one of deep understanding and caring. Like any such relationship on the physical planes, it's hard work, but worth it on so many levels.

The final issue is as to whether SoulBonding is ever "true" multiplicity. Typically, multiple systems consist of several people, at least two of which are capable of "fronting" - taking the physical body, basically. While "co-running" or "co-fronting", where two or more people "run" the body simultaneously, is known of, it's usually the case that people in multiple systems have total control of the body, with the others stepping "back" and away from the Earth world for the duration of that person's fronting. From the (admittedly small) survey of SoulBonders I've sampled, it appears that the majority of them, when their SoulBonds front, actually "co-run"; the SoulBonder themselves retains partial control of the body and remains capable of looking out on the world through the "mask" of their SB. One possible suggestion for this is that while SoulBonds are people in their own right, the SoulBonder is the "strongest" person in the system and the source of the system's energy, being that they were the first person to exist in the body; and/or that to exist in the Earth world, they need an Earth-based person, stabilising force or energy source (the SoulBonder). This is consistent with the theory of the "midcontinuum" or "median", a theory generated by the multiple community to describe systems that have many people but one central "fire" around which the others gather. (For an older essay by us on the midcontinuum and how we perceived it at the time, go here.)

But in actuality...... between SoulBonding, multiplicity, median, "imaginary friends"...... where can you draw the line? I've read stories of imaginary friends who sounded more like multiples than anything else. The experience of having others share our lives with us, others who may not be entirely physical, not entirely from the Earthly plane, others whose origins are unclear but whose existence is irrefutable.... whether you choose to call it SoulBonding, imagination, "people-in-head-space" or Kentucky Fried Chicken, it's a lot more common than open society would have us believe. Whatever kind of re-

lationship you have with "the others in there", treasure it and respect it, and respect them as people

Essays

Clowns to the Left of Us

Riesz Fenrir and Daidouji Tomoyo, at 11:45 p.m. on July 8, 2002, who had now better go to bed.

What is midcontinuum? Apart from being a word that is frustratingly unwieldy to derive from (midcontinuumism? O.o;), it basially describes the arbitrary "midpoint" of a scale of singularity-to-multiplicity, where the singleton (one person in one body) is on one extreme of the scale and the Multiple (many people, souls, spirits or minds sharing one physical, Earth-world body) is on the other. The "tagline" is "not one, not many", though personally I feel that both this idea and the "midway point" description are more properly assigned to SoulBonding, which is a more clearly defined case of "not me, not us, but me and them". "Midcontinuum" is, from the POV of someone who has been a SoulBonder and now identifies as midcont, much closer to the Multiple end of the scale. It's hard to define for someone who has only experienced it coming off the tail-end of SoulBonding, as it were, as opposed to a state in and of itself, but the way I see it is that SoulBonds, midconts and Multiples are all a case of "many souls sharing one body" - the question of which is which is in the case of who fronts. In SoulBonding, there is almost always a "Bonder and Bonded" relationship - the person who "owns" the body "acquires" these new entities, which share the body but don't have any pretensions about it being theirs to use. The SoulBonds stay in the "back", while the Bonder "fronts". In the case of Multiples, there usually isn't a hierarchy; there is very often no "host" (the equivalent of a Bonder), and indeed many object to the use of terms to define a "main person" on the grounds that it makes others in the system less-than-equal; anyone (or at least more

than one person) can front, and all have equal claim to the body. Midcontinuum is the place where the boundaries blur. My experiences of it have been as if two of us "merged", co-fronted or in some other way became a near-single consciousness, aware enough to know that we were separate but not quite enough to know just where one of us ended and the other began. It's as if I "put on" the other person like a mask, as if I existed but in their body and thinking through their mind - almost like a reverse-SoulBonding, where I'm the SoulBond and communicating with the outside world solely through them.

Midcontinuum is apparently a term that some people in the Multiple community don't like. I'm not sure I understand why; I personally think it's not only a useful term for a state of being that is little understood and even less documented, but an important one. I don't find the "continuum" model psychological in the slightest; in fact, I feel it's an empowering escape from the rigidity of psychological diagnosis. Milgram's notorious "electric shock" experiment back in the 60's proved that when a situation is defined as a linear continuum with many possible values, as opposed to a black-and-white choice, a "cutoff" point is much harder to determine. Defining multiplicity as a "sliding scale" with many possible values makes it more difficult to say, "oh, you're a SoulBonder so you're okay, but you're a Multiple, so you need help". Society at large may not be coming to realise any time soon that dissociation in any form other than the "masks" we wear for various social interactions is normal, but if there is no clear boundary between "masks" and soulpuppets, between soulpuppets and SoulBonds, between SoulBonds and "midconts" and Multiples, it will be that much harder for the sceptical world to determine where a "normal" boundary lies - and that may yet be one step closer to the eventual acknowledgement that it is all normal.

Yes, I did say soulpuppets. I did at first disagree with Mooncalf's concept on personal grounds, but while soulpuppeteers and SoulBonders would both claim little in common with each other, that ability to "think through" a character and "wear" them - even if as a puppet - is still dissociation, just as much if not more as the "wearing of masks" in everyday life is. Soulpuppeteers do exist - the "fangirl legions" are proof enough of that - and while their claims to be something they're not have caused them to be blacklisted somewhat amongst the SoulBonding community, I can see where they're coming from, and if they seem childish and trivialising to us then we must remember that SoulBonders are seen in the same way by probably just as many Multiples. I guess the best way to describe it would be something like this: people who don't (or can't) dissociate at all think stories are for kids. The average "mask-wearer" probably enjoys a casual read or two. Soulpuppeteers play with their stories. SoulBonders live their stories. And for those SoulBonders verging into the midcontinuum-to-Multiple side of the scale, they aren't stories. They're just as real as everything else.

Which brings me to the thorny problem for those midconts and Multiples whose systems evolved out of a SoulBonding relationship. There are probably as many causes for, and stories of, multiplicity as there are Multiples; walk-ins, channeled spirits, the body as a portal to other worlds. For many, aided in no small part by a sceptical and narrowminded society, coming to accept themselves, their situation, their worlds and their pasts as "real", as real as anything that can be physically, tangibly experienced by the rest of us, is a long and arduous process. Many feel they're "faking it", that they're just attention-seekers or that they have "active imaginations". It takes most a long time and a lot of support to believe in themselves and their multiplicity. But for SoulBonder-Multiples, the problem is amplified tenfold - because the majority of Soul-Bonds 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?" It's bad enough trying to explain that more than one person lives in your body - how on Mana's green Earth do you explain to someone that a ten-year-old animated character lives in your body? And not only that, but that she wants to be "real" - to have just as much of a physical presence in this world as you or I? To have real-world friends, real-world family, real-world physical contact? To be able to wear her own clothes, study her own school subjects, eat the kind of food she likes?

Some SoulBonders - even the as-yet-non-Multiple ones - already have a theory. Quite a few people believe in parallel "story-worlds", real places out there in the universe from which authors and creators inadvertently "channeled" all the stories and characters we see around us today. They argue that no story is "created", because it all already exists, somewhere out there. It was a theory I entertained once, but personally I don't really like it, because what it practically says is that imagination doesn't exist. I do believe that a lot of things we think we "imagine" or "create" might in fact have bases in reality, or more accurately may be subconsciously tapping into something other than the creators' own minds - for example, the number of people that follow the so-called fictional "Jedi" religion from Star Wars must surely mean that at least the most fundamental concepts behind it (e.g. "the Force") have a ring of real-world truth in their being, and take also the "myths" of dragons and faeries that turned out to be only too true for so many Otherkin (in fact, I count myself among the avariels, which are D&D "creations") - but I believe there is equal truth in the reverse principle; that by the act of imagining, of pouring creative energy into a vision, we actually bring a character, situation

or world into physical being on some other plane. As an animist, I believe that all things have the life-energy and the spirit of the Goddess within them, and that this energy is shaped - either by the person or thing itself, or by outside forces, or often both - into unique, personal energy. For example, this laptop I'm working at now has its own energy, which is different from the energy of the computer I normally use (which is sitting in a box downstairs all forlorn waiting to be sent off for repairs, again ;_;), because I've poured different thoughts and feelings into each one. I'm not sure whether that means that my computer can be classed as having a "soul" or not; that would likely depend on whether it had sufficient intelligence, though then again, if you believe that even the lowliest worm has a soul then sentience doesn't come into the argument. There exists an old Japanese tale that a doll, if sufficiently loved and cared for, can be imbued with a soul through the sheer strength of its' owners affection for it. The basic tenet of magic is that if we actively pour enough energy into a wish, belief or desire, enough physical changes will be effected in the universe for it to come true. Why should this not be the same of characters from fiction? As anyone who has ever read (or watched) The Neverending Story will understand perfectly, when we absorb ourselves in a work of fiction we find ourselves empathising with the characters. We become them, their friends, their adversaries. We step into the story. We "know" the people within it. And into that world we pour our strongest emotions. We love, we hate, we fear, we fight, we pray along with them. Is this not sufficient spiritual energy to begin a seed of life, a spirit, something which could even become a soul if it should have a sufficient physical vessel in which to live?

As a corollary to this theory, I believe that such energies are created uniquely by each person who comes across a character. There is not one "singular version" or interpretation of a character, and thus there is not one singular set of energies attached that character. I see the character itself as an

archetype, a "template" around which spirit is built. There might be many Daidouji Tomoyos out there, and they might all be very similar or very different, but they are not "offshoots" of any one "original"; they are simply spirits, to paraphrase a certain old book that a lot of people seem to like throwing quotes around from, created in her image. One does not make any other less "real" or "true" any more than the existence of one man invalidates another's. I suppose the best way of expressing it would be the idea of a genetic clone - the potential for growth and development is identical, the base characteristics are the same, but that person's subsequent experiences may cause them to turn out very differently from the being whose DNA they share. And the most beautiful thing about a SoulBond who becomes a being in their own right is that, from a character archetype with only the limited range of potential that its creators afford it, is born a spirit with the same infinite potential as any other person on the planet. (I suppose an overly poetic, but seemingly appropriate to me at this late hour of writing, statement would be that it's like the act of giving birth to a child, only through the sheer force and purity of love alone.) Yet the cruellest thing about it is that, save by a few other Multiples, SoulBonders and the extremely open-minded, such people may never truly be afforded the chance to be people that they so rightly deserve.

Co-Consciousness and Two-Dimensionality

Riesz Fenrir, at 10:43 p.m. on July 21, 2002

Until recently, when I referred to a continuum when talking about SBing and Multiplicity, I meant a continuum of individuality, of roundedness - from "masks" that are facets of the singlet to full, whole, separate individuals, with an infinite number of points inbetween encompassing, but not limited to, "soulpuppets", SoulBonds, midcontinuum... people (well, what do you call someone in a midcont system anyway? Midcontinuumite? Is that anything like Kryptonite? ^-^;), and the humble NPC. So just what is a NPC anyway? Sometimes called "fragments" in Multiple systems, these "non-player characters of the soul" are somewhat akin to soulpuppets; they are "cutout characters" that populate a person's or system's soulscape. In a movie, they would be the bit-parts; the pleasant girl behind the shop counter, the crossing guard, the irate driver. Yet NPCs aren't soulpuppets in that we don't "puppet" their lives; they simply live them out "behind the scenes", like the movie bit-parts, only being relevant to the "plot" when the main characters happen to stumble upon them. But this is real life - as messed-up as SBing and Multiplicity might seem to the majority of the "normal" (note heavy use of air quotes there) populace, it is not merely some figment of our imagination. However you want to say that these people came about, through "channeling" from alt-dimension storyworlds, through the "love and belief->soul" principle, through trauma or purely through natural circumstance like lefthandedness, they are real. They exist. And should we really be viewing real-life events from the biased perspective of the movie-director's camera - or the RPG writer's script?

Are the store assistant, the crossing guard, the driver, any less "real" or "three-dimensional" people just because we only see them on an occasional basis? Just because our only interactions with the girl in the store have been "Here's your change, have a nice day", does that really mean that this is all there is to her existence? That she has no life other than how we interact with her?

And to the age-old question: if a tree falls in a forest and nobody hears it, did it still fall?

It was a discussion at the Sword and Serpent MB that kicked off this train of thought in my head. One of the regular patrons mentioned that one of his SBs had fallen in love with a NPC that he hardly knew anything about, and he wanted to know how that could happen. SoulBonds aren't just flat, two-dimensional characters, so how could his fall in love with a cardboard cutout to whose name he had only appended the sketchiest of details? And it occured to me that it was possibly *him*, not his SB, who was seeing things in two dimensions. The less we know about a character, the less "fleshed-out" and subsequently "real" they appear to be, just like a car in the distance appears smaller, less detailed and generally less "real" than the car you drive to work every day. But could it not be the case that this NPC was, in fact, just as real and "detailed" a person as the SoulBond in question - just that the 'Bonder himself had only glimpsed him from a distance?

Is it the case that "fragments", "SoulBonds", "NPCs", "Multiples" - all of these are as real and whole as each other, and it is really the perpective of the person at the "front" which differs? Should the continuum not be one of "wholeness" or even "dissociation", but in fact association - that the further a person is dissociated or distanced from the other people within them, the less real they seem, meaning that those who are on equal terms with everyone in the system are those who are truly able to see and acknowledge what is there?

Needless to say, this brings up a few thorny issues. First, there are certain occurrences of plurality that, however way you slice it, are *not* real people. Are the "masks" all of us wear in everyday life, the serious mask of the business professional and the laid-back mask of the same man with his drinking buddies, really "separate people that we just refuse to acknowledge"? What about soulpuppets? These are characters with no consciousness or will of their own, no spiritual life, just one person's imagination manipulating them. If we start saying these too are real, how deep do we go? Soulpuppet rights? "But your honour, she forced me to have sex with Yuki... umm, Yukito-san! I didn't want to, honest!" In addtion, it borders on the trap which all of those on all sides of the community who are serious about their plurality least want to fall into; that of "[x] state of being is better/superior/more evolved than [y]". It would be churlish and unwise to go around saying "oh, SoulBonders are just people who are too ignorant to realise they're Multiple". SoulBonding, Multiplicity and everything in between are entirely different states of being for everyone - the old "ask 10 Multiple households for a definition of Multiplicity and you'll get 347 different answers" chestnut - and to say that everyone's SBs or fragments are just real people waiting to be discovered comes dangerously close to an attempt to define "one theory of plurality". I don't want to be seen as trying to do that.

However, for at least a fraction of the community, this is undoubtedly a theory that might be applicable. And if it is so, then the situation it throws up is still a tricky one. Those of us who were born singlets, or born believing we were so, like to think that we have control over what goes on in our own heads and bodies. Sure, we have SoulBonds, but at the end of the day they're just SoulBonds. They don't do or say anything that you don't know about. They aren't free to pop up at inopportune moments and take over your body. They don't leave you with the problem of equal rights, of whether these peo-

ple deserve the right to lead equal and individual lives through the medium of the body, to hold down their own jobs, to have their own friends, to be their own people; of how you're going to explain to the rest of the world that hey, sometimes it's li'l ol' me up here and sometimes it's a twenty-foot humanoid dragon or a five-year-old catgirl who can only speak broken Cantonese and meow. To suddenly discover that there are other people in here, no, I mean there are really other people in here, is extremely disconcerting.

But then, I guess it's nothing other than what any awakening Multiple goes through.

The question is, where do we go from here?

Untitled 1

by Laura G

It's said that Soulbonding is unique with every person, and I can attest to that. I have various Soulbonding idiosyncracies, like the fact that I Soulbond men almost exclusively, while I'm actually distrustful of the opposite sex in real life. I also don't have so much of a mind-room, but involve myself mostly with the Soulbonds in their native habitat, as in active story-brainstorming. And yet, they are definitely still Soulbonds.

I have my own ideas about what Soulbonds are. Like most Soulbonders, I believe that my Soulbonds are truly alive and not just made-up things. I've heard a lot of people propose that story-worlds really exist, and story-makers "channel" them from wherever they really are. This is a great explanation for some people, but it doesn't quite work for me.

My own belief is that a thing that has love, devotion, or even plain fascination poured into it gains a sort of spiritual life. In our era of mass communications, where fictional characters can reach millions of people, massive amounts of life are poured into these characters, and I believe that this gives them life as spirit-entities. I see Soulbonders as people whose love and fascination for a character is so great that it gives spiritual life to their own vision of a character (reality, especially in fiction, is subjective. No two people have exactly the same take on a given character), creating a Soulbond, who is at once an aspect of that character's spirit, an aspect of the Soulbonder's personality, and a unique person with a will of their own.

Thus the act of creation (often including Soulbond interaction) is reciprocal. Characters and Soulbonds do have their own will, and will often tell an

author (or fan-author) large stretches of their story that can largely be taken at face value, and there's a sort of sacred trust between character and author that is destructively violated if the author pushes the character to do things against sa's nature and will. But at the same time, the writing is still very much a creative endeavor, and the author must make creative choices, which, if made with responsibility and respect, develop and strengthen the character's personality and continue the cycle.

I know that not everyone feels they can believe in "spirits" in a literal way, but hopefully this will at least be a helpful model for thinking about Soulbonding for some.

Untitled 2

by Khail Chronic

:: a male figure stumbles out of the shadows, rudely shoved from behind. He comes to a halt in the middle of the forest clearing and sits, straightening his clothes as he does so. With one last, venomous glance into the forest behind him, he begins to talk::

Well, this isn't really an essay, but more of a ramble. I'm actually surprised that this hasn't been done yet, but Tama does have her brilliant moments, though they are few and far between. ::pauses and thinks:: The best place to start would probably be introductions. My name's Khail Chronic. And I'm here to talk about soulbonding.

Now, for me, this is a very serious and interesting topic, considering my situation. I've read quite a lot of the articles out there on the Internet, even though I do not particularly enjoy the Internet. As I read some of the articles out there, I developed quite a strong response to many of them.

Like I said, this was Tama's idea. And of course she's listening to every word I'm saying. I have a strange relationship with Tama. I'm her Soulbond and she's my…Soulbond.

On reading some of the articles, mainly those dealing with puppetry, I was offended. And on a deeper level hurt. It didn't really make sense to me that people could believe that I don't truly exist. ::looks around:: From my vantage point it certainly seems real enough. True, the only way I communicate with others in your so called real world is through Tama, but that doesn't bother me. I deal with people in my world that she's never even met before.

I do have my own distinct personality. Just because I am a Soulbond doesn't change that. I existed before Tama found me, before she had the Internet and before she had her journals. Tama knew I was there, and we've been communicating for a long time, long before she even knew what the term Soulbond was. The way I see it is that it took her writing something serious—and completing it—to really open up her mind and be able to understand what was happening. Once she began to need characters, we stepped up from where we've always been and offered to share the experience with her.

I say we which includes me and the other seven of Tama's Soulbonds. She does have more characters than that, not all original, but they really aren't soulbonds. Just NPCs that happen to inhabit our world. I'm certain they have very strong opinions about this matter too, having the same information, but I'm the one that volunteered to do this…ramble.

Normally I hate doing blogs, but this one was important. I felt a need to communicate how I felt about this matter. And I guessed it would be easier for me since I have a different connection with Tama than the others. I'm not the dominate Soulbond, for that distinction belongs to another, but I am more deeply connected to Tama.

Tama is still a child in many senses of the word. I'm here as her "parent" figure. ::frowns and rubs a hand through his hair:: It's not that she needs one, but sometimes she goes astray, and I feel the need to try and help her. Not that she ever really listens to me. In fact, she usually ignores the advice I give her. But I know she listens to it, and that's all that matters. I'm the one that she talks to when she needs advice, because to her, I am her logic, her reason, and when we talk, I help her work things out in her own mind.

I know to many of you out there that don't have soulbonds that this is a very weird thing. You're reading something written by a person that to you does not exist. But trust me, I exist.

When your life becomes connected to another, when you see yourself reflected in the eyes of this person, and when you've become so attached to a person that you can sense when they are near, you might understand what it's like. Tama is by no means a ruler. In fact she has absolutely no control of two of her soulbonds, who enjoy creating chaos in our world. She never forces us to do anything, and she rarely even asks us to do anything. We are not playthings to her, just as friends are not playthings. And in no way did Tama force us into creation. Gavin is a perfect example of that. He appeared quite by surprise and when no one knew exactly who he was, not even Tama. But in the short time he's been here, he's found his own place.

::stops and looks up to stare at the stars overhead:: It's really hard to explain. Perhaps after I've more time to think on the subject. ::bows and retreats to the forest around him::

Soulbonders and Multiples

by Aaron and Gina

Once upon a time, the soulbonding and multiple groups out there didn't really interact much, and there were a lot of misconceptions between both groups of what the other was or was not. Then one brave soul threw the One Ring into the Crack of Doom, thus uniting both forevermore and causing much rejoicing.

Oops, we're getting ahead of ourselves. But if you look through the annals of history, you'll notice that much of the soulbonding community thought itself very far removed from plurality, and the multiple community out there didn't even address soulbonding at all. Recently, all of this has been changing very quickly. Now, you don't have to look very hard to find multiple systems who admit to soulbonding, or soulbonders who have acknowledged themselves as multiple. The times, they are a-changin, but what does it all mean?

In our own humble opinions, it means that the lines once drawn between both concepts are getting weaker, and that there is much less of a boundary there than people used to think. Is it possible that two separate groups of people, who previously rarely communicated at all, came up with different terminology to describe what is essentially the same thing? We think it's very likely. Because of this, we think it's very possible that in the future, we'll see a lot of diffusion between the two. We hope that people from both cultures will also mix freely, and toss ideas back and forth like old friends sitting on a porch in late summer.

But hey, don't let us lure you into thinking that it'll be an effortless venture. Nothing's ever that easy. We have those years of misunderstandings at our

collective backs, and we're going to have to do something to clear them up first. For instance, soulbonders often remark that multiples seem to look down on them as inferior, or "less multiple," and therefore less special. Soulbonders have also been accused by some multiples of affecting a semblance of plurality for attention. And for their part, multiples often get their hackles raised when they see a soulbonding webpage that appears to caricature all plurality as "MPD," and offer a "But I'm not mentally ill!" disclaimer.

It's also common knowledge that both sides are beset with problems among their own ranks. Multiples are plagued by a subgroup that insists that their multiplicity is a terrible ailment, and that all true multiples are of the "MPD" variety. Soulbonders have their own cross to bear in the form of a legion of "rabid fangirls," who claim that their soulbonds keep them up at night with intracranial orgies. Worse than this are the laymen out there who latch on to both of these questionable factions and use their antics to splash mud on all soulbonders and all multiples as a whole. Who among us hasn't been hurt by the self-righteous howling about how all of us are flakes, or whiners who want attention?

Right now, we think that soulbonders and multiples both are looking at each other out of the corner of their eyes. We both want pretty much the same things -- we want to be accepted, and taken seriously. What we don't quite know how to do is reach across the gap that the past years have created. So on that note, here's are some things we think that all of us can do to make communication between us easier, and to help each other see where the other is coming from.

Soulbonders can:

- Avoid the use of the terms 'MPD,' or 'mentally ill' (Remember
  that MPD stands for a disorder, and many plurals will not re-

spect being labelled like this any more than you would want to be called delusional.)

- Avoid the overuse of soulbonds' antics as conversation pieces
- Respect the people that are your soulbonds, and recognize that multiples respect their group members just the same
- Understand that people who call themselves plural or multiple are not categorizing themselves as superior to you
- Multiples can:
- Avoid looking at all people based on fictional concepts as 'pretend'
- Understand that even though several people may each have soulbonded a particular character, that doesn't make any of them less or more real as people
- Avoid looking at soulbonding as a "lower form" of multiplicity
- Hopefully in a year or two, we'll be writing another essay called 'Our Thoughts on the New Friendship Between the Multiple and Soulbonding Communities.' Catch you then.

Untitled 3

by Anthea of Amorpha

Interestingly I'm writing this coming right off a post I did in someone else's journal about religion and how I perceived it to be unwise to cling too strongly to any belief system as the Absolute Truth.

I find that in a lot of communities which involve belief in things which are generally outside of any mainstream religion-- otherkin, furry, soulbonding, gateway/walk-in multiple systems-- a lot of things within the community tend to come down to a clash between Symbolicist and Literalist views. The Symbolicist view can generally be summed up as: "Yes, we're a system which includes soulbonds from games/books/tv/etc, but I don't think these characters exist anywhere outside of our head" or "Yes, we have an internal world where we see ourselves going when we're not up front, but I don't think it's a literal reality, just a place for us to visualize ourselves," or "Yes, I identify as otherkin/furry/etc, but I don't -really- believe that I'm nonhuman in any sense, it's just a useful metaphor for me."

The Literalist view, on the other hand, is "Yes, I have SBs, and I believe that the stories they came from happened in other realities, and they've come to me through that reality," or "Yes, I'm otherkin, and I believe I have a nonhuman soul in a human body," or "Yes, we have an other world, and I believe it exists somewhere."

It can get pretty unpleasant when outsiders stride into a community and demand to know which one you are, even if it's only out of their own curiosity. I've been on a forum, for instance, where several people got offended when a non-SBer wanted to know to what extent people believed SBs were real. It

can get even nastier when it turns into an internal clash of symbolicism vs. literalism. Generally, it tends to go along the lines of the symbolicists believing that the literalists are ruining things for the rest of them, making them look like a bunch of quacks by professing belief in the existence of alternate realities, having nonhuman souls, or the like, the prevailing idea seeming to be that 'we need to keep these people quiet or be very vocal about the fact that we don't agree with them or everyone will think we're all kooks.' It can degrade to the point of mockery and denigration of literalists, presumably in an attempt to prove a point to outsiders who go out of their way to mock the community as a whole-- although interestingly, I've never seen it work. What it is is a form of scapegoating, of saying, "These people are the wackos, not us, and we'll pick on them just like you do to prove it, so you'll leave us alone!"

Except, of course, that these days I'm finding pure symbolicism vs. pure literalism to be insufficient to describe the complexities of the way most multiples, otherkin, SBers, etc. experience the world. While we have definite factions in our own system which lean towards one side or the other of things-- and I don't make a secret out of the fact that I usually lean towards the literalist side-- I also find pure literalism to be limiting in many ways, as much as pure symbolicism, where nothing can be acknowledged as real in any sense beyond an 'emotional truth.'

I believe that sometimes, characters are characters and stories are stories, that sometimes it is fiction-- and not 'just' fiction; just because something isn't literally real doesn't make it not worth honoring. There are a lot of stories we have that, when it comes down to it, I can't point to them and say I don't feel we created them on some level. I don't think that's a sin or that it demeans them, and one of the problems with pure literalism is that it seems to lead to the degradation of anything which is 'just fiction,' which isn't considered as real in some reality or other-- that it needs to be real to have any worth or val-

ue. It's like some forms of New Age religion where fiction is never fiction-- it all has to be a memory of a past life or a message received from another world. As other people have pointed out, it pretty much destroys any potential for imagination and creativity in human life, because in essence, it says that imagination -doesn't exist- -- that it's ALL visions of things that are real.

On the other hand, I find it equally binding to stick with the idea that "it's not real, but oh gee, isn't imagination a wonderful thing!" There are times when it's more powerful to interpret something as a reality. If pressed, I think you would find that the majority (not all) of strong symbolicists would admit that they would -like- to believe in the reality of things on some level-- that their symbolicism is, at least in part, a reaction to prevailing social attitudes and desire to make themselves acceptable, to believe they aren't kooks. There seems to be a big underlying fear among symbolicists that literalists are going to go a little too far and be a little too gleeful in sharing with the world what they perceive to be reality, like New Age channelers trying to tell the world the messages they were supposedly sent by space aliens and beings from higher dimensions.

Except, of course, that the vast majority of multiple systems who experience their other worlds as being more than emotional truth don't like to spread it around. It's not just because they -are- aware and very much so of how it's perceived by the dominant culture, but because it's usually a personal thing to them. Sometimes people will be up front and forthright about it not because they want to force the rest of the world to believe in the literal reality of other worlds, SBs, otherkin, etc. but out of desire to reach out to others in the same situation as they, who might be still unable to honor what they have as a valid thing and not something stupid or crazy, who want to believe in it on a level beyond the symbolic but are afraid to for fear of being perceived as a kook; and defend it not because they think it's going to convince their de-

tractors-- it rarely does-- but to cut down some of society's presumptions for the previously-mentioned unsure, to tell them that no, it does -not- in fact make you an idiot to accept this on a more-than-symbolic level, if it doesn't affect your ability to function in regular daily life (and to show that it doesn't for them).

I think because this is often misinterpreted as trying to convince one's detractors, symbolicists and even literalists who are quiet about it often have a knee-jerk reaction to it. The reaction isn't because it makes them personally uncomfortable for this person to hold these beliefs (that seems to be more the province of those who cut it down in general), but because it makes them uncomfortable to think about how society will judge -them- if this is perceived as being representative of them.

All the same, I think it -does- need to be done, within reason, for it to be pointed out that society really has its head up its ass in many ways; and neither extreme symbolism or literalism strikes me as a very liberating worldview, in the long run, where it all HAS to be one way or the other. There's also liberation to be found in having grey areas, areas of unsureness, or to hold the conviction that a world or person can be constructed through belief, and to see yourself as an active participant in that process.

FAQs and Advice

Talking

This is a tested technique for people finding it difficult to talk to their SBs, because they're discounting the information they get as "making it up" or "their subconscious talking". It's been helpful for me, it always seems to work and it's helped me a lot in improving my relationship with Kirika (and other people in the system), so I thought I'd reproduce it here. This is only a technique for if you're having problems telling the difference - if you already talk to your SBs quite happily you probably won't need it, and attempting to use it would probably confuse matters. Also, it can make your SoulBonds' (and your) head hurt if you do it enough, or simply piss them off depending on what type of person they are. Decide for yourself if you think it's worth using or not.

Basically, if you hear your SB say something that sounds weird/out of place/out of character, or you're not sure if it's just you making up the words, try imagining them saying the opposite. If you get a feeling of "resistance", or like they're still insisting on the idea, then you know it's them talking and not you making it up. If you don't get any resistance, then either the words were in your head, or they're unclear about something, so try asking them to clarify what they're saying. If you don't get resistance or answer either way, and/or you find you can make them say quite silly things using your imagination without getting any "bad feedback" in your head about it, you're probably not talking to a SoulBond (or you're talking to a very lighthearted SB who doesn't really care - but testing this with Karl just now [guinea pig. ^^;], even then there's a little resistance). That doesn't necessarily mean you don't SoulBond that person, however, or that you're just a "soulpuppeteer" - they might just

not be floating around close enough for you to talk to at that time, so your words are bouncing off of empty space.

How to Front

Note: This post was in response to someone saying that their SBs wanted to front, but didn't know how. Not everyone's SBs want to, are capable of, or should front. Fronting is a very powerful experience for both the Bonder and the person fronting, and can be very emotionally intense. Only try anything contained in this tutorial if you are aware that your SBs truly want to front, and you're prepared for that. Obviously, if you don't know what fronting is, don't go anywhere near this document until you've done your research.

First, be aware that forcing this is a bad idea. I'll tell you that in no uncertain terms. For me at least, when SBs front it can be physically and emotionally confusing and draining, both for them and for you. However, if they actually *want* to...... With Kirika, it's usually an experience or some kind of external stimulus that will "trigger" her enough that she needs/wants to come out and look. (Yes, the concept of "triggers" is very Old-Style Survivor Multiples, but it's often the case in much the same way as the sound of your mother talking to one of your friends at the door would trigger you to go down and have a look, even if you were currently absorbed in a video game and very distanced from the physical world at the time. There's nothing magical about it, just simple curiosity and interest.) Although no one's ever called her by her name to her (my? Our?) face, I get the feeling that that would actually be enough of a curiosity trigger, so if you have any physical-world friends who "get" SBing, try getting them to talk with the person in question and talk to them by name. If they have a favourite piece of music, etc., try playing that and closing your eyes, and letting them connect with the music. (If they're from a particular anime or series, they may well have a "theme song"

or a particular piece of music associated with them, which could be a good starting point, as long as they don't have any bad memories associated with it.) Favourite anime/book/subject? Let them watch/read/study. (If you're lucky, you might even get SBs who want to do your homework. Don't count on it, though. ;)) Favourite hobby? As long as you're actually prepared to let them do it, this might be encouragement enough. Also, visual stimuli can be important, both for getting SBs to front, and also for getting yourself back to the front if you need to; try looking at a picture of them, watching the series they're in, etc., getting their form really clear in your head (if it isn't already; I do this because my mental images of people quickly go vague. I have no memory for faces, in the spiritual or in the physical world, sadly). Then close your eyes and imagine their physical form superimposing over your body - their hair, clothes, weight/height, any particular features about them. Similarly, if someone's being stubborn and you need the body *now*, try looking in a mirror or other reflective surface (e.g. your reflection on a computer screen), or looking at a pic of yourself on an ID card/other card you carry with you. (Actually, that's an idea - making all your SBs ID cards with their pictures, for that purpose. Of course, you have to make sure they don't go around showing them in shops and things, although it could be funny, I guess. ^_^;) Of course, this only works if a) you co-front (like me), meaning you have at least minor control of your body when they're out, and b) you actually identify with your physical image. If you don't, you can use an image of your spiritual/astral/"true" form (e.g. a picture you drew of yourself as you see yourself in your mind's eye), an item that's very dear to you (e.g. a piece of clothing with the scent of a lover/family member, etc.), something like that. Whatever works to get them out also works to get you out. If they're being fine and co-operative but they just want to go back inside and you want to take over, you can try the same techniques you used to bring them to the front to bring

yourself back; music, things like that. Also, thinking about stuff like your parents, your school/college/uni, things that ground you to your Earth-world life.

[not-entirely-serious] Another (so far untested) technique for getting Soul-Bonds to front, as suggested by Laura, is Men's Pocky. ^_^ Of course, that would depend entirely on whether the SB in question *liked* Men's Pocky. ^_~; And giving of man-flavoured Pocky is probably not a recommended course of action. ^_^;;;;;; [/not-entirely-serious]

As I said before, forcing = bad, so only do these things if *they* say they want to front. If they do, you should have very few problems, although be aware - if it happens with you anything like it happens with me, their emotions will hit you like a ton of bricks the first time. The situation *will* get better and, providing you're patient with them and don't yell at them and start blaming them for ruining your life, they should get used to being near the front in time, and you'll become more comfortable with each other. (Remember, it's scary for them too - imagine stepping into *their* world. Sure, fun to be in Ohtori High or aboard a starship - for the first five minutes, until you realise you have to start coping with normal life in that world and being surrounded by unfamiliar people, places, scenarios etc.......)

Also, until you're both "experienced" at it, don't try this unless you're prepared to spend the day (or at least a few hours) with them. This is not something to be done five minutes before class, unless you like the thought of your SBs talking to your teacher and classmates, and taking your notes. ^_^;;;;; Be aware that you may not be able to persuade them to return back inside easily, especially if they find they like it, so arrange it on a day when you have few commitments and can afford to burn a few hours having them surf the Internet/walk in the park/blare music/write/draw/paint/eat chocolate/whatever. When they're fronting, it's really not a good idea to push them out of the way

suddenly unless you really have to - it'll have much the same effect on them as it would if someone pushed you out of the way of something you were enjoying. Let them go back in gradually, if at all possible. Also, once they start doing this, if they like it they'll want to do it more often, so be prepared for them to become a regular or semi-regular part of your life.

Be aware also that even once they do return to the inside or their own world after fronting, they're likely to hover around near the front for sometime afterwards. Just speaking from personal experience, but it's very unlikely that an SB will take the helm and then disappear completely afterwards, unless they're really that type. This closeness can last for a long time, and may well be stronger than you're used to.

When they're out or near front, be careful of their limits. It's a good idea if you can talk to them about this beforehand, but sometimes they won't know until they actually face the situation itself. If you know their history, be aware of things they may be scared of or that may bother them, and approach these cautiously (or avoid them, if you can). Depending on how fully they front, you may or may not be able to have much control over where they go, but if you at least have semi-bodily control, pay attention to any strong feelings you get from them about certain things. Remember that, in the case of outsourced SBs, the majority of them have hard and complicated pasts simply by virtue of being "interesting" enough to be characters in a story. Likely as not, these things are what connected you to them in the first place. These people are likely to be fragile and have a lot of emotional hangups, even if they don't outwardly show it - be gentle with them. Being careful of their limits also means not pushing them too much. If they want to front and it's possible in the situation, let them, but having them hopping back and forth all day at the very start is draining on both them and you. Start slowly.

As a rule of thumb, I'd reiterate that it's a good thing to do it with a friend who understands SBing, if you can. It can be lonely to come out into the "real world" and suddenly have no friends and no one to talk to, plus the person can help both with getting them to front *and* with being a stimulus for yourself to come back out. Friends in the "real world" who understand SBing are pretty hard to come by, admittedly, but if you do have any it's always a good idea to get them involved from day zero. Suggest what you're planning to do, discuss any possible problems or issues, get them to ask you questions.

Finally, and most importantly, remember that anyone who can front is a person in their own right. Treat them as such, and respect them as such; and be aware of the changes this might make to all of your lives before doing it.

Soulbonding FAQ

Your Frequently Askeds, answered here.

Introductory Questions

q. i read the soulbonding stuff on your page, but i don't understand it... can you tell me more?

a. Everything I can tell you is already written down there. I can't simplify it any more than that. Try the Alternate Perspectives section for other viewpoints that you may or may not find easier to understand. (If it helps any, as a general rule of thumb, people who don't "get" it usually don't do it. If you feel like you identify with some of the concepts but not others, though, try the Alternate Perspectives section or the links.)

q: who coined the term "SoulBonding"? and how come it's capitalized that way?

a: Amanda Flowers, a member of the JFW, coined the term "SoulBonding", and I believe that in one discussion relating to the subject, she said that the inspiration for the term being capitalized like that was the title of the RPG "SoulBlazer". Basically, she just thought it looked cool. ^^ (That's how I remember it, anyway; if you're reading this and you want to correct me, Amanda, drop me a line!) In addition, "soulbonding" is a term used by many other groups and with many different meanings attributed to it - for example, I've heard it used by Otherkin to refer to a soulmate/life partner with whom one has an empathic bond, and it even cropped up once in the cartoon "Daria" - and this way of spelling it is one way to distinguish what we mean by SBing with what other people mean by SBing. However, not everybody

spells it like that; a lot of people just say Soulbonding or soulbonding, and it means the same thing. "Soulscape", meanwhile, was a term coined by Celes of the Eclective, which seems to have been adopted near-universally as a replacement for "mindscape", "headworld", etc. She didn't feel it was sufficiently used elsewhere to warrant the capitalization.

q. who/what are/were the JFW? how can I join?

a. The JFW (Just For Writers; also known as the Writers' Club, though I don't know anyone in the club who actually called it that) was a mailing list which was originally set up for writers of fantasy, sci-fi and/or videogame-based stories, but was really just a small group of likeminded people, most (if not all) of whom were SoulBonders, who discussed SBing, role-playing in its various incarnations, and other common interests. However, the list died due to internal conflicts. There was never a website or an application procedure; people were merely invited to join from time to time (Goddess, that makes me sound elitist, don't it? ^^;;). Since the concept of SoulBonding was started in the JFW, they get referenced a lot by "old-timers" in the community, though less so today.

How, and How Deeply?

q. please tell me how to soulbond! It sounds so cool!

a. I find the amount of mail I get on this topic quite unbelievable. I've heard so many people say this like it's something they can initiate themselves into, as if they could somehow "channel" a SoulBond. Of course, there are people who are genuinely curious about SBing and hope they themselves will find that special connection with a character someday, and that's perfectly fine, of course - it's not at all the case that SoulBonding can't happen after a certain age in life (see next question) - but it's something that can happen only

if it's meant to happen, not because of something you actively do. In fact, trying to "force" a SoulBond to enter your headspace would undoubtedly be disastrous for all parties concerned, if it worked to any degree. The connection probably wouldn't hold, and they'd resent being pulled out of their existence.

If you're thinking of asking me this question, instead try asking yourself a question. "Why do I want to SoulBond so badly?" Is it because you see it as something mystical and special? Guess what - it's no different from any other relationship, ultimately. Sometimes it's wonderful, warm, beautiful and bright. Sometimes it's treacherous, painful, torturous and soul-wrenching. Sometimes you want nothing more than to fling your arms around all your SoulBonds and tell them how much you love them. Sometimes you wish they never existed. It's like having a child, having a lover, having a family. It's not some kind of magical, always-on, always-loving and always-harmonious connection. They fight. They hurt. They bleed. And as their SoulBonder, you are the one who has to guide them through it, or at least absorb a great deal of the flak.

q. i didn't soulbond/didn't talk to my sbs until i discovered it online. am i faking it?

a. From running the SoulBond Sanctuary forum at the Tavern, I've been able to witness several cases of people either SoulBonding spontaneously when they didn't before or people suddenly developing much deeper connections with their SBs than they had before, seemingly just as a result of being around other SBers who did. For a start, I'd argue that a much higher proportion of the SBers at the Sanctuary have SBs who front than is the average. I don't think it's a case of faking it or wish-fulfilment - in the case of something as fluid as SBing, a connection which is largely spiritual, emotional and/or mental as opposed to physical, the simple realisation that such things are possible is enough to open the relevant channels. In other words, it was always possible - you just never thought about it before, and thus were never able to

forge the relevant connection. (Okay, so admittedly most SBers didn't "think about it" before their SBs arrived - "oh, I wonder what it would be like if characters lived in my head?" - but it seems that some people are more pre-disposed to having it happen than others.)

Generally speaking, if you are asking yourself the question "am I faking it?", you probably aren't. That's not to say that some people *don't* fake SBing after hanging around other, legitimate SBers, or that people don't mis-interpret the concept horribly and try and shoehorn their "fangirl harems" into the mould of SBing. As ever, the rule of thumb is that if you feel like you do, then you probably do.

q. what's the difference between falling in love with/having a crush on a character, and soulbonding them?

a. Sometimes, a great deal. Sometimes, not a lot. It's entirely possible to fall in love with a SoulBond - many people warn against doing so, but I guess it depends on how close your SBs are to you. With our own relationship being somewhat towards the median/midcontinuum side of things, the people in here are as much "people" as any others, but I can understand how it would be painful if your SoulBonds are very ethereal and hard to reach. However, loving a character does not necessarily mean you SoulBond them, and Soul-Bonding them also does not necessarily mean you love them. It's entirely pos-sible to SB a character you hate, but just can't get out of your head; and it's entirely possible to spend your nights and days acting out imaginary fantasies with fictional lovers without ever truly having a connection to them. Ask yourself about the depth of the relationship. If you love this person, what do they feel about it? Think about it? Do they spend time around you? Do they talk to you? Do you talk to them? Do they share their stories with you? Do you spend all night with those stories floating around your head, and wake up with them the first thing on your mind? Do you feel like you know them, not

just on a physical level but on a mental and emotional one? Do you feel as if you carry them around with you, having them comment on situations and events, or else feel their silent presence? Obviously not all of the above characteristics will apply to every SoulBonding relationship, but if what you have with this character doesn't "click" with any of these traits, then it probably isn't SoulBonding.

q. this is all just escapism. you're acting out fantasies with anime characters because you don't have a real life, admit it.

a. We're not "acting out" anything. To roughly paraphrase Mooncalf, if you have your hand up their ass, it's soulpuppetry, not SoulBonding. If you're the one making them say the things they say, do the things they do, if you're the one having them running around in your head acting out your incestuous yaoi fantasies, if they never interact or communicate with you of their own accord - you're not SoulBonding. That isn't necessarily bad, per se; it's just not SoulBonding. SoulBonding isn't about hands up people's asses. They don't make you do things, though they might encourage you, persuade you, even gripe and whine and yell at you. You don't make them do things, though you might encourage them, persuade them, gripe and whine and yell at them. In that respect, it's like normal interaction with any other person or being.

There is, however, some leeway with this; mental space is particularly malleable and subject to distortion, and it's often the case with SoulBonders that their thoughts and ideas can shape their SBs' reality to some extent. The difference between this level of control/influence and soulpuppetry is at times a fine one, so fine that the two can bleed over into one another; and there's always the issue that soulpuppets may in fact be just as real as any other minddweller but just don't have enough control to say so.

q. so this isn't a page for people who make pretty-boy anime charas have sex with each other and get pregnant, and post about it on their livejournals?

a. No. That's not to say this site is against yaoi, or that SoulBonds can't be gay, or that SoulBonds can't be bishounen, or that SoulBonds can't make love to each other, or that SoulBonders do not write fanfiction about these things. All of these things are entirely possible within the sphere of SoulBonding, as they are within relationships between people in this reality, and those things in themselves don't make a connection "not SoulBonding". However, when that's all they do, or when that and beating the crap out of each other with Level-99 Ultimaflare is all they do, and when you're the one making them do it for your own entertainment, that isn't SBing.

q. if it's nothing to do with s&m/power/dominance, then why do people say "soulbondage"?

a. No SoulBonder I know uses the word "soulbondage". The correct term is SoulBonding or soulbonding (however you want to capitalise it). People usually only use "soulbondage" when they're trying to give it a bad image or not being entirely serious about it. Similarly, it's "SoulBonded" in the past and past participle, not "SoulBound" or "soulbound".

Technicalities

q. i don't have one of these "soulscape" thingies, but i still feel like i soulbond. does this mean i'm not a soulbonder?

a. Be aware that everyone's experience of SoulBonding is individual - the way in which people interact with their SBs (and other people's), and their theories on how SoulBonding happens and what SBs actually are, can differ greatly. The things I've outlined on these pages are just my own theories on, and experiences of, the concept - that applies for this topic as much as any other. Just because you don't fit this or that criteria doesn't mean you're not a SoulBonder, as long as you identify with the basic concept - in other words, if

you feel like you SB, you almost certainly do. I didn't have a definite soulscape until I SoulBonded Raiza, but I had SBs for many years before that. Some people never have soulscapes - just the feeling that their SBs are "inside them". Some people have a soulscape for every SoulBond they have. Some people interact with their SBs in the characters' own story-worlds, or in the physical world as presences. Either way, it doesn't make you any less (or more) of a SoulBonder.

q. i've only ever had one soulbond, but other people seem to have so many. is it normal to only have one or two?

a. There's nothing special or clever about having a large number of Soul-Bonds, and there's nothing wrong with only having a couple. Many people only have one true SoulBond at any one time. When I first started to Soul-Bond, I found I was only capable of keeping one SB within my mindspace at once; the arrival of any new SoulBond inevitably forced the other out. And while it's certainly possible to have a large number of SBs all at once, there is an upper limit beyond which it's near-impossible for all those characters to be fully-active, fully-fleshed-out presences all at the same time. Even though I have a fairly large number of SoulBonds, only one or two are a definite presence at any one time, with some less strongly defined and others almost completely fading into the background.

q. is it normal for your sbs to want to choose the music you listen to, the food you eat, etc.? is it normal for them to have hobbies? favourite tv shows?

a. As you'd expect by the mere presence of this question, all these things are pretty common. Most SBs will have their preferences in the Earth world, whether it's as simple as a favourite colour or as complex as a phobia or fear. You can't always respect your SBs' preferences for practical reasons, but if you can let them have as much leeway as possible, particularly with regards to anything they may be particularly afraid of, it'll probably help things go that

much smoother. (Of course, it's always an arse to have to take your *entire* CD collection out the door with you for a five-minute trip just because there are three other people in your head arguing about what to listen to today, but those're the brakes.)

q. is it normal for sbs to have phobias?

a. Very normal. Especially if you think about where most SBs come from. Sure, there are plenty of characters people have SBed who are happy and fluffy, but most SoulBonds come about because of a deep empathy we share with that character, and usually that deep empathy is created through shared pain. Therefore, statistically speaking, most SoulBonds are likely to have traumatic backgrounds. Therefore, statistically speaking, a lot of SoulBonds are likely to have fears or phobias that may be irrational. Obviously, as with the previous question and in this case even more so, it's a very good idea to respect your SBs' comfort levels on these things if you care about them at all, and in most cases this will involve avoiding the feared object or situation while they're closely around front. If it's a serious problem that can't be avoided, the techniques that work for phobias in "regular" people may work here too, like systematic desensitization (look it up on Google or in a psychology textbook; basically, gradual introduction to the thing feared, coupled with relaxation techniques).

q. if i soulbond someone evil, and soulbonds reflect the kind of person i am, does that mean i'm evil too?

a. Firstly, SoulBonds don't always reflect the kind of person you are. They may very well do, but it's not always the case. A SoulBond is just someone who you feel a connection to, enough to draw them into your own "soulspace". That connection may be positive or negative; some people have SoulBonds they only barely tolerate, or who they outright can't stand. Usually, the latter may not be a SoulBond so much as a "guide", a personification of a

problem or something feared, such as violent or sexual desires (I'm going very Freudian, here, but it's been the case with me and several other people). When you learn what the SoulBond represents and why you fear it so much, and learn to accept that part of yourself as yourself rather than compartmentalising it, the SoulBond will usually either disappear, or become much more of a benign presence. Alternatively, you may feel a connection with a "villain" of a story because you find them humorous or find their take on life interesting; many of the villains in stories aren't too deep or serious, and many people connect with the "bad guys" on this level. Conversely, if you're creating a character in a story yourself who's a villain, then you'll find yourself needing to look into the thought processes of that kind of person, and you may end up with a bond at the end of it; this is normal, and while villains do horrible things that aren't considered "normal", deep down they usually have understandable and empathisable reasons for doing it, even if those reasons aren't justifications. Remember, just because you SoulBond someone doesn't mean you always agree with them, or like what they do, and you can understand someone's actions and motivations without considering them right. You also might want to try talking to the SoulBond and resolving some questions and issues; maybe they're not as "evil" as you thought.

As will be mentioned further down, however, if you have a "voice in your head" which is seriously hurting you and/or telling you to do violent or hurtful things, then that typically isn't a SoulBond, and is something that needs looking at seriously.

q. can two real-life people soulbond?

a. That depends how you mean it. I know SoulBonders who have reality-versions of "real world" people in their heads; it's uncommon, but it can happen. (I've heard of someone who SBed Shakespeare....) But when most people ask me this question, it has the meaning of "can two people share a destiny,

can they be bonded through life and death through love", e.t.c. Yes, I suppose they can, but that's not what I mean by SoulBonding and that's not what this page is about. When I say "my SoulBonds", I don't mean real-world life partners/soulmates. They are people from existences that we consider fictional, in various forms, who have touched my heart and with whom I share a life. That is what SoulBonding is to me.

q. do soulbonds die?

a. Firstly, a bond can fade through neglect and disuse, though this doesn't usually result in the "death" of an SB; many times, once the connection is re-established the SB is found still to be there, and even if they're not that doesn't have to mean they're dead. It's quite natural and common for Soul-Bonds to come and go (though it's equally natural for them to stay for extend-ed periods of time), and this "fading" or "slipping back" doesn't appear to constitute death. Other than that, whether a SoulBond can be "killed" or oth-erwise suffer death is a questionable matter, and can depend entirely on the SBing relationship. It's possible to SoulBond characters whose deaths you've witnessed, and they may either come to you alive, before the tragedy or in an alternate-universe state where it never happened, or dead, as "ghosts" or passed-on spirits. When a SBing relationship already exists, and the SB wit-nesses sa's own death within the storyline, again the effect on the SB can vary wildly; some will suffer death in "sympathy" or symbiosis with their fictional counterpart, some will dismiss it and say "Well, I'm still alive and I'm still here, guess that wasn't so real after all!", others will survive but experience varying states of shock or numbness, etc. Even if an SB dies through the death of their "source" character, it's not always the case that they can't be brought back to life; within our system, Misato died after witnessing her own death, wandered the soulscape as a ghost for some time, and was eventually revived. Whether a SB can be killed as a result of attack, disease or injury

within a soulscape is yet another question to which there is no certain answer, or rather, there are a number of different answers; and whether it can happen between soulscapes (i.e. interaction between SBs) can be largely a question of how much truth or seriousness you place in the interaction. (See also SEP Fields.)

The Multiple Question(s)

q. i'm worried about you. isn't this "soulbonding" thing awfully like possession/multiple-personality disorder/schizophrenia?

a. Firstly, no, it is not demonic possession. We don't speak in tongues, our heads do not rotate upon our shoulders, we do not suddenly start claiming we are the sons of Satan and we're going to devour your kittens. There could be a case made for the idea that maybe "stray" spirits move into the body, which could account for some cases of multiplicity (see below), but it'd be unlikely that they'd all take the forms of characters from popular TV and literature if they did. (Although there have been cases where "SoulBonds" have actually turned out to be people in a multiple system, pretending to be the characters in order to get noticed. That's a different issue, and I won't go into it here since I don't think it's common, and I'm also wary that it makes people for whom this is not the case doubt their SoulBonds' validity. If anyone who's experienced this would like to submit essays to the site, feel free.)

As for "MPD", that's an entirely different issue. Many SBers seem to want to claim as much distance from multiples as possible, but multiplicity - the existence of more than one person in one body - is not abnormal or disordered if the system exists healthily and works together (as most do), and has many things in common with SBing. What they appear to be is two separate concepts with some overlap, though to say that SBing is multiplicity is inaccurate.

(Read this essay for a greater insight into the relationship between the two.) Schizophrenia - unlike multiplicity - is a true mental disorder, and is unrelated to SBing or multiplicity. Schizophrenics are unstable, unable to cope in everyday society, and often dangerous to themselves and others. SoulBonders are not that, and neither are multiples.

However, if you have a "SoulBond" who moves into your head and starts making you do bizarre and uncharacteristic things without warning, starts telling you you're worthless and weak or otherwise uncomfortable things, or is generally a Bad And Unwanted Presence in a severe way that affects your daily living - then that's probably not SoulBonding or multiplicity, but is something that needs checking out professionally.

q. but isn't multiplicity caused by trauma? so does that mean to have soulbonds, you must have been abused?

a. No. Multiplicity is merely a state of existence, like lefthandedness or homosexuality (although we know people who'd probably condemn you for those, too). Some multiples have suffered abuse (and they tend to be the ones you hear about). But a lot of people who aren't multiple have suffered abuse, too. And a lot of people are multiple and have suffered abuse (or members of their system have suffered abuse), but don't believe that that's what made them multiple. Sadly, it happens, whether you're multi or singlet or mashed potato with cheese. Multiplicity appears to have many causes - the body being a gateway to other worlds, "walk-in" and channeled spirits, the traditional "split", or just being born like that. SoulBonds happen because people empathise or connect enough with a character for them to become real to us - whether you believe that the act of loving/connecting with a character draws a "version" of them in from a parallel dimension, or whether your love for them in fact creates them. You don't have to be abused to have SoulBonds, nor to be multiple. It's about empathy, not trauma-resistance.

q. does this mean my soulbonds are going to start taking over my body?

a. No. All we're saying is that it's possible for SoulBonding relationships to develop into multiple systems (or to function in a multiple-like way), not that it always happens or that it's even common.

q. what's the difference between soulbonding and multiplicity anyway?

a. It's difficult to decide on a waypoint. Primarily, SoulBonding is a connection with a fictional character or characters. Multiple systems may include SoulBonds, or people who are not SoulBonds but who "adopt" features of certain fictional characters, but the majority do not originate from sources that we would consider to be "fictional". Within the sphere of SoulBonding, there are many kinds of experience, ranging from the connection a writer has to the worlds of sa's characters, to a mutual understanding and friendship, to a deep, profound empathy and even love, to experiences more characteristic of multiplicity such as fronting. Within the sphere of multiplicity, there are also many kinds of experience, ranging from the classical, "disordered" states of non-cooperation and time loss, to highly organised and functional systems with councils and political factions, to more relaxed and still functional systems, to experiences more characteristic of SoulBonding. There is a degree of overlap between the two spheres, but both have their own origins and their own ranges of unique experiences. See here for more information.

aaaaand finally.....

q. can I talk to one of your soulbonds?

a. You can certainly ask to talk to anyone in the system if you have a genuine question, though not everybody wants to communicate with the outside world or is able to at this time. Send an email to us with the subject line "Attn: [person's name]", and whoever you address it to will get back to you

when they have time out, or else one of us will reply to say that person is unavailable at that time. Also, please don't be offended if a person doesn't want to answer particular questions about their pasts or private lives; asking Celes about her time in the Empire, or Ryoko about what it was like to be in servitude under Kagato, probably won't get you the politest of responses. These people are human (or non-human) beings too, so please treat them as such.

Glossary

A no doubt futile (Karl: Yet unquestionably valiant.) attempt at gathering together the many and varying strands of the SoulBonding community's lexicon, as well as some terms from the multiple, anime and other communities that might be relevant. Where possible we've attempted to credit people; if anyone wants credit for their term or has been credited incorrectly, if your term has been defined incorrectly, or if you'd like to add terms that you've seen used, email!

Note that you in this document is usually used to refer to the perspective of the SoulBonder, and assumes the SoulBonder is fronting.

active adj., adv. If a SoulBond is active, you can currently feel their presence in your mind (depending on the SoulBond and SoulBonder, this may or may not mean that you can communicate with them, but you are aware of their presence, opinions, and/or influence). If you are aware of what a SoulBond is doing, thinking, feeling etc. at the current time, they are active. The opposite is dormant.

age slider n. someone whose age changes in a way unrelated to the normal passage of time; age slide, v., to age or de-age in this manner. Age sliders may slide between two or more fixed points (e.g. someone who identifies as between 4 and 8, or 16 and 19), "jump" between fixed points (e.g. someone who can "jump" from being 4, to 16, to 30), or "jump" to one fixed point and stay there (e.g. someone who was 15 and jumped to being 20), amongst other possibilities. Age sliding can happen in both directions (i.e. it's possible to slide to both an earlier age and a later one); it may be controllable, with the person able to slide at will, or may happen involuntarily. Age sliders are in no way re-

lated to Sliders, which is a sci-fi series about dimensional travel, much missed by the author of this glossary. ^^; [--Originated by the multiple community]

age static n., adj. related to age sliders, someone whose age is fixed at a certain point regardless of the normal passage of time. Someone may age normally up to a certain point and then become age static, or they may simply be "born" a certain age which remains unchanging. Age statics are common particularly amongst outsourced SoulBonds, who often remain at the age they were in the source material when they arrived, and don't change over time.[--Originated by the multiple community]

alter-ego n. (also persona, avatar, and similar terms) a character who is not a SoulBond, but a representation, alternate form etc. of yourself. This might be a "version" of you through which you interact with your SBs; a persona you act out on forums, in MUCKs/MUDs etc. who has developed into a full-fledged character; a younger, older, different-gender, different-species etc. version of you (e.g. inner child, furry form); or any other character who you identify too closely with yourself to consider as a separate person in their own right. Alter-egos can become SoulBonds, and SoulBonds can become alter-egos (Riesz from Seiken Densetsu 3 used to be a SoulBond of mine who became an alter-ego). [1]

archetype n. the "model" or initial concept from which an outsourced SoulBond originates; e.g. all reality-versions of Kinomoto Sakura are derived from the original Card Captor Sakura character as created by CLAMP (even if you derived your SoulBond from fanfic, somewhere along the line they would have to have come from the original - unless they're so far removed from canon that they're unrecognisable as the original character, but that's where the issue starts getting cloudy, so we'll leave it there). "Archetype"

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[1] N.B. Not to be confused with "alter", a derogatory term that people use for others in a multiple system as they relate to one particular person in the system, assuming that one is the main or "host" and the others are lesser or "alters" (meaning alternate). See also host.

means a similar thing to "canon", but has connotations of a source of spiritual energy or inspiration. [--Originated by Laura G]

back n. opposite of front (obviously ^^;), the place where your SoulBonds go when they're not fronting and/or the SoulBonder doesn't know of their location, or cannot/is not interacting with them. If a SoulBond is not interacting with you, the outside world or other SBs currently, or you cannot feel their "presence" ("I sense your presence..." ^^;;), they can be said to be back. Whether "back" designates an actual place or not depends on the SoulBonds and SoulBonder. See also dormant, front, middle space.

bishounen n. Japanese for "beautiful boy"; used to denote "pretty", feminine- or androgynous-looking male characters, usually in anime. Bishounen, though they may not always be gay, are often associated with yaoi/slash. Its counterpart is bishoujo, "beautiful girl", which rather unfairly has no such connotations of sexuality.

[--Japanese word]canon n., adj. a character, story or world as portrayed in the original source material; e.g. in Final Fantasy 6, it's canon that Terra/Tina is half-Esper, since this was stated in the storyline. Reality-versions may adhere to canon religiously, slightly, or not at all. A fan's own personal interpretation of canon, or a fan-created variation from the canon which remains consistent within itself, is often referred to as "fanon", which is much the same thing as a reality-version.

co-consciousness n. the degree to which people within a system share thoughts, feelings, memories and awareness of each other. To be completely co-conscious is for everyone in a system to be fully aware of everything that everyone else does, says, feels or thinks; to have no co-consciousness whatsoever is to act as a group of people who do not share the same body (and are not telepathic ^^;) would act, only knowing what others do or say when they

are stood beside them, and only knowing what they think or feel when they ask or are told.

co-running v. two or more people fronting at once. continuum n. a "sliding scale" which is generally accepted to span between total singularity (no masks or facets) and total Multiplicity (more than one equal, fully-developed person within the same body). The model was developed to show that any point along such a continuum is a normal part of existence, and that there are not just the "sane people" and the "MPD sufferers". Not everybody agrees with the continuum model, and some Multiple groups are actively trying to get it downmoded, but for some people it can be useful. Also called dissociative continuum.

dar'morende n. a much-maligned (and now seemingly outdated) term in the SoulBonding community, originally just meaning a SoulBond. Interpretations, however, got confused and for a long time the majority of people used the term to mean a "permanent" SoulBond. (Not to be confused with Dar Williams. That's someone different. - Karl.) [--Originated by Catherine R]

dominant n., adj. (also primary) Refers to the SoulBond or SoulBonds who are currently "fronting". When used as a noun, "primary" tends to imply an extended period of time, or a SoulBond who regularly occupies "front".

dormant adj. A dormant SoulBond is one who you know has not left you entirely, but whose presence you cannot feel. If you are not aware of what a SoulBond is doing, thinking, feeling etc. at the current time, they are dormant. Dormant SoulBonds are usually back.

empowered adj. a type of multiple system which rejects the "survivor" view of multiplicity as a negative, disordered, abuse-created state. Empowered multiples may or may not be natural multiples, but they view their multiplicity as a positive and healthy state; they are frequently undiagnosed med-

ically, and many (but not all) reject the concept of integration. See also survivor.

fangirl n., adj. a term often used disparagingly to refer to people (mostly female) who practice and superficially flaunt soulpuppetry. (In the wider anime community, simply refers to a female, often obsessive, fan of anime; contrasts with fanboy.)

front n., v. (to front, fronting) as a noun, describes the "window" through which you and your SoulBonds look at the physical (Earth) world, the place at which one stands to have bodily control; the position of seeing things through the body's eyes and being interactive with the physical world (as opposed to being in a soulscape, in their own worlds/other worlds, or "back"). Also designates someone who is doing this currently (Mary and Jake are front). As a verb, designates the state of being front (Rei is fronting; Spike can front now). Depending on the SoulBonding relationship, "to front" can mean to co-inhabit "front space" alongside the 'Bonder (co-fronting), or to "operate" the body independently of/instead of the 'Bonder. The latter is the generally accepted usage in the multiple community, and the context in which it is used on this site. [2] [—Originated by the multiple community]

See also: back, middle space.

frontrunner n. a term for whoever is fronting. Can also be used as a "job description", as in "the main frontrunner", the one who's out most or much of the time. [--Originated by the multiple community]

guests n. pl. (also visitors) SoulBonds who only stay for a short time, then leave. See also: permanent.

host n. the multiple or midcontinuum equivalent of a SoulBonder. The host is the "main", "original" or "first" person in the system; the one who usu-

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[2] Other terms for fronting include "being out" (Emeraude is out), although some multiple communities dislike this term, as it implies that everywhere people go when they're not interacting with the Earth world is "in" - i.e. inside the body/mind and therefore less real.

ally or always fronts. Many multiple systems have members who all front equally, and no one identifies as being "head" or "main"; thus, they do not have hosts, and (rightly) dislike this term being used. However, some systems do identify as having hosts (or centres, or main frontrunners, or whatever they may choose to call them). In the Otherkin community, host is a collective noun meaning a multiple system, as in "a host of angels".... which to be honest is just confusing, but hey. [--Originated by the multiple community]

idea-creature n. a nice little term for anything born of thought, dreams, imagination or the energies from such processes; whether that be parts of ourselves, our self-images, or our SoulBonds. [--Originated by Laura G]

IOHO acronym In Our Humble Opinion. Dunno if anyone else uses this, but we've found it useful. [--Originated by.... us, possibly... though I'm sure someone else must have thought of it before]

lil n. (also little) A child or young person in a multiple system (frequently used in plural: "the littles"). Often seen as derogatory and connected to the survivor community, and many systems don't use it. [--Originated by the multiple community]

masks n. pl. (also facets, aspects) The slightly different "modes" that the average person switches between in their daily social life, e.g. the mode of parent when with children, the mode of "one of the boys" when with friends, the mode of professional when at work. "Faceted" or "aspected" refers to having these masks or facets to one's personality (most people do, but not all). Related to the concept of the continuum.

median n., adj. a term derived as an alternative to midcontinuum, defined as a system centred around one "fire"; a person who is the creative and energetic source of the system, often the "head" or "caretaker" and often (but not always) the one who usually fronts, and without whom the system would

probably cease to exist. "Median" usually implies that the other people in the system can front.

midcontinuum n. the state of being somewhere on the continuum between SoulBonding and multiplicity; the crossover line is usually when Soul-Bonds begin to front, and/or develop stronger, more "real" presences or personalities, though midcontinuum is a state that may not necessarily have anything to do with SBing. Many multiple communities dislike the use of this term. [--Originated by the Vickis] See also: continuum, median.

middle space n. a state of existence which is neither back nor front; a SoulBond may be able to communicate with you and you can sense their presence, but they are not in control of the body. It can imply any position from "slightly behind front" to "just within shouting range". [--Originated by La Senza Fine] See also: back, front.

multiple n., adj. (multiplicity: the state of being multiple) The state of having more than one fully-developed, independent person or entity sharing a body, or a person who identifies as being one of such entities. Not to be confused with "Multiple Personality Disorder"; people who identify as multiple commonly have normal, functioning lives and are not "disordered".

muse n. another word for SoulBond. Classically a "muse" is a deity or other figure that inspires creativity, and as such this term is sometimes used specifically to refer to SoulBonds that inspire writing, or are involved in the process of writing with or via the Bonder; other times, it's just another word for a SoulBond in general.

natural multiple n. phr. (natural multiplicity) A multiple system who believes their multiplicity originated naturally (e.g. the body as a gateway/portal to other worlds, spiritual channeling, natural state at birth, etc.), not as a result of trauma or abuse. Natural multiples usually see their multiplicity as a positive and/or normal thing. SoulBonding can be considered to be related to

natural multiplicity, and natural multiples often forge links with SoulBonding communities.

NPC n., acronym a character who lives in one's soulscape, but isn't a "full-fledged" SoulBond. Most likely to be friends, family, pets etc. of existing Soul-Bonds, but can also be "pseudo-SBs" who aren't yet developed enough to be classed as true SBs. NPCs may become SBs, over time. In the multiple community, may be called "fragments". [--Originated by Hawkeye Erron; derived from the roleplaying term "non-player character"]

Otherkin n. sing. or pl. a person, including a member of a multiple system, who is not human in race or identifies as other than human in race. "Otherkin" is usually used by people who are distanced from the world or time they feel they originated in, and so is not usually used to refer to non-human SoulBonds, who are frequently fully aware of their home worlds and/or can return to them.[--Originated by.... well, Otherkin, I guess] Further reading: otherkin.net

outsourcing v. (to outsource, outsourced) The SoulBonding of characters that the SoulBonder did not create; deriving a SoulBond from an outside source. E.g. books, plays, anime, TV, video games, fanfic. [--Originated by Laura G]

peanut gallery n. collect. A general consensus of people at or around the back, who aren't identifiable individually due to their distance from the 'Bonder/frontrunner, but who may make comments on the happenings up-front. For example, "I got a 'yes' from the peanut gallery there". [--Originated by the multiple community]

permanent adj., n. a term to describe a SoulBond that has stayed with you since you SBed them. (Personally I find it misleading, since this could refer to a SoulBond who's been around twenty minutes or twenty years, and seems to

imply that they will stay forever; it's impossible to know whether this will be the case. I don't use this term, though others do.)

plural adj., n. (plurality: state of being plural) a catch-all, neutral term for "one body, more than one mind/entity/presence/person/existence". Covers SoulBonds/SoulBonders, medians/midconts, multiples and anyone else who isn't alone in their body.

reality-version n. (RV, r/v; also settai) A SoulBonder's reality-version (or "settai") is their personal interpretation of an outsourced character, story or world, or the "version" of that character who lives with them. Reality-versions can be very close to canon, or drastically altered, or anywhere in between. It is basically a way of saying "In my (or my SoulBond's) version of their reality, such-and-such happened".

sa pron. gender-neutral pronoun; e.g. "sa went to the store", "sa's books are here". The gender-neutral equivalent of him/herself is "saself". Commonly used when a person's gender is unknown, unclear, the person prefers to identify as gender-neutral or not specify a gender, or when referencing a general audience or group in the third person; saves using terms like "s/he" and "him/her", and avoids embarrassment if someone is not sure of a person's gender. IOHO, far preferable to "sie", "hir" and other such terms, but we're biased. ^^ ::wave "Go Kati" flags:: [--Originated by Kati D'Esprit]

slash n., adj., v. as a noun or adjective, fan fiction involving same-sex relationships between characters (who many or may not be homosexual in canon), e.g. Kirk/Spock, Heero/Duo. Slash often denotes male/male fiction but can also be female/female. As a verb, to pair up two characters of the same sex in fan fiction or fantasy (e.g. to slash Heero and Duo). [--Originated by the Star Trek fanfiction community, c. 1970s; named for the "slash" separating characters' names] See also: yaoi

singlet n. (singularity; state of being a singlet) Someone who identifies as one person in one body; not multiple or midcontinuum or SoulBond/SoulBonder or soulpuppeteer. Also single, singleton, singletype, monomind, snarfplat, sniglet. These terms can carry a range of connations from neutral to unpleasant; I personally use "single" or "singlet" as a non-derogatory-sounding term. "Sniglet" is a disparaging term for singlets who "Just Don't Get It"; "snarfplat" was a not-entirely-serious response to a discussion on finding a non-derogatory word to describe singlets. [--Various origins; "snarfplat" originated by the Dark Personalities ML]

SoulBond n., v., adj. (SoulBonding; SoulBonded) If you don't know what this means, what are you doing here? Go back to the basics page. ^^;;;

SoulBonder n. the person, usually born in the physical body and usually the one who fronts all or the majority of the time, who connects with characters either created or existing in such a way that they become SoulBonds.

soulscape n. (also mindscape, headspace, headworld, inner world, other world, etc.) A personal world or place, created by or belonging to the SoulBonder, in which sa's SoulBonds live and/or communally interact, both with sa and each other. A soulscape can be anything from a room in a house, to a whole mansion, to a city, to a country, to a planet, to an entire universe. Many people have more than one soulscape depending on their SoulBonds. Some people many have no soulscape at all, and interact with their SBs simply within themselves (in blackspace/greyspace/whitespace/whatever), or in the SoulBonds' own individual worlds and timelines. [--"Soulscape" originated by Celes Chere of the Eclective; other terms of various and unknown origin]

soulpuppet n. (soulpuppeteer, soulpuppetry) A character who exists within a person's mind/body/soul but who does not have independent will or consciousness; sa is merely "puppeteered" or played with in the imagination for entertainment, and is not usually taken seriously by the puppeteer. Soulpup-

petry is often seen as a derogatory term, since it is often connected to people who claim to be SoulBonders but merely "collect" popular characters and act their antics out on forums and mailing lists as a form of attention-seeking, not really believing what they claim. Soulpuppets are often bishounen, and soulpuppeteers are often "fangirls" (a derogatory term used to mean obsessive female fans of anime); however, many bishounen SoulBonds are not soulpuppets, and many SoulBonding "fangirls" are not soulpuppeteers. Similarly, though soulpuppetry often features in combination with yaoi/slash, characters who have yaoi/slash stories or connections are not always soulpuppets. Indeed, the connection between soulpuppetry and bishounen/yaoi has made life difficult for many SoulBonders who genuinely have gay or bishounen SoulBonds. Many soulpuppeteers do not believe in SoulBonding, though it could be possible for the two to coexist (and SoulBonds could possibly even have their own soulpuppets). (Karl: Wheehee! I'm playing kissy face with Sephy and Vincent! ::smoosh smoosh::) [--Originated by Mooncalf]

source n. the place where an outsourced SoulBond came from, e.g. if you SBed Hermione from Harry Potter, her source would be the Harry Potter novel(s) (or movie, or game, or whatever it was you watched/read/saw that caused you to SB her). SoulBonds may be derived from multiple sources (e.g. some of their traits may come from an anime, some from a manga, others from fan fiction written about them etc.), but their source is usually defined as being the series in general (e.g. Ryoko's source is Tenchi Muyo, which may cover the OAVs, any of the TV series, the manga etc).

stereo-SoulBonding v. the SoulBonding of the same character by two (or more) people. The SoulBonds themselves may be very similar or very different people, but are derived from the same source (e.g. you and your friend both SB Ryoko). "Stereo-SoulBonding vibes" are what a SoulBond might get

when they encounter another reality-version of themselves; confusion, denial, discomfort, etc. [--Former term originated by the JFW; latter by Laura G]

survivor adj. broadly speaking, a type of multiple system which identifies its origins, and its coping strategy, as that of an abuse survivor; as commonly used in the community, someone who not only believes their multiplicity was created by abuse in childhood, but whose belief in this causes them to hold a negative view towards all multiple systems. Such people often see their multiplicity (and everyone else's multiplicity) as a harmful and undesirable thing, believe it can never be natural and scorn people who argue differently, are usually in therapy, and often desire integration (the "resolving" of all people in the system, who are seen as fragments created to cope with the abuse, into a single coherent person).[3]

system n. (also group, household, clan, collective, army, and many other terms) The entirety of entities tied to a single body, and their interactions and hierarchies. A system can comprise masks/facets, SoulBonds, soulpuppets, NPCs/fragments, multiples, and probably other types of entities, in any combination or all at once depending on the system; e.g. multiples could have SoulBonds or soulpuppets, SoulBonds could be faceted, etc. Some systems name themselves collectively, such as Astraea Household or the Blackbirds; this seems more common amongst multiple systems than SoulBonding systems.

tai'morende n. a much-maligned (and now seemingly outdated) term in the SoulBonding community, originally meaning a reality-version of an outsourced SoulBond's world. Interpretations, however, got confused and for a long time the majority of people used the term to mean a "temporary" SoulBond or guest. [--Originated by Catherine R]

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[3] It is important to note that systems, or system members, can be survivors of abuse and yet still identify as empowered and/or even natural multiples. "Survivor" is typically a term used to identify an attitude towards multiplicity, not the state of having survived abuse.

yaoi n., adj. similar to slash but not necessarily implying fan fiction, yaoi denotes homosexual male relationships, usually in anime. Unpronounceable by most people (who don't speak Japanese), though I'm led to believe "yowie", no matter how groanworthy it sounds, is the closest approximation. [--Originated by the anime community; acronym for "yama nashi, ochi nashi, imi nashi" which means something along the lines of "no point, no climax, no meaning", but I can never remember] See also: bishounen

zig n. something that is "fired" for "great justice". You know what you doing. (Sorry, I just wanted a "Z" entry. ^^;;;;)