

THIRD EDITION

LOVE AND

GLEAM

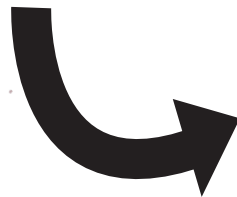
A PLURAL TRANS MANIFESTO

Jack
Dankins

OF PLURES HOUSE

Hello! I'm Jack.

I'm a member of a **PLURAL SYSTEM** - I share a brain with several other people.



It seems a bit weird, but it is what it is. Most people develop a singular sense of self when they grow up, but others don't, including us. This is often caused by trauma, but not always. In our case, our plurality is the combined effect of neurodivergence, trauma and creativity.

In any case, there isn't any hard proof that a brain can't actually have several minds. The human brain is quite a complex thing; what's to say that a brain can't develop several consciousnesses? Identity is complicated enough that it doesn't make any sense to say that it can never happen.

My being part of a plural system doesn't make me any less of a person.

I'm a flamingly queer trans man. I'm an existentialist witch; I think magic is mostly psychological but can be used to help you to determine the course of your life and your attitude towards it. I love language: how it changes over time, the cultural contexts in which people use it, the emotions it evokes. My favourite word is 'fascination'. I don't eat red meat. I'm a recovering pedant. I'm a bit lefty: I'm a social democrat and a feminist. I love music but sing horribly. I draw serviceably at best but enjoy doing it anyway. I'm a temporal and geographical expat. I'm English, European and a citizen of the world, all in one. I'm quite a sensitive person, though it's not always obvious. I think in textures, distance, colour, sound, movement, words, associations. I love and hate deeply.

I suppose I'm like anybody else, aren't I?



delusions

integration

We've established that I exhibit the traits of any other person.

So why are people so invested in the idea that people like me can't possibly exist, except within the context of a psychiatric diagnosis in which members of a plural system are merely 'dissociated parts' of a whole person? Why can't we recognise that we can be people even if we *have* originated through trauma? I'm not a personality, part or ego state; I'm a *person*.

alters

madness

DID

personalities

dissociated parts

Western cultural constructions of identity don't always take that complexity into account.

There's often a desire to make everything black and white: male versus female, embodied or non-existent, straight versus gay, white versus non-white. When there are strict barriers between identities it's much harder to think of existence in different ways. Identity is more variable and flexible than many people envisage. That sort of thinking is what pushes people to treat homosexuality, transgender and non-binary identities, and multiplicity as pathological even when the suffering comes from mistreatment, not the identity itself. Instead of being personal identities that people can accept, they're now disorders that have to be cured.

That doesn't have to be the case. It's time to stop thinking of identity as either-or and start thinking of it as both-and. Different aspects of identity don't have to be mutually exclusive. Existence is beautifully complex and ought to be treated that way. Even if you are a trauma survivor, it's not just being plural that has to be the problem, but the trauma that caused the splitting to happen in the first place. That's how we feel about our past traumas.

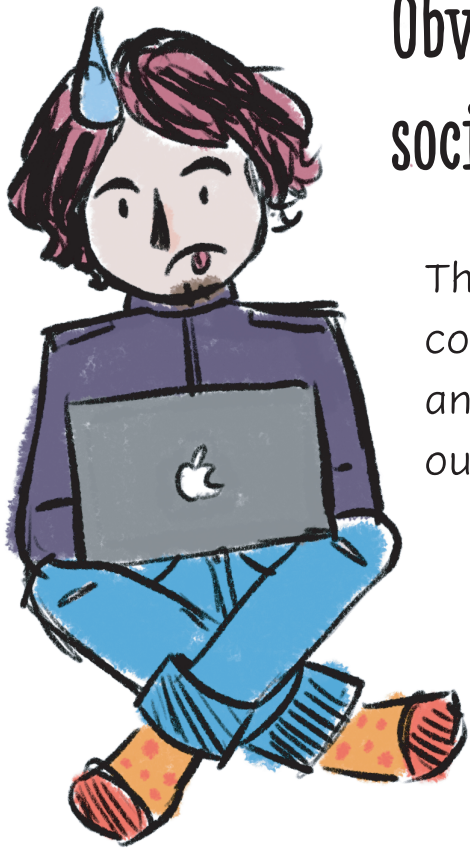
I think it's important to fight against the idea that being different is diseased.

Respect shouldn't just be for people who fit in. It's for everyone. It's not OK to dehumanise people just because their experiences are different from yours. It's been a problem throughout history, but we're the ones with the power to stop it.

I know I'm a person, not an ego state or a mere symptom. I'm not a personality; I *have* a personality. I have several aspects to my identity. There's no imaginary original person who slips into the role of Jack whenever they feel like changing who they are; I'm just me. I'm not a wisp of a person who lives part of a life. My system-mates and I may coexist in the same brain, but I'm not an aspect of somebody else's identity. Nor is Hess, Lilly, Richard, Yavari, Vladimir, James, Noël or anybody else in our system. We the lot of us are all people, each with our own interests, opinions, beliefs, dreams, thoughts and backgrounds. We've known about our plurality for more than sixteen years; if this were just a game we'd have stopped a long time ago.

I'm the one who has the right to judge whether I exist or not.





Obviously the ways plurality is treated in society really piss me off, to say the least.

That frustration inspires me to reframe the discourse about multiplicity on our group website and in blog entries. But this isn't just about me or our system.

It's important to get plural voices out there.

My voice is only one of many. It's representative of my experience, and there are so many ways to be plural. If your story is different from ours, that's fine! Different brains work differently. One model may work for us, whilst another may work for you. There's no one true way to explain how these things work.

We are who we are.



DEDICATIONS

The third edition of *Loud and Clear* is dedicated to the brilliant members of the plural community who inspired me to create a plurality zine. The two works that influenced me the most were the Desired Constellation's *Dyscalculia* and LB Lee's *Alter Boys in Love*.

Jack Dawkins

has been a member of Plures House for over twenty years. He's a primary frontrunner in the system, alongside Hess, Vladimir, Yavari, Zip and James. For the past several years, Jack has been head of the system.

Plures House

are a plural system in their late 30s. They've lived in three different countries and six US states. They run the website Ex Uno Plures (exunoplures.org), a website that explains multiplicity and addresses misconceptions about it.