

Little Plural Things

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Systems can present in a lot of different ways. Sometimes, being a system can be loud and obvious if you're naturally more overt and/or out about yourselves as plural. Sometimes, it can be quiet and barely noticeable, but still there--just harder to see. Our system is fairly obvious if we're unmasked, but there are still things that escape even our own knowledge when we're masking as hard as we can. Little things that to us, remind us that our system is undeniably real. This is a post about those experiences we've had with barely-noticeable signs of a system.

Not every system will relate to these experiences, some might feel similarly about a few points, some may have others of their own entirely, some might not know or not have anything like the experiences we mention, and that's all part of being plural. No two systems are mirror images of each other. This is a post about our experiences.

1. Handwriting

Recently, we've had it brought to our attention that we have different handwriting. We don't write with a pen/pencil often, but we were asked to fill out a worksheet for our psychologist recently. She told us that whoever in our system wants to contribute to it can, and suggested that we signify who wrote what in some way--to which we chose different pencil colours for different headmates. We took the worksheet home and put things on it depending on who was in the front and if they wanted to.

It turned out that some of our writing widely differs from each other. Out of the 6 people who wrote on the sheet, most of them were wildly different. Rift and Martin wrote the most tidily, with Rift's writing looking more "proper" and "adult". I (Vince) apparently am not the best at neat writing but I managed to be better than what our "normal" writing is like from what we remember. Merlin wrote messily like he was writing very fast. Mystery wrote with very large letters with sharp angles that overall made it look like it was written by a child new to writing. *Which makes absolute sense.* It's not a child, but its hands in-headspace are bigger than ours and that was the actual first time it had written anything on paper since it got here.

Somehow, it took until our psychologist pointed it out for us to notice how different it was.

2. Vocabulary Choices

Something we are able to notice sometimes is how our vocabulary and sometimes sentence structure changes based on who is speaking. Some obvious examples are our British headmates substituting "bloody" for other words as an exclamation and the difference between what some of our headmates would call a "chip" or a "fry".

Other times though, it's more subtle. Sometimes there's certain phrases that will just have a word or two swapped out and it does tend to point toward who is fronting even if people do use multiple of these. Some examples are:

- "I suppose" vs "I think" vs "I believe"
- "Kinda" vs "Kind of" vs "Sort of" vs "Sorta"
- "Recently" vs "A bit ago"
- "Sleepy" vs "Tired"
- "Lol" vs "Haha" vs "Lmao" vs a keysmash (Even though these are text-based they are quite telling.)
- "Quite" vs "Very" (Speaking of the above.)

Getting more subtle with them, some other examples are:

- "You know" vs "Y'know"
- "Uh" vs "Um"
- "Uh-Huh" vs "Mhm"

Sometimes typing is influenced too. The amount of em-dashes within the text, the consistency of proper punctuation, how mechanical the text feels, how many run-on sentences there are and even how much tends to be written in one message/post can all point toward different people being in control.

3. Accidental Accents and Inflections

While accents are usually very obvious, we're generally good at masking them. *Generally.*

Due to us living in Australia, our headmates with accents straight from London don't stick out too bad when they're struggling to mask, but they are still noticeable to those around us who know we're plural. Passersby on the street or people who don't see us often don't think much of it, but certain people we are close to know that a few people in our system find it harder to mask and can tell when they're fronting very easily because of it.

Even if we are masking our accents properly, some parts of the way we speak still come out. Some of us end sentences on a higher-pitch more often due to what our accent generally has

us do and some end more on lower-pitch notes when speaking. Some of us put emphasis on certain syllables differently. There's lots of little things that go into language that make it hard to completely mask.

4. Food Choices

More of a noticeable one, but something we tend to brush off as "just a bad batch" when it happens. Some of us like and dislike different foods and drinks, some of us to an extreme degree.

Mystery hates the brand of juice we normally buy and thought that it might've just been past expiry (it was not) or just a bad batch of the juice, but they're consistently the only one who doesn't like it.

Rave likes spicy food much more than the rest of us because they have a harder time tasting it. I on the other hand can't handle spicy food at all and am worse with it than the others in my system.

Some of us favour different brands of food and some of us might like/dislike textures of food differently too.

5. Default Facial Expressions

Different resting facial expressions are something we hardly notice because we don't look in a mirror often due to dysphoria. What we do know though, is that some of us just rest our faces differently.

I look more stern and tired than others. I have a bit of an angrier resting expression.

Martin looks a little bit more anxious due to being an anxiety-holder, but he also looks softer and kinder.

Crowley also looks tired but has less of a stern look and more of an almost blank one.

6. Body Language

This is one we don't know too much about because we can only get knowledge on this from other people, but most of our headmates have a different "vibe" by the way they carry themselves.

- I end up seeming to-the-point and business-like.
- Martin reads as being very anxious even if he's not always.
- Crowley reads as smug.
- Mal reads as if he's planning something mischievous and silly.

- We've been told that Filigree just reads as "gay".

We're not sure what actions make us seem this way, but some of us can be clocked by others around us as fronting without even talking first. I don't know how people do it, but it's something in our body language.

7. Clothing Choices

A few of us have different clothing choices--Crowley still wears sunglasses everywhere due to light sensitivity and wears dark colours, I prefer to wear button-up shirts as opposed to more casual things, Martin prefers hoodies that are lighter in colour and Merlin prefers to dress in pink and black and more fluffy textures.

We don't have too many clothes overall so to others it does just look like we're cycling through our wardrobe, and sometimes we are, but there's certain styles some of us tend to lean toward more than others.

Some of these might seem quite noticeable, and maybe they are if you know we're a system, but people change a lot so once again some of this is much more subtle than it sounds. People who don't know that you're a system hardly ever notice, and if they do they put it to "having an off day" and leave it at that.

We wanted to take some time to appreciate those little things we find it hard to notice, though. And maybe it'll end up helping some other system realize how unique they are as individuals and help fight off the imposter syndrome like these realizations did for us.