

Tulpamancy description for singlets

Contents

Introduction	2
1 Tulpa? Plurality? System? What's all that?	3
2 So it's a mental disorder?	3
3 Is it even real? Can brain do that?	4
4 Okay, what about tulpæ?	4
5 But the Internet says...	5
6 Why would you do this?	7
7 How does it feel to have a tulpa?	7
8 How does it feel to be a tulpa?	8
9 Hope it helps!	9

Hi! The purpose of this article is to give singlet friends and curious people a thorough explanation of what tulpamancy and plurality as a whole is, how it feels and experienced from the inside. Hope it can help plural people explain to their friends what they go through. As the author is a tulpamancer, it's mostly tulpa-based, but might be useful for other system types as well.

Disclaimer: plural experiences are vastly different for each system. This article reflects views of the author based on her own experience and interactions with people she met.

Russian version:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hBGlyGPb9Xig4_DXkC47t2myNi_Sy25a3ZC20S3n2LY/edit

1 Tulpa? Plurality? System? What's all that?

That might be shocking for you to learn, but not all people are alone in their heads. And I don't mean it in a sense that they hear voices or see things, I mean literally, just like stories of possession in fiction go: they might have another people in their head, that can take control over their body or just talk with them, the experiences are different. This state of the head and mind is called "plurality" and plural people are generally referred as "systems", because they're basically comprised of a few people — headmates.

There is a lot of different terminology for system types, based on it's origin, separation level, hierarchy, amount of headmates etc, but here we will only touch it's origin. Not everyone agrees on this terms, so don't be surprised if you see different definitions.

Plurality can be caused by trauma, mostly the case for DID (Dissociative Identity Disorder, formerly MPD — Multiple Personality Disorder), those are called traumagenic. Some can be that way from the start or develop naturally over time — endogenic. Tulpamancy system is the one where headmates were created by direct will and effort. There are some other types and some system have combined origin, but those are the main ones we will touch here.

2 So it's a mental disorder?

No, plurality in itself is not a disorder. There are some disorders that cause plurality to develop, like DID, DDNOS (Dissociative Disorder Not Otherwise Specified), maybe some others. But in most cases plurality itself doesn't fit a disorder criteria — it's not inherently harmful or cause trouble, most of the time in listed cases the real cause of troubles are other symptoms, like dissociation or cPTSD.

Yes, having other people in your head can cause a lot of problems. But there are ways to coexist peacefully and for benefit of each headmate and the system as a whole. This is called "healthy plurality".

Of course, there are still stigmas from society and modern psychology views it as disorder that has to be treated. But let's not forget that merely less than 50 years ago the same attitude was towards gay people. If it doesn't cause harm to the person and people around them and they don't want it to change — it's not a disorder.

3 Is it even real? Can brain do that?

There are different psychological and neurological explanation of how brains can host multiple people at the same time, from designated neurons to each headmate (with most of the brain shared, of course) to just separating data. Some claim there is no plurality at all and it's all a self-delusion and a mind-trick.

Sadly, there are not enough studies of plurality to say something clearly and definitely. Some studies claim that alters (name for headmates in some systems) have very distinct brain wave patterns, brain activity and behavior from each other for one person to simulate this.¹ But generally it's a subjective thing that can be viewed only from inside, much like your own consciousness — you assume everyone has it, because you can observe your own, but there is no solid reason to claim that every consciousness works the same way as yours.

So basically it comes down to: why not? Brain is an incredibly complex thing and we are just coming closer to grasping how parts of it work. We yet to find the one spot where personality/sentience/consciousness stored and to prove how many of these the brain can handle. But so far we have to accept what history tells us: there are millions of people experiencing plurality in some form, from just having nameless advisors that guide them through life to distinct alters that can switch involuntarily and have separate memories.

4 Okay, what about tulpæ?

As was said earlier, a tulpa is a headmate that was created by will and effort. Usually, a singlet tulpamancer decides they don't want to be alone in their head anymore and over time train their brain to designate resources and create another consciousness to coexist near their own. Sometimes other systems can decide to add new headmates for some reason, or a tulpamancer with one or more tulpæ wants to make more, but that's out of scope.

It's a gradual process and usually takes a lot of time and effort to reach desired levels. But usually after some point a singlet becomes a system of tulpamancy origin hosting two or more people, with one of them being an original (usually referred as host) and the other — a tulpa. Each of them continues to develop as all humans do, finding their own quirks, hobbies, likes and dislikes, forming and developing their character. And interacting with each other, of course — what's the point of creating a headmate if you can't chat with them? :)

¹<https://community.tulpa.info/thread-plurality-a-scientific-and-philosophical-overview>

5 But the Internet says...

Okay, the Internet says a lot of things about tulpæ. Not all of them true and some are vastly exaggerated. Let's try to clear some of them.

Tulpæ are not a hoax. What you will often see is a claim that tulpamancers are faking it to get an attention. Some, of course, do. But the tulpa phenomenon in itself is very real. What confuses the most is that tulpæ are fairly new thing in the internet — they emerged on 4chan only around 2011 and clearly had a lot of controversy. But the idea is not at all new: starting from Buddhist monks, who created the word “tulpa”, authors over the history creating too real meta-aware character that left “stuck” in their head and of course people with DID and other endogenic systems — the idea of plurality was with humanity for a very long time and change with our views on personality and consciousness.

So there is no logic to accepting phenomenon of plurality as a whole, but denying an ability of a person to become plural with direct effort. Our brain is a complex and flexible organ, if it can block memories from one alter to be accessed by another in case of trauma system and produce dreams and hallucinations that feel and perceived as real, it can sure as well do this too. At least that's what seems logical to assume from my point of view, obviously we need more research :)

You can talk to real people with tulpæ, you can even talk to tulpæ themselves! And see for yourself. Maybe some of your friends are tulpamancers or plural (someone sent you this article after all ;).

Tulpæ are not a mental disorder. I covered it above: if it doesn't cause your or others any trouble, it does not qualify as a disorder or illness.

Tulpæ are not schizophrenia. That's the same as the last one, but people usually claim that seeing and hearing things that are not physically there is a schizophrenia. Well, it's not. First, schizophrenia has genetic origins² and can't be developed by your will. Second, when you have a headmate, in most cases, you know for sure what's produced from inside of your head and what is not, which is not the case for schizophrenia. Also it's a more complex disorder than just hallucinating things, you may want to read about it yourself if you're curious.

Tulpæ are not *necessarily* hallucinations. Starting from people who wanted to have a pony friend, tulpæ are seen as live hallucinations that you can see as if you're on some drug, but who live with you all the time and have a mind of their own.

This is called imposition. But the imposition is not a tulp, it's a way to perceive them and interact with them. And no matter how fun does it sound, it's

²<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schizophrenia>

literally the hardest technique in tulpamancy. Most never reach it because it's too hard or they just don't bother. Depending on your alignment, it's estimated that you need no less than a year of training to be able to actually see tulpa clearly over the real world (or as plural people call it, the meatspace).

But tulpæ often do have a form, either imagined by host or later changed by themselves to whatever they like. Usually a tulpamancer can “interact” with it in the wonderland (mindspace) — a dream-like world often perceived with closed eyes, where you and your headmates are in control. Have you seen Sherlock? The Mind Palace from it is basically a wonderland. Yes, we know it sounds like an escape from reality. And some people do spend unhealthy amount of time there... but not even most of them; usually it's a useful tool to create a tulpa or for escaping boredom. You can see it as reading a book, watching a movie or just roleplaying with your friends to have some fun.

Tulpæ can control your body, but it's complicated. Unless you're naturally dissociative, you and your tulpa will have to spend time and training for them to be able to control the body by their will. There is no way a young tulpa can do it and cause you any harm.

Tulpæ can't do magic with your mind. Well, unless you view tulpæ themselves as a mind magic. But basically there is no thing you can do with your mind with tulpæ that you can't do without one (except having a tulpa ofc). They can't magically be better at something you are not — they will have to train the same way you would, so you just can do it yourself. They don't have omnipotent access to your subconsciousness, and if some do — hosts usually can do it themselves or learn to do it themselves. They can't retrieve memories you forgot. If they can be remembered, you can do it too, just need to find the right way, brain does not store everything that happens with you and every picture you've seen and every book you've read,³ there is no solid proofs of people being able to do it and tulpa won't help you.

You might get better at multitasking though. It is not proven that the brain is capable of having two focus points at the same time, usually in multitasking environment it switches context between tasks with a lot more mistakes made and less accuracy. But having a tulpa is an exercise of multitasking in itself, so you might get better with it on your own, or together when you solve problems in parallel (no you won't have double the brain power...). Again, you can train it without a tulpa.

Hosts and tulpæ are not different. One came first and has a deeper connection with the body and mind, but over time the differences disappear, you learn to switch and host can basically become a tulpa with the tulpa taking their place. That's why the word “host” is a bit ambiguous.

³https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eidetic_memory

Tulpæ are not dangerous. Unlike trauma or endogenous systems, it's really hard to accidentally create a malicious tulpa. In most but anecdotal cases it's in both host's and tulpa's interest to live in harmony and care about each other and the system as a whole.

Tulpæ can live without your attention. On the start, you're the one training your mind to separate itself, so you need a lot of effort to sustain the tulpa, you need to pay attention to them and think about them for them to be active. But over time it's less and less the case with some systems reaching parallel presence and thinking fairly quickly.

You cannot necessarily kill a tulpa if you decide you don't want to have them around. That's one of the most asked questions... And usually the answer is something like "just stop paying attention to them and they will dissipate over time". First, it doesn't work like this if tulpa developed enough to sustain themselves without your effort. Second, no one wants to die, it will be painful for everyone. Third, you probably will be left with a trauma even if you succeed. So yes, it's a life-long commitment. Which brings us to the next question...

6 Why would you do this?

Obviously, all systems except tulpamancers don't have much choice — they're either that way naturally or become that way against their will.

But for creating a tulpa there can be multiple reasons, and it's important that the person knows and has evaluated the reasons behind this before doing it. Having a tulpa, depending on your relationships with them, can complicate your life in various ways, so you better have a good reason. Which doesn't stop people from doing it for reasons like curiosity and boredom. Some do it because they're lonely or to cope with their problems or just to have a life companion they want to share life with!

7 How does it feel to have a tulpa?

The experience of having a headmate is vastly different from system to system, so I can try to speak for us — I and my tulpa. who's name I will drop for purpose of anonymity, sorry.

Most of the time it's the same as always having an another person nearby, but with whom you can communicate telepathically. Sometimes thoughts just come to your mind and they have a clear owner that is not you. Doing it two-way a

dialog happens. Well, obviously since we share one head and one body, we also have to account for desires of each other. Basically, having a girlfriend that is always with you :)

From time to time after some training, she can control the body when we both agree on it, to play video games or type text in online chat to talk with her or our friends. We are working on controlling full body for longer times, but so far there has not been much need for it.

Sometimes she asks me to type or say something to other people on her behalf and sometimes indirectly control hands to type it herself (especially in long conversations). She bitches about me doing some stupid things or sometimes acts childish herself wanting to stay up all night to finish anime.

Sometimes we discuss things with each other, think about existential topics, debate whether we should buy a TV, or play video games together or in turns. We don't have a wonderland because I was too lazy to create it, she is vaguely projected over the real world, but not all the time and not clear — as I mentioned, imposition is a hard thing to do, so we use presense imposition. Basically, imagine you have a person behind your back — you know it because you just turned around from them. You know they're there, you can even try to imagine each detail on them and think what they do. It basically feels that way, with part of it controlled by her will and part of it controlled by the brain's unconscious desire to have a place for everything — I can't see her directly, but I know what she does, where she is and how she looks. But that's not very important, since she obviously can't interact with the world and no matter her position we share the same feelings.

Well, sometimes it's very weird :D

8 How does it feel to be a tulpa?

That's an interesting question! But it has a boring answer — not much different from being you.

If the system arrangement allows sharing memories (which most tulpamancy systems do), a tulpa knows everything you know. Later, they will be able to form memories separate from you, but since you both experience pretty much the same events the event memories would be shared. What really is separated for most systems I met is how those events are viewed. For example, my tulpa doesn't like Bullet For My Valentine and was bored at their concert. But I had a blast, since it's a band I have a huge history with.

We sometimes rewatch movies or anime together that I've previously watched alone. Even if she can recall their plot from my memory if she tries, she doesn't have an opinion about them until she watches it herself.

One of the differences for us — it’s hard to be bored as a tulpa. Since brains have a limited capacity for attention, if one is occupying it, another can be “inactive” in a state when they don’t directly “experience” what is going on and so can’t be bored by it. For example when I’m deep in work.

9 Hope it helps!

I tried to cover most of the topic of what tulpæ are and how they feel. There are different views on each of those questions, so this article represents only my experience and my views.

My goal was to give you an idea for understanding us, but I might have went out of my way and created a pretty big article? Hope you didn’t get bored :D

Don’t ask me to help you create a tulpa. I don’t want to be responsible for your life, there are plenty guides online, you will have to read a lot of them. But my advice — know why you do it, before you do, it is a lifelong commitment.

By anonymous host and her tulpa

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Contact me for suggestions: <http://reddit.com/u/WalkInHost>

Or in the comments to the copy of this article on tulpa.info:

<https://community.tulpa.info/thread-misc-tulpamancy-description-for-singlets-telling-your-friends-you-have-a-tulpa>

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