

Self-Delusion Amidst Afternoon Hallucination

JD Pirtle | 2009

I'm repeating myself.

Not just in the way we all follow the same paths as a consequence of routine or by telling the same anecdote to each person I encounter throughout the day. I am living this life over and over.

As I disentangle myself from you and close my eyes, I begin to speak but stop mid-sentence as I am swept up in a torrent of *déjà vu*—memories of memories of having uttered *this* phrase at *this* time to *this* person. The memories are mirrored, stacked, reverberant. These images are resonant and speak in some strange unison—yet they are varied and individual. They are like the ripples in a body of still water after someone has tossed in a stone, but the ripples flow inward, gain strength and gather magnitude. Nested memories of the same memory. They are duplicates, each one with different qualities. They are visions of myself in this repeated act, but each act is skewed and distorted.

So here, lying next to you, as I have so often, seeing the things we have done over and over to each other and to those who briefly distracted us, I see that there is some agency in the phenomenon of my memories. For in this moment of communion I see what has been and what is to come—I see it along varied paths, alike and yet dissimilar. Under the duress of seduction, ascendance and collapse, I cease for a moment the incessant intellectualizing of my life and the emotional brain takes the helm. In that flash between time and space I am as Janus, looking forward and backward through time, simultaneously. I can look through our past—traveling along an extruded tube of expired fate, looking as I will through the translucent tunnel at other, parallel versions of me. Shadows of this existence, wrought in the same singular beginning but affected by chaos, entropy and every chance occurrence that leads to a nexus of fates that St. Augustine or Calvin would never accept. And so in the twisting and varied pathways I travel I am different; dying young, burning out, destroying the world, settling for less, lurking in shadows or calling all to a new light.

I see the future—a technocracy, infinite holocaust and a gradual unification of consciousness. I see that we will be the ones to turn back time. Removed as we will become from this (horror and climax as earthly bodies collide) we will tear asunder heaven and earth, collapse the multiverse on itself and send our fates hurling backward just to reach the moments of mere mortals locked in the embrace of lightning and thunder. And I wonder if I can do that now, to us.

Maybe we have always known each other. Not in the way you are just like my mother or the polar opposite of her, or that we have been on and off and apart and inseparable for a decade, or that I even met you before I met you when we were 15 and you sold candy at the mall. We have always known each other in this life and the others—that much is evident and absolute. I have seen it in myriad dreams, locked in an eternal embrace as we sleep in the tide, full of answers and environments no mere gray matter could devise. In nightmares of betrayal and intrigue, in which we are the victims and perpetrators of globetrotting betrayal and adulterous legerdemain. And in hallucinations, that vision of you drying dishes in a future kitchen frozen forever in my mind as I lose consciousness, crashing through the double doorway of the dorm room bathroom as I reel and collapse beneath alcohol and mescaline.

In my concatenated *déjà vu*, where all the I are caught off-guard, we all stop mid-sentence and stare at ourselves. “So it’s you,” we say.