

11/28/2006

Dear Downloader,

Ever wanted to read something I wrote in high school that was both utterly pretentious and unbelievably silly? No? Me neither! That's why I couldn't bear to reread this. Nevertheless, I feel like posting it on the internet, for all to ridicule. I've put it up here unedited, save for this introduction, and some added information in the footer. Enjoy it the way you would the original *Star Trek*, or *Plan 9 From Outer Space*! Maybe you too will remember what it's like to be a teenager.

With Warm Regards,

[insert fancy signature here]

David J. Peterson

Déjà Vu

Dearest God in heaven above, with whom I've entrusted my most profound faith: what is happening to me? Where am I, and wherefore am I here? What have I done...what have I done? Have I not always been most gracious with and understanding of my fellow beings? Have I not always observed thy most sacred rites? Have I not served my masters well? What dost thou want from me? What grand design can be fulfilled with naught but my little death? What sin of mine dost thou look upon in sheer and utter disgust that thou wouldst cut my string, when, in my feeble mortal comprehension, I have so much yet to do in this world created by thine own perfect hand? If thou dost remember some significant event in my past which is deserving of this vile consequence, I swear to thee, I have no memory of it. O, so wretched! But, I suppose it is not my place to call into question thy holy judgment. If only thou wouldst give me some clue as to why...

The sun rises high, I see, through my lonely cell window. I fear my secular truth draws nigh. How gray the shining of the sun can be tinged through the dust of this hideous hole. If only I could see the gilded light dance lightly upon the blades of grass, blown about like the swells of the ocean in the summer breeze. The whole countryside seems to sway in the blessed stillness of the month of May. Rise and fall; rise and fall... From crest to valley; from high to low... Yea, upon a vessel bound for England, or the Americas! The sea, the sky; breathe out, breathe in. But, the ship creeks...key...lock...come with thee? I suppose it's time. My, I believe I'm faint with these musings. Oh, but they look so sad! Why do they look at me in such a manner? So tortured, so crestfallen... Had they my thoughts, I could but help them. So beautiful, so soothing! They won't allow me to remain here among the pain of these dear spectators. Indeed, they bear me away now...

* * *

For sooth, the myst'ries Fortune holds for me,
As well as for thee, my love. Fond memories or—
Be cursèd by heaven—terr's ne'er dreamt by poet
Nor dæm'n. But, should one bare the darkness to
The light—yea, should the hoodwinked maid of swords
Be freed to face her plight—what change might one
Invoke upon his fortune? To what step must needs
Repairs be made, I ask thee? Ay, to think
On't sets mine eyes to trembling. Ah, but soft—
Mine ambulations set me 'pon thy most
Pacific banks, O noble brook of mirr'r
So sweet. And what, pray, dost thou show me, brook?
A tree, thou sayst? And ne'er a finer tree
Has cast its lot upon the earth. And with
Thine leaves I shall construct mine wreath
or circlet o'earthy stock. But watch! I know
The game: And one and two and through and through,
Mine thoughts, dear love, are train'd on none but you.

* * *

But, who are they? Oh, dear Elizabeth! And good Victor, too! They appear so disturbed in this dire hour of mine. Indeed, what of Victor? Oh, poor dear! He's just returned, and to come home to such...oh, I cannot to bear to think of it. That poor, poor soul! See how he suffers! I should spare my tears so as not to pain him. Should he lose his confidence, then surely Elizabeth must do so as well. Therefore, I must bear strength enough for them both. But, they've started. What do they speak of? Ay, there's too much truth in their speech for them to notice one slight inconsistency. There's no hope for me, is there, dear Lord? My fate is to be sealed this very day. Dear God, how could it be so? Sweet William! Who could remain sensible upon viewing the degenerated corpse of so gentle a creature? Why him? Why me? Oh, but I mustn't be selfish. I'm less the victim than he. How scared he must have been: all alone; night fallen; and that dreadful assailant... Strength, I pray God, give me strength!

Elizabeth stands? Wherefore? The portrait, yes. What an unfortunate coincidence. Yet, a coincidence it remains. Is this to be my undoing? How could it be so? Look at them all. They fancy me the murderess, and tender feelings of utter reproach and loathing in their very souls. I'm innocent! Hear me! Why will they not hear me? But they will hear me? Oh Lord, what shall I say? What can I say? Courage, I pray, courage; I must stand.

"God knows how entirely I am innocent. But I do not pretend that my protestations should acquit me: I rest my innocence on a plain and simple explanation of the facts which have been adduced against me; and I hope the character I have always borne will incline my judges to a favourable interpretation, where any circumstance appears doubtful or suspicious..."

* * *

And lo! cries of the cursèd Troian babes did pierce
the angered air as the slaughter thundered on, no
still in sight! Pallas Athina of the shining
eyes did quiver and tremble with gall, and the wine-
dark sea did shudder as Posædon, shaker of
Earth, moaned in poignant anguish.
Unmovèd were the Achians by their wanton
show of defiance toward man and god alike.
Blood ran mud-thick in the causeways 'tween the ruined
shell of once proud Troi: envy of all what could see
and hear. Troian woman and child; leper and lame;
envigored and timeworn; none were spared the force of
the iron gale what toppled every wall; shattered
every glass! Zeus, son of Chronos, did lower his
head in shame that inglorious day.
Yet, a woman remained, child in arms, tears afresh,
amid the crimson clatter of swords and halbards.
A manic cry arose from the trench-deep throats of
th'Achians: "Cast the boy from atop the vaulted
wall still left standing about this damnèd state!"

* * *

My soul shall never see the gates of heaven from the inside looking out. I shall pass an eternity within the flames of black which give neither light nor heat, but only pain and suffering. No one knows what I have done. God knows. He knows all, and sees all. O, mighty God, have I sinned in vain? I acted not for myself, but for the souls of those who cast their sable ballots. How could they live knowing that they'd sent an innocent soul to the scaffold? I would not have that stone weighing down my soul. I had no choice. My life shall end shortly, but theirs shall last many a year after my flame has been snuffed. I would not have them live a life of eternal torture for the wrong they had done. A life that full of anguish must indeed be the most miserable of existences; none can surpass it. Yet, still you frown. Why? Why do you turn from me in my darkest hour? Even now I feel the shrieks of the damned souls which I soon will join. They scream in terror, sorrow, and pain; yet, they cackle murderously as they stretch their claws of rotted and decaying flesh towards me. I can feel their sultry breath upon my neck this very instant! God, they're here!

Elizabeth! You have not abandoned me, then? Oh, fate! Even you? Even you, my dearest companion? You would come to mock me? You seek a response?

"And do you also believe that I am so very, very wicked? Do you also join with my enemies to crush me, to condemn me as a murderer?"

Alas, I cannot endure it! Why should she come? Why did she have to come, O Lord? Why? Just to scorn upon my wretched state of being? Is this my deserved secular retribution? If so, it far surpasses the scaffold's physical form of judgment! Ah, but she seeks the truth? I can see now she believes in me yet. And, poor Victor! Do you still let storm clouds darken your brow? For thy peace, I must confess!

"I did confess; but I confessed a lie. I confessed that I might obtain absolution; but now that falsehood lies heavier at my heart than all my other sins. The God of heaven forgive me! Ever since I was condemned..."

* * *

Andromachæ of the pale arms did wash away
the memory of her son as slowly he did
ascend to his salvation. O, so wretched! so
piteously did his face, what once did cower
'neath the gilt armor and plumage of his father,
mighty Hector, breaker of horses, look towards
the setting sun with innocence and wonder
of the fate what had been delivered by the
Furies! No clouds of discontent did obscure his
gentle face; no ripple of fear did darken his
lustrous brow. Only the whimpers of his fair-skinned
mother did perturb him in the slightest, bringing
forth a single tear, whose outline and trail shone in
the light of the dying sun.
Rung by rung he made his ascension, driven on
by the jeers of the incensed Achians. Slowly

he did rise—as slowly the sun did set. The last
glints of the chariot of Helios put life
into his eye and color into his pallid
cheek. He turned to find a Grecian guard ascending
the ladder to the place where he stood, a frigid
wind blowing his locks about his face. The child casts
his gaze to his mother and sheds one final tear. Ere
th’Achian reaches his place, he throws himself from the
wall, and the sun is eclipsed by the blanket of
night.

Shantih...

* * *

Alone again. Is there anybody out there? Can anyone hear me? Have you abandoned me, O Lord? I hear thy voice no more. Is it my fault, or thy will? Be it either cause, I can do naught to recompense. As I feared, I am alone. What of you? No succor shall you offer? He goes. They pass my cage, and I know the cycle of their gaze: they look toward me in pity; they look directly upon me in fear; they look back in anger. It’s not in their nature to stay to hear the ravings of a mad woman, a bewitched malefactress. Am I the damned of all the world? Is there not one who suffers greater than I? If there is, I should pray for that soul with all my might. Yet, there’s little left in me for prayer; there’s little left for aught. There is nothing.

Ah, sweet mistress the moon. You’re looking well, this night. Have you come to set your eyes upon this tortured soul in trepidation as well? Or do you sympathize? I feel you know my plight. Yes...how...gorgeous. How wonderfully beautiful. Yea, if I close my eyes thus, your pallid rays stretch across the sky. Ah, to light up the blanket of night! Mysterious and...and... Snow. I can remember the bittersweet chill of November. Waking refreshed, yet fearful to set foot outside, lest one catches the frost. So perfect a balance. Inside, the fire of warmth and light blazes in cheerful ardor as the winter dress is thawed. Outside, all is stopped. The silence is so that it rings louder and clearer than the shrillest tolling of the cathedral bells. One can feel it all around. I feel that if I spoke my voice would be drowned out by the overpowering silence. And bright! The sun of summer months is no match for the...white. All is lost in the blizzard’s fury and the mountains of ice, cascading in perfect fixity. Yes, “lost” is the word. So easy to lose one’s self. It calls to me...

* * *

How beautiful thine fol’yage be. Ah, what
A contrast can be drawn twixt nature and
The human mien. Forever blissful made
Of life for tree and plant and flow’r and bush!
Of naught thou knowst the hate and bittersweet
That is the way of God’s beloved. How couldst
Thou know of aught? No pain, no tears; nor love,
Nor fears. Yea, thou art spared of all mine woes.

But soft! You call me yet again? And what,
Pray, be your gen'rous gift? The peace? The flow'rs?
The trees? The stars? Your offer sets my soul
Aflame, I grant. But, how would you have me
Attain such rest? O sliv'r, of which mine thoughts
Do envy: wilt thou be my salvation?
Wilt thou deliver me to joy? I think
That I must needs discover. Death, your charms:
They shall deliver me into your arms...

Shantih...

* * *

So sweet, they are, dear...Elizabeth, and...and...Victor. They do not understand, though. I could not comprehend their speech—none could. They did not speak words, but emotions, feelings. There aren't those that can hear...feelings, here. Yes, that's it...can't hear feelings here. Oh, but I do wonder at the sun. One mustn't stare at the sun, lest one go blind. Yet, what can be the harm now, when... But look, you, do you see? Do you see its power? It rains its very essence down upon me. When the sun rises, there is little else that can be paid heed. One can't listen to aught when the majesty of the rising sun demands an audience. Look you now... It speaks, I can hear it. Are you listening? Can you hear it? I can. I shan't ignore it. I can do naught but heed its entreaties. Oh, it grows louder! It shouts! I can feel it tingling through my legs! It begs me! You need not beg, O mighty one. I shall not turn on you; I could never turn on you! I can feel it! It's on the lips and hearts of all that watch. It's echoing through the wind and the treetops. It's rising, and sinking, up and down... Do not lie, you can hear it now, can you not? It's repeating, over and over, embedding itself into the rhythm of my soul! It breathes one word: salvation, salvation, salvation!

Shantih.

-David J. Peterson

Notes On Text

Notes On "Notes On Text": I have constructed the headings in this section in such a manner so as to keep the confusion factor at a bare minimum (hopefully). A section is divided by asterisks. The line numbers correspond to paragraph numbers in prose, and to page numbers in verse. Thus, it is possible to have two "line 2" 's in the same soliloquy. On the whole, this should make referencing a bit easier.

Section 1, Page 1, Paragraph 1, Line 6: Essentially, this question concerning Justine's "little death" was taken from "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead". Guildenstern asks this after he learns that Hamlet has switched notes with he and Rosencrantz on the boat.

6—David Peterson, Fall 1998, AP English, Mrs. Ross, Pacifica High School

Section 1, Page 1, Paragraph 1, Line 12: In all of Shakespeare's plays, the second person familiar conjugation of "to wish," or "would," would appear as "would'st." This, however, is incorrect. During Shakespeare's time, Middle English was dying, and so were its rules (if, indeed, there were any). The "st" ending for verbs in the second person familiar comes from German, whose second person familiar pronoun is "du," which corresponds to "thou". Thus, as in German (the language from which Middle English descended), the "st" ending should not be separated from the rest of the word with an apostrophe. This holds true throughout the text.

Section 1, Page 1, Paragraph 2, Line 2: "Truth"="judgment".

Section 1, Page 1, Paragraph 2, Lines 6-7: The "vessel bound for England" is a cheap reference to "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead" (or "Hamlet"). The inclusion of "the Americas," however, should be taken as an allusion to how Frankenstein's daemon planned to go to South America after receiving a mate.

Section 1, Page 1, Paragraph 2, Line 8: Just a general reminder: This is stream of consciousness so it should be assumed that Justine is being spoken to, and that she is responding in her mind only. Should a response appear in quotes, then and only then is she actually speaking.

Section 2: This, as well as the Ophelia's other soliloquy, is written in iambic penta-meter.

Section 2, Page 1, Line 1: "Fortune" is capitalized because it is a reference to the tarot card, "The Wheel of Fortune," which can signify the future in general, or specific experiences related to the future.

Section 2, Page 1, Line 5: The "hoodwinked maid of swords" is a reference to the "Two of Swords" in the tarot pack which symbolizes blind conformity.

Section 2, Page 1, Line 7: Here, "fortune" simply means "future".

Section 2, Page 2, Line 3: This is another cheap reference, this time to Lewis Carroll's "The Jabberwocky," which can be found in his book Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There. The real line goes as follows: "One, two! One, two! And through and through the vorpal blade went snicker-snack!"

Section 2, Page 2, Line 4: The last word, "you," should indicate a change in address.

Section 3, Page 2, Paragraph 1, Lines 4-6: This corresponds to the first line of the second paragraph of the eighth chapter of Frankenstein: "The appearance of Justine was calm."

Section 3, Page 2, Paragraph 1, Lines 6-13; and Paragraph 2: The end of the first paragraph, and the whole of the second correspond to paragraphs three and four in Frankenstein, chapter VIII.

Section 3, Page 2, Paragraph 3: This is copied directly from Frankenstein, chapter VIII, paragraph five. I simply omitted the words “she said,” which fall between “knows” and “how”.

Section 4: I attempted, yet failed to write this and the other section in the Grecian style completely. As a compromise, I did give every line twelve syllables, and tried to end each with a spondee as much as possible.

Section 4, Page 2, Line 1: So as not to confuse myself, I’ve handled the Greek names thusly: The pronunciations are Greek, but the transliterations are Latin. The first place we come into contact with this is the word “Troian.” This will take a bit of explaining. First, the city is called “Troy,” or “Trois,” which in Greek would be spelled “Τροι” (pronounced “Trois”). Directly transliterated, this is “Trois.” When talking of someone from Trois, we, in English, say they are “Trojan”. The real word, however, is “Troian” or “Τροϊαν” (pronounced “Trois-an”). In English, we changed the “i” to a “j” because in German (the language English descended from, remember) the “j” makes the “y” sound. Thus, we get “Trojans”. I’ve corrected this.

Section 4, Page 2, Line 3: “Παλλας ‘Αθηνα”=“Pallas Athina,” pronounced “Päl-las Ä-thT-na” (the last “a” in both words sounding like that in “about”).

Section 4, Page 2, Line 5: “Πωσαιδον”=“Posædon,” pronounced “PÅ-sh-don” (the last “o” as in “gallop”).

Section 4, Page 2, Line 7: “ ‘Ακίαν”=“Achian,” pronounced “Ä-kT-un” (the “u” as in “circus”).

Section 4, Page 3, Line 3: “Ζευς”=“Zeus,” pronounced “ZyÅÅs”; and “Κρωνωσ”=“Chronos,” pronounced “KrÅ-nÅs”.

Section 5, Page 3, Paragraph 1, Lines 2-3: This description of hell is mainly inspired by the exhortations from the priest in James Joyce’s A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

Section 5, Page 3, Paragraph 1, Line 3: “No one knows what I have done. God knows.” In Joseph Heller’s book Something Happened, there is a section entitled “No One Knows What I Have Done.” Also, Joseph Heller wrote a book entitled God Knows. This is completely coincidental, but interesting, nonetheless.

Section 5, Page 3, Paragraph 1, Line 11: “In My Darkest Hour” is a song by Megadeth in which the narrator expresses his contempt for those that did not comfort him on his death bed.

Section 5, Page 3, Paragraph 1, Lines 11-15: Again, this was inspired by the same section in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

Section 5, Page 3, Paragraphs 2-3: Paragraph 2 corresponds to paragraph 19 in chapter VIII of Frankenstein, and paragraph 3 is paragraph 20 from chapter VIII of Frankenstein, 8—David Peterson, Fall 1998, AP English, Mrs. Ross, Pacifica High School

minus the final sentence.

Section 5, Page 3, Paragraph 5: This is the beginning of paragraph 22 from chapter VIII of Frankenstein.

Section 6, Page 3, Line 1: “ ‘Ανδρομακai”=“Andromachæ,” pronounced “Än-drÄ-ma-kih” (the second “a” sounding like that in “about”).

Section 6, Page 4, Line 3: “ ‘Εκτορ”=“Hector,” pronounced “HRk-tôr”.

Section 6, Page 4, Line 12: Truly, Astyanax (for that is, indeed, who the child is) is far too young to actually climb a ladder, but Homer did not write realistically—he wrote allegorically. I keep the style alive in humanizing the child Astyanax.

Section 6, Page 4, Line 15: “ ‘Ελιωσ”=“Helios,” pronounced “HRl-yÄs”.

Section 6, Page 4, Line 24 (end): Cf. T.S. Eliot’s “The Wasteland”. The repetition of “shantih” three times is a formal ending to an Upanishad. The English equivalent is “the peace which passeth understanding”.

Section 7, Page 4, Paragraph 1, Line 1: “Is There Anybody Out There?” is the title of a song from Pink Floyd’s The Wall. At this point, the main character, Pink, has given up on life, and goes on a drug binge. He comes to and fearfully asks, “Is there any-body out there?”

Section 7, Page 4, Paragraph 1, Lines 5-6: “Look Back In Anger” is a song by David Bowie.

Section 7, Page 4, Paragraph 1, Line 7: “The damned of all the world” is a reference to a Megadeth song—“Youthanasia”—which is quoting the theme of the French Legionnaires, though in English. The line being referenced here is “We are the damned of all the world,” or “Nous sommes les damnés de tout le monde.”

Section 7, Page 4, Paragraph 2, Lines 5-6: Justine’s remembrance of the “chill of November” was inspired by Dream Theater’s “A Change of Seasons”. The reflective tone of the song is mirrored in this passage.

Section 8, Page 5, Line 1: This was the only way I could think of to show that I wanted “foliage” pronounced as two syllables.

Section 9, Page 5, Lines 10-11: Justine does feel a tingling in her legs, though it’s not from the heat or majesty of the sun. At this point, she’s on her funeral pyre.

Explanation

While there are many references in this story of mine which I call “Déjà Vu,” there are three main specific influences: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce, Sylvie and Bruno by Lewis Carroll, and Epic In Orange by me, though not 9—David Peterson, Fall 1998, AP English, Mrs. Ross, Pacifica High School

yet completed (my first novel, The Last Great Awakening, was completed in November). Each story deals with the stream of consciousness style, though each in its own way. I've combined the three styles into "Déjà Vu," and that's where the idea for the plot was born.

I'll attempt to list the three basic styles of the above-mentioned books here. In Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, one finds the third person stream of consciousness style, in which the main character slips in and out of his real life experiences, and his introspections, giving the reader a sense of constant motion. In Carroll's Sylvie and Bruno, the main character randomly jumps between the real world, and a parallel universe in which two fairy children have interesting adventures. In my new novel, Epic In Orange, the main character recalls his entire life in random order all in about half of a second. His flashbacks change from third person to first person, and from past tense to present tense. Combining these three styles, I wrote "Déjà Vu" which sees the main character living her life in Joyce's stream of consciousness style (though in the first person), and randomly flashing to scenes from parallel worlds in the past (adding some transcendentalism to the mix). I wrote the story in this manner to illustrate my belief that Justine Moritz, Astyanax, and Ophelia are all really the same character.

In their respective books, these three characters all meet untimely ends even though they are completely innocent (it can be argued that Ophelia is a little guilty, but the argument is weak). These three, in my opinion, are the true definition of tragedy. Each find themselves in situations that are larger than themselves, and which are far beyond their control. Since Astyanax is too young, and since Ophelia is too crazy, I believe that Justine is the only one who recognizes this fact, and that's why she is my main character. As she jumps from "Hamlet" to "The Iliad," she jumps into characters who realize it less and less, for Ophelia, although crazy, does know more about her situation than Astyanax does about his. This lies in inverse proportion to her, for she begins to realize the situation she's in more and more. Section five is the turning point. This is the point in which Justine starts to descend slowly into madness. Now, as she descends into madness, her flashes go from Astyanax to Ophelia, illustrating how as she decreases, the other characters increase. Thus, right before their deaths, all three characters have switched roles from where they began. I set this up this way on purpose, so as to illustrate the following point. When they die, each section ends with the word "shantih," showing that no matter what happened to them, each ended up exactly the same way.

There are several devices I use throughout the story to tie the three separate stories together, but the most important is repetition. The most obvious, aside from "shantih," which has already been mentioned, is the word "salvation". It indicates that each character, whether knowingly or not, is seeking salvation. They each wish to be saved from the terrible situation which they've been placed in, and due to the goodness and/or innocence of their characters, they each receive salvation in death. The death of each of these characters then initiates the downfall of everyone else in their respective stories. Justine and Astyanax both see the sun before they die, and it's given special mention. Astyanax is cast off as the sun sets, indicating the beginning of the end for Troi, as well as the Greeks; Justine is killed as the sun rises, signifying the moment when Victor Frankenstein really comes back to life to attempt to face his responsibilities. Also, both indicate the end of their life of sorrow, and the beginning of their bliss.

Another bit of similarity is the manner in which each die: Ophelia by water;

Justine by fire; Astyanax by air or earth (depending on whether he has a heart attack before he hits the ground or not). Thus, as one goes from section one to section nine (which I would not have separated with asterisks, had it still been possible to comprehend the story without doing so), the story goes through a complete cycle, which, if graphed, might look like a positive and negative sine curve graphed on the same x and y axes. The average of these two graphs comes out to be zero, just as the Ophelia, Justine, and Astyanax all end up in the same place. Shantih.