

Wilderness House Literary Review 17/1

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WHEN REPETITION REPEATS

When repetition repeats
It gets repetitive.
It goes on and on, again and again,
And there's no stopping it.
Stopping it? Why would you want to
Stop it, when you know
You know repetition is how
People know what they know.
It's hammered into them,
Hammered into them by Custom and Tradition
Tradition and Custom hammer it into them
Over and over, again and again
Until it becomes a HABIT -
Which is something you do habitually,
When you do it...and...
It's a repetitive thing to do
When you do do it, which is often
Or daily, or nightly, or
Day to day, or night after night.
This is WHEN you do it.
"It" being the thing you do when you
Have a habit - which is something you do habitually.

There are, of course, good habits and bad habits,
Or so we're told; but they are equally habitual,
The good ones and the bad ones.
BOTH are habitual; just as EACH is habitual.
Doing them over and over, day after day
Makes one good or makes one bad,
So the ethicists and the moralists say.

Wilderness House Literary Review 17/1

This conclusion makes some sad
But it makes others glad
Because it is no mere fad
When things are done again and again
And again - for THEN it is
An established fact - and a fact is
Something that is factual.
It is; it exists; it is not nothing.
Because to be is not not to be,
Or so the metaphysicians say,
And the logicians say it too;
With them it is a RULE,
And they are those who practice logic,
Which is anything that is logical.

Having come at last to this CONCLUSION
Which is something which concludes
A poem or a syllogism,
Having established that existence
Is what is, and not what is not,
And that repetition is what repeats,
And that habit is what is habitual,
And that thought is thinking
And thinking is thought,
I ought to end this meditation
But the temptation to repeat the repetition
Is just too strong - strength being
That which is powerful,
And power being a kind of strength
Which only the strong have
And not the weak, not the weak...

Wilderness House Literary Review 17/1

Such is a TAUTOLOGY -
Which is a kind of logical folly
For it merely repeats the thing said
But in a different way
So the saying of it is the same
Even though it is different -
This sameness, which, by any other name,
Bears repeating...bears repeating.

It's like saying 4 is $2 + 2$
Or something more, such as
8 - 4, which is the same thing
Only said in a different way,
(Using subtraction instead of addition)
Or so they say - those logicians
Who practice logic,
Which is a sort of trick
Which makes you think
Syllogistically or tautologically,
As when they say "snow is white" is true
If and only if snow is white
A thing that bears repeating, bears repeating,
But perhaps NOT in a poem.