

There are three ways to define worthwhileness.

Two are linguistic. One is not.

Of the first two there is rhyme and there is reason.

However hard they try, the first two can never amount to the third way in answering the question of what is worthwhile. The third way of defining worthwhileness is *through* action.

But, isn't it impossible to separate writing from acting? Isn't writing *a form* of action? Yes, and this is what keeps these three categories from being mutually exclusive. However, certain approaches to defining worthwhileness lie more within reason or rhyme or action than others.

Rhyme and reason are complete opposites, which means that at their most different they are the same. That is to say that the rhythm of the most rhythmic rhyme is the rhythm of reason. So, at the heart of rhyme we find reason. But then, at the heart of reason, in the most reasonably reasoned arguments (e.g. Camus' *Myth of Sisyphus*) we find rhyme. Thus, we have a picture of rhyme and reason according to the image of the yin yang symbol, in which dualistic opposites form a cohesive and unified whole through their interrelation. This interrelation is infinite.

Because the moment we look long enough at reason we see rhyme--we see the rhyme of reason--and when we look long enough at rhyme we see reason--the reason of rhyme. This is not to say that a well-rhymed poem and a thoroughly reasoned argument are the same, but it is to say that their efficacy in answering the question of worthwhileness operates according to the same parameters. What are these parameters?

What makes a good argument? What makes a good rhyme?

A good argument is reasoned rhythmically. That is if one pushes from their starting premises too quickly toward their conclusion they might lose the reader in their haste in trying to demonstrate the logical connection at the heart of their argument. It is the logical connection at the heart of a

good argument that makes it good. But what is this logical connection? What is this 'logos'?

Aristotle defined it empirically, taking the syllogism as an example of one symptom, or sign, of good reasoning. But good reasoning itself refuses to be defined definitively or systematically, apart from itself. Good reasoning, then, can only be defined by showing several and various examples of good reasoning in a group, side-by-side, and trying to determine what those examples share in common. The traits or patterns they share in common will be seen as the traits or patterns of good reasoning, and hence, nothing can be meaningfully defined apart from the world. So, the only method we have for determining the strength of an argument's reason--its reasonableness--is how much that argument seems to rhyme with other seemingly reasonable arguments. How do we decide upon what arguments are and are not, or are more and less, reasonable? We do not decide, we intuit. A good argument persuades. And one cannot choose to be persuaded. Thus, we are left with intuition as our basis for defining reason and rhyme, and in using these terms to define worthwhileness, with intuition as our basis for its definition as well.

How do we determine what are good rhymes and bad ones? The ones that have better rhythm are of course the better rhymed. Interestingly, rhyme can be broken down and analyzed through reason. What is commonly thought of as 'rhyme' is when the end of words rhyme with each other. For instance, 'reason' and 'season'. This rhyme is quite close. Only 'r' and 's' are different at the first letters of each word. This is, in fact, the closest one can get to an absolute rhyme without writing the same word twice. But not all rhyme operates this way. Take 'apartment' and 'retirement'. These words share the same end sound but do not rhyme as closely as 'season' and 'reason' do. (Oxford Rhyming Dictionary). Thus, rhyme can be explained through reason.

Rhyme, in addition to being defined as the end sounds of words, can be defined more generally as repetition. Thus, rhyme can be the repetition of sounds and it can also be the repetition of

meter. Meter is the pattern of stress and accentuation on the words in a written line. Meter is measured differently in different languages. In English, it is measured in feet. There are different kinds of poetic feet. Feet do not correspond to syllables (which happen to be the measure of meter in Japanese) but rather to certain patterns of stress. The most common foot in the English language (according to some) is the iamb. It is said to mirror (or repeat or rhyme with) the way that English is actually stressed when it is spoken. Iambic meter is commonly construed as sounding like ta-dum-ta-dum-ta-dum-ta-dum. This structure is a pattern. And this pattern is a sign or symptom of rhyme, just like a syllogism is of reason. Thus, both rhyme and reason have reason--in their structure--and rhyme--in this repetition of their structure. At this point, we start to gaze into the endless kaleidoscope of the yin yang effect, in which reason is contained within rhyme which is contained within reason... Thus, we see that "Rhyme and reason are complete opposites, which means that at their most different they are the same." (above). Absolute reason, that is, an argument which is irrefutable is circular. Some use the term 'circular argument' pejoratively, implying that only an argument which is linear, that moves from one point to another point is legitimate. But what then, is the ultimate linear argument? In order for a conclusion to follow logically from the premise the two must be connected by logic. An argument can be logical without being true. But if it is to be true, then the logical connection between a premise and conclusion is rhythmic, because it represents truth that follows from truth. In order for an argument to be logical and true it must repeat itself (however masked that repetition is at first by subject matter and syntax). So, this would make it seem that every logical and true argument is circular, and thus that the only kind of logical argument that is linear is false. Why would anyone champion false arguments over true ones? Rhyme is a reasonable

construction. Rhyme can be defined according to a set of rules, just like logic, as a recurring pattern.

Reason takes seemingly different things and unifies them through logic. Rhyme takes seemingly different things and unifies them through rhyme and rhythm.

What is it that makes reason rhythmic? What is it that makes rhyme reasonable?

Both reason and rhyme are intuitive. What are *their* opposites? The opposites of our opposites are unreason and unrhyme. Perhaps there are more eloquent words to use, but the awkward sounding nature of these two helps to illustrate the opposition between the pairs 'rhyme and reason' and 'unrhyme and unreason'. There is neither rhyme nor reason in 'unrhyme and unreason'.

Rhyme implies reason and unrhyme implies unreason. Thus, there is no such thing as an unreasonable rhyme, because anything unreasonable is also unrhythmic. This is a tautology. It must always be either true or false. Tautology is another word for circular argument. It seems to presuppose its truth before its truth is known. This is metaphysics.

Wittgenstein led the logical positivists to believe that tautologous statements were inherently meaningless. And, in doing so, he seemed to equate meaning with worthlessness, because upon declaring a statement tautologous, Wittgenstein would say it was nonsensical. It could tell us nothing new. The irony is that this itself is true. *Reason cannot tell us anything new that is also true*, for it to do this it would no longer be able to rhyme. And there is no reason without rhyme.

The only kind of argument Wittgenstein was an argument about the natural world, such as Dung beetles are black. This perhaps appears not to be circular because in order to know that the beetles are black we have to go and see such a thing. However, it is circular, because once we have seen a sufficient number of brown dung beetles and beetles of no other color, we make the assumption that all dung beetles are brown. Thus, in order for us to make a statement of the

general form, all dung beetles are brown, we must *define* dung beetles as being brown. There is a desire voiced by advocates of linearity in reasoning to learn new things. However, the only new things we can learn are ultimately uncertain possibilities. They may be extremely certain, but can never be known for sure. This is the statistical foundation upon which all of science rests.

Probability. Certainty, on the other hand, is the domain of the humanities, showing again and again how the same themes emerge in human history and behavior, in new articulations perhaps, but of nonetheless the same essential message. However, why should we discount circular reason--rhyming reason--at the expense of linear reason? The premises of linear reason must be false in order for the conclusion to be true. Thus, linear reason can only act negatively. It can only talk with confidence (and still not complete certainty) of what things are not, slowly ruling out possibilities until all other potentialities for a thing are negligible and it gets taken as a tautology. Aha! This is the lie of the linearists! They want to reach a point of such great confidence in their assertions, which can never be certainties but only potentialities, such that those potentialities become *de facto* certainties. They want closure but deny its validity! A circle is formed by an infinite number of line segments running tangent to that circle. The circle is an instance where a tangent line touches the circle, which it itself is helping to create¹. But, if there are an infinite number of tangent lines there are an infinite number of these instances. Thus, the only way for a scientist to be religious is to be an infinite polytheist with the mental capacity to hold open the space for the inevitable uncertainty which surrounds making claims based on probability. Thus, the scientist can say something, but with the foreknowledge that it could at any moment be proven wrong. On the other hand, the humanist can say something with absolute confidence, but with the fear that such a statement will sound like an empty tautology instead of a fruitful one. That is, if we want to comprehend the circle, we cannot comprehend it one point at

¹ For a more constructive discussion of circles, and their role in the human experience, see Emerson, "Circles"

a time. Since there are an infinite number of points, or instances of tangency with linear lines of reasoning, we must comprehend the circle as an infinite collection of infinitely finite instances. What is the most finite instance? The present moment. We are always tangent to the present but most of the time we are at a different position along our line than that instant where it touches the present. Thus, we might be thinking about what we want to eat tonight for dinner while we are eating breakfast and in doing so not be mentally (?) located at the point in time in which our line happens to be tangent to the circle. But even when we do experience tangency with the holy circle of the present, our tangency is infinitely short. Thus, we cannot convey it fully. To do that we would have to be back in that line of being. But that line of being vanished the moment it touched the circle. And now, finding ourselves at a location along the circle which is *not* the one we were at during tangency, we find ourselves along a different line.

What the logical positivists wanted was either a line that curved itself identically to the circle, which line is God. That is, saying that the one thing that connects our infinite points of tangency is the one immortal being. God is able to connect the lines in a way we are not. Since we are mortal we have a finite number of points on our circle. But, our circle is never closed until we die. Thus, in order for us to comprehend the whole of our life we would have to be dead. We cannot glimpse every point on the line because the moment we can see we have glimpsed them all, that means there will be no more, which means that we have died. And in dying, we have lost our ability to comprehend the points of our circle. Some people live their lives in certain lines for very long times without ever touching the circle. Some live for very long times touching it (although I think these people are fewer: mystics and artists--people who live in a flow state more often than not). Being in flow is being on the circle. One is neither on the point of their line before or after its tangency with the present moment. If we choose to explain the nature of the

specific moment that lines that become tangent to the circle of our lives, that is if we choose to explain the course of our life as random we are denying God by accepting the fact that tangency is random. To say there is a God is to say that tangency is not random but predetermined. Of course, this tangency then makes it seem like the circles of our lives are sketched out by an infinite creator outside of both space and time, who is able to perceive our lives as the tautologous circles that they are. Likewise, by imagining that there is no God, we allow for the fact that any given moment of tangency could occur along any place of a tangent line. Whereas in the God example we declare that the moment of tangency could be none other than where it was, in this example it seems like it can be anywhere. But, in the fact that it *does occur somewhere* we are forced to realize that we ourselves do not have the privilege of the circle maker, able to stand outside of a circle and arrange its specific arrangement of tangent lines as we please, but that we are ourselves drawing. We cease to perceive our lives as tautologies in saying I am the drawer, if we equate this “I” with the concept of God, then religiosity and atheism come to the same conclusion.