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Bertrand Russell's Art of Persuasion: A Rhetorical Analysis of Selected Essays

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By

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Letter of Recommendation

This is to certify that Surendra Chaulagain has prepared this thesis entitled "Bertrand Russell's Art of Persuasion: A Rhetorical Analysis of Selected Essays" under my guidance and supervision. I therefore forward this thesis to research committee.

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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled "Bertrand Russell's Art of Persuasion: A Rhetorical Analysis of Selected Essays " Submitted to the Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Surendra Chaulagain has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

The research paper inquires how Russell develops his arguments to seek acquiescence of audiences. On the foundation of the New Rhetoric developed by Chaïm Perelman and Lucie. Olbrechts-Tyteca, the research investigates how Russell maneuvers the facts, values and ideas in the essays under study to seek meeting of minds – of audience and the speaker. The study argues that Russell adheres to dialectical reasoning in developing the arguments not on demonstrative arguments like in mathematics. The research concludes that Russell's essays succeed in persuading his audiences because of his way of delivering ideas through building incompatibilities, examples, dissociating ideas and not to mention knowing his audience well.

Keywords: Rhetoric, the New Rhetoric, audience, dissociation of Ideas, freedom of thought, official propaganda, philosophy of specialist

This research entitled “Bertrand Russell's Art of Persuasion: A Rhetorical Analysis of Selected Essays” investigates the strategies adopted to solicit adherence of minds in the essays of Bertrand Russell. Essays entitled “Free thought and official Propaganda”, “On Being Modern-Minded” and “Philosophy for Laymen” are meticulously analyzed to enquire how the essayist seeks adherence of mind.

To begin with, Bertrand Russell, in the essays under scrutiny, strongly disapproves dogmatic holding of belief and urges the audiences to embrace scientific temper. In “Free Thought and Official Propaganda”, he points out the importance of freedom of speech and freedom of the individual. Besides, he also indicates the dangers of upholding beliefs not founded on solid grounds and argues that the unthoughtful reception of ideas and values restrict the freedom of an individual.

Before delving into the work, itself, discussion of Kairos is necessary. According to Longaker and Walker, “Kairos names both the occasion for discourse and the surrounding conditions that present the rhetor with opportunities and constraints: opportunities or openings to say certain things in certain ways; and constraints that limit what can be said and how” (10).

The essay “Free Thought and Official Propaganda” appeared in 1922 as a response to the political and social upheaval triggered by a revolution in various part of the world. People then believed revolution to be the emblem of equality, peace and prosperity, but the reality contrasted. For instance, Russia underwent into massive political and social reformation after the Russian revolution in 1917 and people expected social equality, freedom and development. Russell too “. . . greeted the Russian revolution with unrestrained delight. He saw it as a blow against tyranny, and a giant step towards peace and social justice. In 1920 he visited Russia expecting to admire the new Bolshevik government. Instead, he came away horrified by its cruelty and ruthlessness . . .” (Griffin 8). Russell’s faith in the Bolshevik government dwindled when he experienced the situation precisely the opposite of what the revolution promised. In his autobiography, he expresses the experiences he had during his visit to Russia:

. . . the time I spent in Russia was one of continually increasing nightmare . . . Cruelty, poverty, suspicion, persecution, formed the very air we breathed. Our conversations were continually spied upon. In the middle of the night one would hear shots, and know that idealists were being killed in prison. (316)

Russian revolution vowed freedom and equality, but it persecuted people based on their belief and ideals - the reality defied the dreams promised. Besides, Europe was also under threat of fascism and ultranationalist. Griffin argues, “Russia fell firmly

under Stalinism, Italy under fascism, and Germany under Nazism . . . If anything Russell's pessimistic diagnosis seemed to be confirmed: power ended up in the hands of the most ruthless, while the good were condemned to utter futility" (10). To make the matter worse, Russell realized the new regimes restricted freedom of speech and thought. He seems to have written the essay to aware people about the tyranny of the state.

In another essay titled "Philosophy for Laymen", Russell proposes to make philosophy part of general education in order to manage belligerent instinct of humanity which was evident from World War I (1914-1918) and II (1939-1945). Russell, in his autobiography, explains:

The War of 1914–18 changed everything for me. I ceased to be academic and took to writing a new kind of books. I changed my whole conception of human nature . . . Through the spectacle of death I acquired a new love for what is living. I became convinced that most human beings are possessed by a profound unhappiness venting itself in destructive rages . . .(247)

Also, during second world war "The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 first brought the possibility of nuclear war to the attention of men of science and even of some few politicians" (Russell 489). These social and political cataclysms in the world led Russell to conclude that scientific and technological advancement alone were inadequate to better human society. This conclusion drove him to advocate for the teaching of philosophy as a part of general education to all which, he believes, will help people to "discover and inculcate best possible way of life" (38); however, he acknowledges the importance of abstaining from the temptation of teaching technical aspects of philosophy to all. Similarly, in the essay "On Being Modern-Minded", Russell criticizes the tendency of finding a flaw in tradition in the

name of being modern. He argues that modern people as a fashion adapt themselves to the latest fashion in living as well as thinking things not to be weighed down at the time of its emergence but from maintaining a certain degree of distance from time and space which he argues will give people independence to judge over things. To conclude, in all the selected essays, the major issue remains to be the search for an effective way to liberate human thought.

In a careful analysis of Bertrand Russell's selected essays, the study employs Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca's theory of the new rhetoric as the study analyzes how Russell uses rhetoric as a method of persuasion. Perelman and Olbrechts – Tyteca discuss the distinct characteristics of persuasive arguments. The New Rhetoric from the Belgian authors remains to be one of the first modern approaches to enquire argumentation. The authors developed the approach in the aftermath of war years and published their results after a decade of development in 1958, in the large volume of *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (1969).

The New Rhetoric emerged, as a result, of huge emphasis bestowed upon logical empiricism in the philosophical context of the 1940s and 1950s – the decade in which philosophical discourses engulfed in logical empiricism. Philosophers like Toulmin significantly revered geometric demonstration – logic in which conclusion followed premises, and Descartes who considered ideal rationality to be authentic if the derivation of truth occurs from the self-evident truths. Olbrechts-Tyteca criticized the then-contemporary logicians and philosophers for adhering excessively to a narrow understanding of reasoning which the logicians termed as the geometric concept of reasonableness. Unlike their predecessors Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca deny the logic inspired by Cartesian ideal to be appropriate for all occasion of

argument and instead propose the New Rhetoric which considers argument to be a tool for increasing the adherence of minds to propositions put forth.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca define the new rhetoric as “the study of the discursive techniques allowing us to induce or to increase the mind’s adherence to the theses presented for its assent” (4). They hold the belief that when disputable premises, instances or assumptions erupts among people, the possible way to reach the desired result would be to begin from generally accepted opinions about the problems put forth. However, the aim of soliciting adherence from the audiences is gradual as well as a relative process. It is gradual because different people adherence to theses presented might vary in intensity and relative too since what may solicit compliance from one person may not necessarily solicit from the other. The approval of the thesis varies because the value judgment of the evaluating audiences differs from individual to individual. The New Rhetoric framework begins from the audience whom they define as “the ensemble of those whom the speaker wishes to influence by his argumentation” (19). Audiences are vital in the New Rhetoric because the rhetor adopts his values and judgments in the light of the audience he addresses. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca hold a view that “analysis of argumentation . . . deal[s] first with what is taken as the starting point of arguments and afterwards with the way in which arguments are developed through a whole set of associative and disassociative processes” (65). A properly developed argument requires a point of agreement to commence the argument. The speaker consciously and deliberately studies the values and ethos of the audience and formulates a concise plan to address the hearers in order to gain adherence. Perelman adds, “When a speaker selects and puts forward the premises that are to serve as a foundation for his argument, he relies on his hearer's adherence to the proposition from which he will start” (65).

However, the premises which the speaker presents to the audiences could be accepted or unaccepted ". . . either because they do not adhere to what the speaker presents to them as being accepted, or they may see that his choice of premises is one-sided, or they may be shocked by the tendentious way in which the premises were advanced" (65). Adherence from the audience to the premises present is relative because the same premises can be adhered by some whereas rejected by the other depending upon the schema of the audiences.

Moreover, Perelman divides the objects of an agreement into the real: facts, truths and presumption, and the preferable: values, hierarchies, and lines of argument relating to the preferable. The belief about real which the people hold depends on the philosophic views they live with but "everything in argumentation that is deemed to relate to the real is characterized by a claim to validity vis-a vis the universal audience" and the preferable ". . . is necessarily identified with some particular audience. . ." (66). The presumption is another object of an agreement which depends on reasoning. It renders universal agreement because "presumptions are connected with what is normal and likely" (71). It grounds itself on rationality, but a reinforcement of presumption is significant according to the duos. Preferable, another object of the agreement as proposed by the Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, encompasses values, hierarchies and loci of preferable. Values mean the commonly held belief by a particular community. The duos argue, "Agreement with regard to a value means an admission that an object, a being, or an idea must have a specific influence on action and on disposition toward action . . ." (74). Nonetheless, the foundation of agreement of values depends on hierarchies implied implicitly. ". . . hierarchies often remain implicit . . . [and] . . . occur in practice with two distinct aspects: next to concrete hierarchies, like that of expressing the superiority of men over

animals, there are abstract hierarchies, like that expressing the superiority of the just over useful" (80). The interconnection between values is the reason behind the subordination of certain values over the other. The hierarchies of values create incompatibilities compelling the audiences to make a choice. Hierarchies build incompatibilities while common sense, which is lists of commonly accepted knowledge among the particular groups of people, propels the audience to prefer one value over the other. Common sense differs from groups to groups, society to society, nation to nation and discipline to discipline. Each discipline forms its unique periphery where enlightened common sense is practiced and expected from the people initiated into that discipline, unlike accepted knowledge of the universal audience.

Studies carried out by scholars on Bertrand Russell mostly examined his authored texts consisting only of philosophical significance either of mathematics, political or analytical philosophy. Chandrakala Padia, Vincent Buranneli and Ivor Grattan- Guinness analyzed Bertrand Russell's political philosophy, his impression and view on nuclear war, respectively. However, there is a gap that exists here in the sense that scholars have explored only the philosophical aspect of Russell.

Furthermore, studies carried out on his essays do little justice to him as an essayist. Don King, in his research paper called "The Rhetorical similarities of Bertrand Russell and C.S Lewis", merely highlights some rhetorical techniques that the essayist utilized in his writing but robust investigation regarding Russell essays in the light of the New Rhetoric is still hard to find. Don King, in his analysis, argues that in his speech called "Why I am not a Christian", ". . . Russell shows himself to be informed, certain of his object of argumentation, and enlightened. His persona comes across as someone worth listening to, regardless the audience's own stand" (28). Besides, according to King, Russell also employs Aristotle's proofs in his speech. He uses logos and pathos when he used real-life situations and personal examples.

Nonetheless, the studies mentioned hardly analyze Russell's art of persuasion. Most of them focus on his contents than investigating how he presents his contents, excluding the study carried out by Don King, who inquiries into his presentation exclusively remaining within Aristotle's ethos, pathos and logos. However, this paper studies how Russell articulates his ideas on controversial issues persuasively. Three essays entitled "Free Thought and Official Propaganda", "On Being Modern-Minded" and "Philosophy for Laymen" are minutely scrutinized to discover the appeal in his arguments as well as to enquire whether Russell achieves his purpose or not.

In addition, this research paper helps explicitly to enlighten general enthusiasts interested in Russell's work as well as academicians understanding of Bertrand Russell's works. Academicians usually identify Russell as a logician, and perceive his arguments as that of mathematical logicians. However, Russell essays concern not with analytical reasoning but dialectical reasoning, ". . . the former deal[s] with truth and the latter with justifiable opinion" (Perelman 3). Apart from enhancing the knowledge about Russell's work, this research also contributes to the further studies of Bertrand Russell's work. Hence, this research not only supplies knowledge about Russell's rhetoric but also adds to the study of Russell's discourse through a rhetorical lens; even so, this study is limited to the study of the rhetoric of selected essays of Bertrand Russell. The research employs the concept of the New Rhetoric as proposed in Chaïm Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (1969) as a framework for analysis.

Bertrand Russell around the world is recognized as a British Philosopher, logician, historian, essayist and most importantly mathematician. His *Principia Mathematica* published in 1910 obscures his other contributions. He was "the thinker

who had revolutionized the science of mathematic logic and then gone on to both a legend in the world of learning and an oracle in the affairs of men and nation” (Buranelli 44). Critics of Russell’s work argue that Russell penned his thoughts on numerous subjects. Allan Wood states “Russell's work covers so many different subjects that there is probably no single living person equipped with a sufficiently thorough knowledge of them all to write an adequate commentary. . .” (260). Russell wanted a change in human nature. The immense trouble of the world compelled Russell to write prolifically about contemporary issues to change people's perception. Will Durant states “. . . Bertrand Russell who had lain so long buried and mute under the weight of logic and mathematics and epistemology, suddenly burst forth," into "a man of infinite courage, and a passionate lover of humanity" (628). Durant’s statement on Russell provides insight about his personality. Apart from being a bohemian mathematician, he was an ardent philanthropist. "However, of all the means by which he hoped nature might be changed, none held out more hope to him during the 1920s than education. It was primarily to education that he looked for a way of producing people who could be resolute without being ruthless" (Griffin 10). In all his essays, Russell shows an ardent passion for some truth independent of human and minds of men. Russell harbored an extraordinary love for existence. He states, in the prologue of his autobiography:

Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of humankind. These passions, like great winds, have blown me hither and thither, in a wayward course, over a deep ocean of anguish, reaching to the very verge of despair. (3)

Russell's statements, mentioned above, provide evidence to his indefatigable journey for love, knowledge and consideration for the suffering of humankind. This quote from his autobiography points out his anguish having root in human suffering. He believes that humanity's future rests on independent individuals – free in their thought and action. In order to understand the rhetoric of Bertrand Russell well, it is advantageous to consider the origin and meaning of rhetoric. According to Herrick,

The systematic study of oratory (or rhetoric) probably originated in the city of Syracuse on the island of Sicily around 467 B.C . . . His systematic approach . . . was carried to Athens and other Greek city-states by professional teachers and practitioners of rhetoric known as Sophists. Many Sophists were attracted to the flourishing city of Athens where they taught rhetoric to anyone able to pay their high fees. (32)

Gorgias, Protagoras, and Isocrates were the most influential rhetorician of ancient Greece, but their rhetorical approach was fiercely criticized by Plato, “. . . in his dialogue entitled *Gorgias*, and suggested the possibility of a "true rhetoric" in another dialogue called *Phaedrus*” (Herrick 53). Plato critically examines sophistic rhetoric in his dialogue called *Gorgias*, he argues, “. . . the Sophists' rhetoric is simply a knack for creating persuasive speeches lacking any foundation in justice. Practicing debased rhetoric is dangerous as it leads to an unjust society. Educating young people to practice such rhetoric is also reprehensible because it perpetuates injustice” (61). Whereas, he outlines his idea about rhetoric in *Phaedrus*. Plato believes that a true rhetoric

. . . would consist of a thorough knowledge of the different types of human souls, as well as a thorough knowledge of how to make arguments that would appeal to each type of soul. Moreover, the true rhetorician would have to

understand truth and justice. The goal of this art would be to order society properly so that a healthy nation would result. (68)

Unlike the Sophists, Plato stands against using rhetoric to acquire personal benefits. He prefers rhetoric to be used in the upliftment of society. Although Sophist initiated the study of rhetoric, the credit of systematizing the rhetoric goes to Aristotle. According to Herrick, Aristotle held that, in order to be a successful rhetorician, one certainly needed to understand arguments. But it was also necessary to have a thorough understanding of human emotion, and of the constituents of good character” (88). The theories of Rhetoric emerged in Greek rhetoric shaped the rhetoric in its present state.

Presently, there are as many definitions of Rhetoric as there are rhetors. Kangira and Mungenga provide various thoughts on rhetoric by the ancient scholars who studied rhetoric. Plato considers rhetoric as an art that aims at winning over the soul while Aristotle defines rhetoric as a field responsible for discovering the available means of persuasion in any particular field. Moreover, the authors mention that Cicero points out five parts – invention, disposition, elocution, memoria and pronounciation - of rhetoric. He believes rhetoric to be a speech designed to urge people. Finally, Kangira and Mungenga also note that Quintilian took rhetoric as an art of speaking well. Rhetoric seems to have surfaced for the sole purpose of persuading the audience.

Furthermore, Burke defines rhetoric as “the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or induce actions in other agents” (41). He finds rhetoric as a mean that allows human to manipulate words to form attitudes over some issues or persuade others to perform specific actions. In addition to this, Burke also claims that in rhetoric “a speaker persuades an audience by the use of stylistic identifications; his

act of persuasion may be the purpose of causing the audience to identify itself with the speaker's interests" (46). Burke's thought on rhetoric is synonymous to ancient rhetoric scholar since they also point to persuasion as an underlying aim of rhetoric. Rhetors induce persuasion or compliance over their view through the techniques at their disposal. Asemanyi and Alofah, contemporary scholars, define rhetoric as the art of discourse; an art that aims to improve the capabilities of writers or speakers that attempt to inform, persuade or motivate particular audiences in specific situations. Malmkjaer, on the other hand, notes that rhetoric originated from the theory of how best a speaker or writer could, by application of linguistic devices, achieve persuasion. Furthermore, Cronick maintains that the rhetoric explores how people employ language to achieve specific goals; that is, to convince others, establish power structures and make people do what the speaker wants the audience to do.

Mshvenieradze argues that the goal of argumentative writing is to persuade an audience that the idea of a writer is more convincing than that of others. From the definitions, mentioned earlier, of rhetoric by contemporary rhetoric scholars it is evident that the field of rhetoric at present is not limited to speech but encompasses written texts as well used for informing, persuading and motivating the audience.

Despite the plethora of definitions of rhetoric, the rhetoric's common goal seems to be persuasion or compliance with the theses presented before the audiences. Rhetoric, thus, is the art of using different techniques to persuade an audience to adopt ideas or to influence the actions of the audience by the rhetor either in written or spoken.

Audiences are important in any rhetoric. The audience comprises of people with their distinct values and ethos. According to Perelman, in order to address the

audience of different values and ethos, the rhetor adapts himself and ". . . chooses his point of departure from only the theses accepted by those he addresses" (21).

Bertrand Russell, as it appears from his selected essays, commences his essays from the compliable theses. In other words, his initial point of argumentation seeks consent from the audiences. For instance, he begins his essay entitled "Free Thought and Official Propaganda" citing Moncure Conway. This essay was a lecture which the essayist gave in 1992 in order to honour Moncure Conway. Russell cleverly amalgamates his view regarding the independence of individual and freedom of speech to Conway arguing that freedom of thought and freedom of the individual were the two significant objects to which Conway devoted his life:

Moncure Conway, in whose honour we are assembled today, devoted his life to two great objects: freedom of thought, and freedom of the individual. In regard to both these objects, something has been gained since his time, but something also has been lost . . . My purpose in this essay is to emphasize the new dangers and to consider how they can be met. (Russell 124)

To enlighten the audiences about the challenges to freedom of thought and individual, he connects his view with observed facts of Conway, which provides ample ground for him to proceed his argument. Russell has connected his idea with the real historical person to find common ground. Similarly, in the essay "On Being Modern Minded" and "Philosophy for Laymen" Russell utilizes presumption, a belief based on evidence, to create an agreement between himself and the audience. For example, he begins "On Being Modern - Minded" presuming distinction between the present age and the age of Homer, "Our age is the most parochial since Homer" (Russel 88), and "Philosophy for Laymen" providing two difficulties that human civilization has faced since its inception; he argues, "Mankind. . . have been confronted with problems of two

different kinds. . . the problem of mastering natural forces. . . and the problem of how best to utilize our command over the forces of nature” (Russell 35). Presumption, according to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, “. . . enjoy[s] universal agreement”(70), but presumption alone fails to solicit sufficient adherence from the audience, so Russell immediately supplies further explanation to reinforce the presumption in addition to concrete examples.

The credibility of the speaker remains significant in any argumentation. In other words, the speaker or the writer should garner trust from the audiences. Audiences seeksome sort of specialization, reputation, knowledge of the subject and general moral quality from the speaker. Aristotle terms this credibility of the author as ethos. According to Longaker and Walker, "Ethos is the apparent character of the speaker – whatever inspires trust . . ." (45). "Ethos or credibility has to do with the ethical appeal of the rhetor, it is easier to believe those that are trusted and respected by the audience. The tone and style of the message given can convey a sense of ethos or trustworthiness” (Ramage and Bean 15). Russell in his essay presents a persona who can be trusted. In “Free Thought and Official Propaganda”, he argues:

I am myself a dissenter from all known religions, and I hope that every kind of religious belief has been a force for good. Although I am prepared to admit that in certain times and places it has had some good effects, I regard it as belonging to the infancy of human reason, and to a stage of development which we are now outgrowing. (125)

Perelman also recognizes the role that the personality of the speaker plays on audiences. He maintains, “When it is a question not of facts but of opinions, and especially of value judgments, not only the person of the speaker but also the function he exercises, the role he assumes, undeniably influences the way the audience will receive his words”

(Perelman 98). Analyzing Russell's essays in the light of Perelman views points at one of the crucial reasons for the effectiveness of his essays - “. . . prestige of a person or a group is used to gain acceptance of a thesis” (Perelman 94). Audiences hardly raise questions at his value judgments since academically he was a lecturer in Cambridge where he lectured on Leibniz and mathematical logic and not to mention his stature in the world as “. . . the youngest and the most virile of the European thinkers. . .” (Durant 621). Russell’s authority not only came from his acts and fame but also from his family “For he belongs to the Russells, one of the oldest and most famous families in England or the world, a family has given statesman to Britain for many generations” (Durant 621). Hence, his value judgements successfully gain the adherence of the people - for his past and action compacts. What is more, liaisons of coexistence not only encompass the ethos of the person arguing but era or epoch as well. Perelman claims:

Based on the model of the act-person liaison, other liaisons of coexistence are developed, the use of which is typical of the human sciences. When the historical sciences shift their focus of interest from individuals to peoples, eras, institutions, and political and economic regimes, they lay stress on new categories, formed in imitation of the person. (98)

Bertrand Russell in the essay "On Being Modern-Minded" bestows characteristics to the age –which is modern. Age is an abstract concept, but Russell gives certain traits to the modern age, for instance, he states "Our age is the most parochial since Homer" (Russell 88); however, age can never be narrow-minded or broad-minded, but Russell declares age as parochial. This technique allows him to hint at the characteristics of the people living under the concerned era. By referring the modern age parochial; implicitly, he reveals the peculiar trait of modern man who “. . . finds it difficult to go on doing the

work that he himself thinks best and is inclined to subordinate his judgment to the general opinion". Besides overlooking their judgment, the people under parochial age also, according to Russell, want "to be pointed out, admired, mentioned constantly in the press. . ." (91). Furthermore, choice, presence and presentation also determine the effectiveness of the argument. Attention sought to particular facts and details draw one's consciousness and thereby maintain a presence in psyche affecting the decision made. Perelman maintains, "Every argument implies a preliminary selection of facts and values, their specific description in a given language, and an emphasis which varies with the importance given them. . . Presence acts directly upon our sensibility" (34-35). Russell, in his Rhetoric, manipulates the hierarchies of values. The preference for specific values over the other provides Russell with an opportunity to intensify the solicitation of adherence to the thesis. As an example, in "Philosophy and Laymen" he encourages the audiences to adhere to the thesis that philosophy is vital to the general people citing the reason that it teaches people to think critically. Similarly, in "Free Thought and Official Propaganda" he emphasizes the importance of the ability "to weigh the evidence or to form an independent opinion the ability" (136). As seen in the examples, Russell exploits specific values over the other, and his values are generally respected by the audience because ". . . they have specific influence on action and on disposition toward action" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 74). Also, hierarchies in Russell arguments spawn incompatibilities driving the audiences to make a choice. The general belief among human being usually advocates for the propagation of independence of thought and speech since self-evidently it appears beneficial to the people, and Russell utilizes this common belief to reinforce his presumption. Moreover, the New Rhetoric claims that

. . . in argumentation we find ourselves . . . faced with incompatibilities in those instances in which the affirmation of a rule, assertion of a thesis, or adoption of an attitude involve us, even against our will, in a conflict with either a previously affirmed thesis or rule, or with generally accepted thesis to which we as members of a group are expected to adhere. (Perelman 54)

Audiences exist in time and space. The specific time and space of an audience shapes their values and opinion over subject matters. As a result, the people of same nation but existing in different time and space might show varying responses to the same subject. Seeking consent from audience comprising of various background is a difficult task. To address this, incompatibility or conflict between the ideas is vital to stimulate audience's response. Russell, being an astute Rhetorician, understands this; hence, he convincingly rolls out arguments and evidences to counter the beliefs of his audience. In an essay entitled "Free Thought and Official Propaganda" Russell sheds lights on how the state propagates specific values over others confiscating the right of people to grow independently citing his own experience. He argues:

. . . in modern England, the scales are weighted in favour of Christianity . . . My father was a free-thinker, but died when I was only three years old. Wishing me to be brought up without superstitions, he appointed two free-thinkers as my guardians. The court, however, set aside his will, and had me educated in the Christian faith . . . A parent has a right to ordain that any imaginable superstition shall be instilled into his children after his death, but has not right to say that they shall be kept free from superstition if possible. (127)

Russell, in the extract, demonstrates the obstacle people face in the path of freedom of thought. The state of England allowed Russell to be raised according to Christian faith but not to the principle of free thinkers. The state stance over his upbringing is

incompatible because “. . . one of them applies to a situation which the other excludes” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 203). He brings in the consciousness of the audiences about the opposite stances the state has over the people lives. By demonstrating his own country’s conflicting attitude on his upbringing, Russell cautions people about the hindrances to the freedom of thought.

The New Rhetoric considers examples to be one of the techniques of materializing theses in the mind of the audiences. Perelman opines that "To argue by example is to presuppose the existence of certain regularities of which the examples provide a concretization" (106). Examples aid the speaker to cement his arguments in the psyche of the speaker but "Whatever the way in which the argumentation takes place, the example chosen must, in order to be accepted as such, enjoy the status of a fact, at least provisionally" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 353). Russell, in his essay "Free Thought and Official Propaganda" uses an actual example to show the reluctance of discipline other than science in welcoming new beliefs and ideas.

Einstein[‘s] . . . theory upsets the whole theoretical framework of traditional physics . . . Yet physicists everywhere have shown complete readiness to accept his theory as soon as it appeared that the evidence was in its favour. But none of them, least of all Einstein himself, would claim that he has said the last word . . . What would happen if Einstein had advanced something equally new in the sphere of religion or politics? (130)

Russell, in the above example, brings the indubitable fact to concretize his theses.

Einstein theory of relativity challenged the then-dominant Newtonian theory of physics, and all the scientific community embraced the new change because science accepts the change, but Darwin's theory of evolution received scorn and hatred from the people for it held belief contrasting to that of Christianity. Russell intends to aware people by the help

of the example about the hostile attitude which people have towards new belief and theory in disciplines other than science like politics and religion. Science welcomes the change if facts and evidences are provided unlike religion and politics. New ideas in religion and politics always encounter hostility in contrast to science. He praises the receptive attitude of science and hopes to encourage people of other disciplines to have “critical undogmatic receptiveness” (130). This example in essay implicitly encourages the audience to weigh and judge new belief appearing in the arena of religion and politics before being belligerent to it.

Additionally, Russell establishes sequential relations to intensify the argumentative effects. He presents “. . . the affirmation of a casual tie between phenomena, argumentation . . . and direct[s] toward the search for causes, the determination of effects, and the evaluation of a fact by its consequences” (Perelman 81-82). The speaker builds casual tie “. . . to account for phenomenon, to explain it, and at times to direct further inquiries” (82). For instance, in the essay “On Being Modern-Minded”, the essayist considers the appetite for contemporaneous interpretation of all the past achievements problematic and provides reasons behind such impulse – the reasons are “The money rewards and widespread though ephemeral fame . . . rapidity of progress . . . [and lack of] any inner defense against social pressure” (Russell 91-93). In this essay, the administration of causes plays a vital role in inciting the audience to reflect on their views about modernity. Consequently, it urges them to adhere to the theses of the speaker: the insatiable desire to interpret past with modern perspective is not always right.

In addition to establishing sequential relation, Russell also employs the technique of ridiculing. He mocks people’s hastiness in approving new fashion

without contemplation. A person faces ridicule when his/her opinion stands against logic. According to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, “Ridicule is a powerful weapon at the disposal of a speaker against those who might undermine his argument by refusing, without cause, to accept some premise of his discourse” (206). Ridicule stands as a powerful argumentative technique at Russell’s disposal in the essay. For example, he argues, “The belief that fashion alone should dominate opinion has great advantages. It makes thought unnecessary and puts the highest intelligence within the reach of everyone” (Russell 90). Russell ridicules those audiences refusing to accept his argument. He mentions the advantages of succumbing to fashion but with repercussions. A person adhering to latest fashion is bestowed with a blessing- he doesn’t have to think. Meaning transcends the words in the argument. Russell critiques the believers implying that they are not thinkers but mere simulators in every vistas of life.

Despite the importance of building a link between the arguments, the opposite may also occur in an argument. The dissociation of ideas is another technique present in Russell’s selected essays but hardly discussed in traditional rhetoric. Perelman maintains that “The dissociation of notions brings about a more or less profound change in the conceptual data that are used the basis of argument” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 412). It restricts the independence of concepts or elements and not to mention erases the existence of connecting link. According to the authors, “Lack of connection may be probed by actual or mental experience, by changes in the conditions governing the situation. . . Efforts will also be made to bring forward all the drawbacks of the connection” (411). In the essay "Philosophy for Laymen", Russell creates a distinction between philosophy designed for laymen and that aimed at specialist. Philosophy, according to popular belief, is the arena of specialist.

Academician as well as commoners strongly adhere to the belief that philosophy is the business of intelligent people. In contrast to this popular opinion, Russell argues, “. . . the philosophy that should be a part of general education is not the same things as the philosophy of specialists. Not only in philosophy, but in all branches of academic study, there is distinction between what has cultural value and what is only of professional interest” (Russell 37). Here, Russell advocates for incorporating philosophy in general education. For him, general philosophy must free itself from the grip of handful of academicians in order to make human beings more humane – thoughtful and responsible towards their act. He counters the widespread belief that philosophy is meant for specialist and forwards a proposition to include philosophy in general education. Hence, he divides philosophy into the parts which address the needs of specialist and that of general public. Russell cleverly mentions the disadvantages of excluding general philosophy from the public in order to provoke people to consider the dangers of allowing society to be run by the human resources indifferent of the future of humanity. He, through the essay, aims to encourage human society to provide philosophical wisdom to the laymen in order to utilize the resources best and make the society a better place to live.

Russell not only critically examines philosophy based on its purpose but its objects as well. He asserts, "Philosophy has had from its earliest days two different objects . . . on the one hand, it aimed at a theoretical understanding of the structure of the world; on the other hand, it tried to discover and inculcate the best possible way of life" (Russell 38). Based on its objects, Russell further maintains that philosophy relates to science as well as religion. Nonetheless, he concedes to the fact well established today - the philosophy being merely theoretical. However, he refutes the popular opinion that considers philosophy unprogressive as a verbal matter because “as soon

as a way is found of arriving at definite knowledge on some ancient question, the new knowledge is counted as belonging to "science," and "philosophy" is deprived of the credit" (Russell 38). Philosophy is discredited of its achievement. Russell opines that philosophy has created knowledge since ages but when concretization of the knowledge takes place it gets transferred to the arena of science which makes philosophy a mere discipline of word.

Russell views philosophy not only as a means of creating knowledge but also a discipline capable of stimulating human beings to search answer to perennial questions. According to Russell, despite the massive technological advancement, humans still have

. . . a number of purely theoretical questions, of perennial and passionate interest, which science is unable to answer, at any rate at present. Do we survive death in any sense, and if so, do we survive for a time or for ever? . . .

Has the universe a purpose? Or is it driven by blind necessity? Or is it a mere chaos and jumble. . . (40-41)

Russell asks a rhetorical question which he believes the science does not have concrete answer. Russell advocates for teaching general philosophy "To keep alive the interest in such questions [death, meaning of life, afterlife etc], and to scrutinize suggested answer, is one of the functions of philosophy" (Russell 41). Russell's argument to make philosophy part of general education would not have been as convincing had he not employed the technique of dissociation. He dissociates philosophy from the realm of science and religion. He confirms that blind adherence to religions ideologies harms the human society and argues for the propagation of philosophy, which he believes will allow people to think for themselves.

The speaker's style of rhetoric remains vital to project arguments in the psyche of the audiences effectively. Longaker and Walker argue that "Eloquence consists of impressive verbal effects, flourishes, and "flowers of rhetoric" that charm, beguile, and move the passions of the audience" (136). However, "Style is not something added to the argument. It is the argument embodied" (137). Stylistic analysis of Russell's selected essays allows the readers to better their understanding of his arguments. The clarity, correctness, appropriateness and distinction of Russell's arguments are unquestionable. His language is precise familiar and accessible to the general readers. In terms of language, he maintains distance with sophisticated vocabulary. Most importantly, the arguments are easy to follow. The use of formal English maintains the decorum of the rhetorical situation. The "discourse exhibits such qualities as individuality, variety, wittiness, expressiveness, impressiveness, charm. . . . sophistication . . ." (Longaker and Walker 141). Similarly, diction is another important aspect of any argumentative writing. It is "word choice and the texture of meaning it creates" (142). The employment of particular words in an argument achieves a specific purpose. Thus, diction is significant. Under diction, Russell manipulates schemes in his discourses. According to Longaker and Walker, "Schemes involves not twisted word usages or substitutions, but distinctive word arrangements (or additions, subtractions, and/or rearrangements)" (150). Antithesis one of schemes of accumulation which is visible in Russell's "Philosophy for Laymen". Antithesis refers to the intentional juxtaposition of contrasting ideas, usually through parallel structures. For instance, "Some men are so impressed by what science knows that they forget what it does not know; others are so much more interested in what it does not know than in what it does that they belittle its achievement" (Russell 40). In this extract, Russell demonstrates the insufficient observation people usually possess about science. He wants people to acknowledge what the science knows and well as what it misses.

Another technique that featured in the argument is anadiplosis. It is a figure of reiteration which occurs when last words, terms, phrase or clauses repeats at the beginning of the next sentence, clause or phrase. In the essay “On Being Modern-Minded” on defining the hope of modern-minded man he writes:

His highest hope is to think first what is about to be thought, to say what is about to be said, and to feel what is about to be felt; he has no wish to think better thoughts than his neighbors, to say things showing more insight, or to have emotions which are not those of some fashionable group, but only to be slightly ahead of others in point of time. Quite deliberately he suppresses what is individual in himself for the sake of the admiration of the herd.” (90)

Russell repeats the phrase "what is about to..." to emphasize the lack of vision in people to think beyond the present. However, he does not leave his ideas weaved in anadiplosis but further reiterates the ideas differently to demonstrates the modern-minded people's excessive desire to identify with the herd. The speaker shows his dissatisfaction towards the people who in the name of being modern associate themselves with the newest trends naively.

All in all, the research concludes that Russell’s essays are best understood in the light of the New Rhetoric than classical rhetoric for it spawned as an art of oratory. In sharp contrast, the arena of New Rhetoric primarily concerns itself with written texts and aims to understand the thought mechanism manipulated by the speaker to elicit adherence of mind.

Furthermore, Russell arguments, in the selected essays, adhere to dialectical reasoning – not on demonstration. Demonstration, usually free of ambiguities, restricts natural language. However, dialectical reasoning or arguments sticks to natural language. Consequently, in the essays under analysis, abstains from

saying anything self-contradictory. Audiences adhere to the theses²⁵ when their values and ways of seeing things match with the speaker. Hence, the speaker begins his essays from generally accepted opinions then only presents arguments to arrive at specific conclusions.

Also, Russell's advocacy for independence of mind and freedom of individual remains valid due to his formidable position of philosopher and well-recognized personality. He belongs to a historic family whose influence limits not only to public space but to parliament and government as well. His character, or ethos, bestows him authorial power that allows him to maneuver the audiences' values and beliefs. Russell's aims his discourse to universal audience because it is valid for everyone; the theses he presents in his selected essays attempts to make the world a better place to live. For instance, he argues for political ideology free education and general philosophical education to all laymen in order to teach people to think clearly. Thus, he builds humanitarian persona, concerned about the world, in his selected essays.

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