

Perelman believes that the aim of argument is to, “gain[ing] the adherence of minds...”(14). The word adherence is a key concept within Perelman as it flags a type of measurement. In order to judge an effective argument one needs to consider the staying power that the argument has upon its audience; does the interlocutor change the mind of the listener momentarily, or in the most successful manner indefinitely. The notion of adherence is linked to section six, as strong adherence marks the differentiation between merely persuading and conviction. The strongest possible adherence gains the conviction of every being (universal audience) and is thought to be more than a proven fact, but *right* (31), and in addition this adherence brings about action. The addressee is first persuaded by the arguer, and then internally by himself: for as one actively adopts the views of another as our own we experience conviction (41).

Argumentation in contrast to demonstration does not exist within a vacuum, but is concerned with the psychology and social conditions of the respective audience. In opposition to the demonstrative scientific understanding that the “facts speak for themselves”(17) effective and adhering argumentation must concern itself with presentation to an audience, and subsequently drawing attention from that often indifferent audience. When Perelman uses the word audience he is concerned with whomever the speaker wishes to influence by his argumentation (not necessarily the person/people he is directly speaking to).

Audiences are divided into three types 1) deliberative—engaged in deliberating 2) forensic—engaged in judging 3) epideictic—engaged in pleasure (not responsible for reaching a conclusion). While a polyphonic argument may contain deliberative elements which look at what to do in the future, forensic elements that look at what has been done wrong in the past, and epideictic elements which consider values as a whole: New Rhetoricians believe that what the audience ultimately takes away from the argument are its lasting epideictic values (47). In other words if what has lasting effects on the audience are the values internalized through the epideictic genre, then by definition the epideictic argument can be measured as having the most potential for adherence.

Also of key importance for Perelman is the universal audience. The notion of the universal audience is built up by Perelman when he cites Cartesian certitude as defined by Dumas as a universal and “complete belief”(32), he then knocks this notion down by alluding to Einsteinian notions of relativity based on the position of the observer when he writes, “Each individual, each culture, has its own conception of the universal audience”(33). Thus, universality exists only with regards to what an individual believes wholly in regards to all “others”, and even then these beliefs change with time, just as Foucault has taught us that “truth” changes with each new discovery, and is decided by those in positions of power. However, if one takes into account the Lacanian notion that the “self” is “other” it stands to reason that with adequate persuasion any given culture’s, or individual’s universal audience can be demonstrated as coinciding with an “other’s” by highlighting their similar core values. In this regard the notion that the epideictic argument is all encompassing and most important makes perfect sense, for it is best aligned with the notions of a universal audience and those understandings and values, which have the capability to transcend separate discourse communities and win over complex audiences.