



Research Paper

A Phenomenological Escape from Russell's Critique in "Why Am I Not a Christian?" On the Prejudice of Religious People

Mahmoud Dayyani¹ , Mohammad Ali Dayyani^{*2} ¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy and Islamic Theology, University of Mazandaran.² PhD in Religions and Mysticism and Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Mazandaran, m.alidayyani@yahoo.com[10.22080/jepr.2026.29315.1282](https://doi.org/10.22080/jepr.2026.29315.1282)

Received:

May 25, 2025

Accepted:

December 6, 2025

Available online:

December 31, 2025

Keywords:

Phenomenological Criticism, Bertrand Russell, Religious Fanaticism, Academic Theologians, Arrogance

Abstract

In the current century, a great philosopher like Bertrand Russell has confronted the world of faith and theology with fundamental challenges, the essence of which can be found in the concept of "religious bigotry." According to her opinion in the book "Why Am I Not a Christian?", Religion leads to prejudice, and the prejudice of religious people will result in nothing but petrification and dogmatism, which the present study interpreted as "arrogance." Apart from her view of all religious believers, especially Christian believers, it seems that, from a phenomenological perspective, to pathologize Russell's statement and ultimately respond to her criticism, we must first pay attention to the "academic theologians" as the leaders and influencers in this field. The following article has attempted to address the issue of arrogance in this field by using a phenomenological method based on objective-applied manifestations and a descriptive-analytical type; due to the novelty of the subject and the lack of necessary specialized resources, relying on argumentative perspectives and based on a self-constructed and experience-oriented theoretical movement, while presenting a clear picture of academic theology, in relation to it. And as a result, it offers solutions to overcome this unfortunate intellectual and behavioral dilemma. As a result, it recommends strategic reasoning principles to the principle of research and investigation, the systematic application of which will reduce the prejudice of religious people and the resulting arrogance in the thought and practice of professors and students in the field of academic theology, and consequently, free them from Russellian criticism.

***Corresponding Author:** Mohammad Ali Dayyani**Address:** University of Mazandaran.**Email:** m.alidayyani@yahoo.com



Extended Abstract

In the present century, a great philosopher like Bertrand Russell has confronted the world of faith and theology with fundamental challenges, the essence of which can be found in the concept of "religious bigotry."

According to her opinion in the book "Why Am I Not a Christian?", Religion leads to prejudice, and the prejudice of religious people will result in nothing but petrification and dogmatism, which the present study interpreted as "arrogance." One of the challenging concepts that has been widely criticized and condemned in the religious, political, scientific, and economic arenas is the issue of arrogance. In terms of typology and genealogy, arrogance has variations that are each worth analyzing in their own right, considering that arrogance is a morally and socially reprehensible trait, as it goes beyond the realm of thought and thought and enters the realm of behavior and action. Another point is that a fundamental difference must be made between the three terms that refer to each other and their conceptual limits and boundaries must be recognized from each other; just as arrogance in the field of belief is considered different from arrogance in the field of science and in the field of religious knowledge, all three are considered different from each other. Apart from Russell's view of all religious believers, especially Christian believers, it seems that, from a phenomenological perspective, to pathologize Russell's statement and ultimately respond to her criticism, we must first pay attention to the "academic theologians" as the leaders and influencers in this field. The question is: How can Muslim theologians and theological readers, as those who breathe and live in the realm of academic theology,

distance themselves from arrogance in the theoretical and practical realms and escape Russellian criticism, using strategic-argumentative principles? This research has attempted to use the phenomenological method, which is based on examining the attributes of phenomena (symbols) and does not pay attention to the essence of phenomena (beings), due to the novelty of the subject and the lack of necessary specialized resources, relying on argumentative perspectives and based on a self-constructed and experience-oriented theoretical movement, to benefit from Russell's criticism of the followers of religion. This means that theology in the hands of academic theologians should be viewed as a living and vital entity, and considering the existing manifestations of this field - and not its beings - from the heart of this objective - and not subjective - phenomenon, it should present strategies so that academic theologians can escape Russell's criticism by clinging to it. In the first step, it presents a clear picture of the characteristics of academic theology, and due to the novelty of the subject and the lack of necessary specialized resources, in considering the acquisition of resources, while there are special limitations, it considers academic theology to have certain characteristics, including: Theology as a solid and independent discipline, having a systematic system, a specific domain of knowledge, a diversity of interdisciplinary and extra disciplinary attitudes and tendencies, originality of perspective, extensive attention to the text, capacity for conceptual studies, capacity for comparative studies, capacity for comparative studies, The capacity for phenomenological studies, the capacity for interdisciplinary studies, was mentioned. At the same time, the recognition of the characteristics of the field of academic theology, which can reveal and strengthen the grounds for



arrogance in theologians and theological readers, is presented in a categorized and orderly manner, including: He pointed out the lack of philosophizing and rethinking of previous acceptances, a fanatical and devout view of previous acceptances, failure to recognize the authenticity of other perspectives, interpretation based on opinion, deviation in the methodical conduct of comparative studies, underestimation of comparative studies, disregard for phenomenological studies, and lack of precision in expressing statements in the

form of non-expert and non-scientific statements. Finally, the authors have found that theologians and academic theological students, by adhering to the practical strategies outlined in this research, can, to a large extent, take steps to overcome the intellectual and practical dilemma of arrogance in thought and action, and consequently, distance themselves from Russell's criticism. In this research there is no funding support and declared no conflict of interest.



References

Russell, Bertrand, 2019, *Why I am not a Christian*, compiled by Paul Edwards, translated by Amir Soltanzadeh, Alam Publishing House, Tehran.

Sidney Hook, 1939, "Lord Russell and the War Crimes Trial", Bertrand

Russell: critical assessments, edited by A. D. Irvine, New York, Volume 1.

Dartig, Andre, 1994, *What is Phenomenology?*, Translated by Mahmoud, Nawali, Samt Organization Publications, Tehran.