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### Norms of Forcibleness

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# Norms of Forcibleness

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**ABSTRACT:** If logic alone does not compel adherence to a thesis, must we conclude that the audience is irrational at worst or weak at best? I submit that a normative pragmatic perspective helps to explain cases of argumentation where logical or intellectual forcibleness alone is not sufficient for pressuring addressees to believe, consider, or do something. I argue (1) that a normative pragmatic perspective explains why argumentation foregrounding only logical forms may in some cases reasonably be expected to lack forcibleness and, in doing so, (2) that a normative pragmatic perspective offers a more complete account of norms of forcibleness than a logical perspective. To support these claims, I first overview a normative pragmatic account of forcibleness and then analyze and evaluate pragmatic forcibleness in Anna Howard Shaw's 'The Fundamental Principle of a Republic'. I focus on humor as a strategy and as comprised of strategies that create reasons for attending to her argumentation and believing her thesis.

**KEY WORDS:** normative pragmatics, force, humor, rhetorical strategies, Anna Howard Shaw

## INTRODUCTION

Forcible argumentation pressures or compels addressees to adhere to a thesis, recognize premise adequacy, accept a burden of proof, and so on. Forcibleness is in part logical or intellectual. When we note that a parallel case is strong because the cases compared are sufficiently similar, or that a causal generalization is strong because there is a good explanation for why one event caused another, we are remarking on intellectual forcibleness. Argumentation that meets standards of basic critical questioning intellectually pressures us to adhere to the thesis it is designed to support; to do otherwise would seem illogical. This kind of pressure may be understood as independent from audience and context. But because argumentation involves audiences and contexts, it may not be the only relevant dimension of forcibleness.

Consider for example the kind of situation described by Richard Whately in *Elements of Rhetoric*. He sketches a case in which 'the very triumphant force of the reasoning adduced, serves to harden [some people] against admitting the conclusion' (1963, p.163). We are accustomed to criticize argumentation in which the reasoning is weak, but here Whately suggests that there are cases where the reasoning is too strong—where the intellectual forcibleness of the argumentation repels adherence to a thesis.

One explanation of this kind of case is: the audience's response is irrational. There is nothing in Whately's account to suggest that the premises are unacceptable, insufficient, irrelevant, false; or that the audience does not acknowledge the admissibility and applicability of the argument schemes used. As Whately puts it, the 'truths' have only been 'clearly explained and proved, [and] appear perfectly evident even to a child' (1963, p. 163). If we simply explain the audience's response as irrational, the case does not challenge a theory of argumentation that

## NORMS OF FORCIBLENESS

assumes that the more intellectually forcible the reasoning, the better the argumentation.

Another explanation is: the audience is rational to some degree but cannot follow a logical argument, is weak, vain, prejudiced. In his *Rhetoric* Aristotle occasionally offers these kinds of explanations for why we ought to use enthymemes rather than a long chain of reasoning (1.2.1357a), introduce our speech with a joke (3.14.1415b), or pay attention to delivery (3.1.1404a). From this perspective the case may be of marginal interest to argumentation theorists. It may be possible to identify strategies outside of the argumentation proper used to conciliate the audience, for example, but this kind of inquiry would seem to focus more on how to make argumentation effective even with a weak audience than on whether the argumentation is good for a reasonable audience.

A third explanation is: the reasons created by the argumentation—as opposed to the reasons provided in the argumentation—are not sufficiently compelling. From this perspective, the case poses an interesting question for argumentation theory: why may such argumentation reasonably be expected to lack force for an audience? What norms of forcibleness, besides intellectual, exist?

I submit that norms of forcibleness are best theorized from a normative pragmatic perspective—that intellectual forces are not sufficient for explaining how argumentation pressures us to believe, consider, or do something. I argue (1) that a normative pragmatic account of force explains why the kind of argumentation described by Whately may in some cases reasonably be expected to lack forcibleness and, in doing so, (2) that a normative pragmatic perspective offers a more complete account of forcibleness than a logical perspective. To support these claims, I first overview a normative pragmatic account of forcibleness and then analyze and evaluate argumentative forcibleness in Anna Howard Shaw's 'The Fundamental Principle of a Republic' from this perspective. I focus on humor as both a strategy and comprised of strategies that create reasons for attending to her argumentation and believing her thesis.

### A NORMATIVE PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO FORCIBLENESS

Although the pragma-dialecticians first described argumentation theory as a branch of 'normative pragmatics'—as an attempt to merge ideals of argumentation with actual practice (see van Eemeren, 1987, p. 9 and 1990, p. 40; van Eemeren, Grootendorst, Jackson, and Jacobs, 1993, ch. 1; van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004, ch. 2), here I use 'normative pragmatics' to refer to the recent work of several scholars studying argumentation from a rhetorical perspective. A normative pragmatic approach to forcibleness involves four main assumptions (Manolescu, in press).

First, the force of argumentation is derived from discourse strategies—from what arguers actually do. Discourse strategies that may serve as sources of force include taking into account the audience's interests and holding people accountable for their decisions. Other things being equal, argumentation that takes into account the addressees' interests pressures them to at least attend to the argumentation; to do otherwise seems unreasonable (Kauffeld, 1995, 1998). Argumentation that reminds listeners that they will be held accountable for their decisions pressures them to make an issue of something (Goodwin, 2002); if they do not make it an issue, then they may be subject to criticism in the future for their short-sightedness. Argumentation that shows listeners that a speaker deserves respect pressures them to accept a conclusion based simply on the speaker's say-so (Goodwin, 2001); to do otherwise may subject them to criticism for not giving the speaker her just deserts. Attention to discourse strategies focuses researchers

on how argumentation is actually practiced and the goods internal to it. Generating criteria from outside its actual practice is difficult in part because argumentation may have a number of functions. It may be possible to generate criteria for one kind of function—like resolving a disagreement through a critical discussion—but these criteria may be less useful in analyzing and assessing argumentation designed to serve other functions.

Second, these strategies or design features create reasons. A border around an editorial, for example, is not a reason given in the discourse but may create a reason or manifest rationale for persuasion (Jacobs, 2000; see also Leff, 2003); it may serve as a sign that the argumentation ought to be taken seriously or not. The aim is to identify strategies that are usefully viewed as argumentation—as reason-giving. It is possible to dismiss these strategies as outside the scope of argument proper, but then we do not account for the actual practice of argumentation. If these strategies are not viewed as creating reasons but instead as general persuasive strategies, then we may move outside the study of argumentation specifically and to the study of persuasive discourse more generally.

Third, since the strategies create reasons, the forcibleness of argumentation is not compulsion. Participants in argumentation are free to choose to evade the argumentation—to avoid or accept the consequences of not adhering to a thesis, recognizing the adequacy of a premise, discharging a burden of proof, and so on (see also Goodwin, 2003, 3-4). Argumentation cannot be compulsion because the practice of argumentation depends on reasonability and individual autonomy. If we describe inducements created by discourse strategies as carrots or sticks (Goodwin, 2002, p. 88), then it is apparent that audiences may strive for something more appealing than the carrot or be willing to put up with the stick.

Fourth, the forcibleness of argumentation is evaluated based on its reasonability under the circumstances. It may be tempting to equate forcibleness with effectiveness: argumentation that in fact persuades must be forcible. A normative pragmatic perspective, however, involves evaluating norms of forcibleness—not effective persuasion—in part because effectiveness depends on factors external to the practice of argumentation. Participants in argumentation are autonomous agents who have varying levels of skill in evading forces, of tolerance in accepting negative consequences, and of restraint in pursuing positive consequences. Forcibleness derives from reasons created by discourse strategies, and the reasons compel to varying degrees because they invoke norms about how arguers ought to act. The concept of reason is gradual and a product of situated human judgment (van Eemeren, 1987, 12; van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004, 16), because what counts as good argumentation must be continuously developed, maintained, and re-developed in the practice of argumentation itself.

In what follows I aim to identify discourse strategies that generate forcibleness in order, first, to show how the strategies may create compelling reasons for persuasion that supplement the reasons presented in the discourse; and, second, to suggest that these norms of forcibleness encompass and supplement logical or intellectual forces.

#### NORMS OF FORCIBLENESS IN SHAW'S 'FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF A REPUBLIC'

To illustrate that the forcibleness generated by rhetorical strategies may supplement intellectual force and augment normative pragmatic force, I analyze and evaluate select passages from Anna Howard Shaw's 'Fundamental Principles of a Republic'. The speech makes a good case study for three reasons. First, it is a clear case of actual, complex argumentation. Shaw delivered the

## NORMS OF FORCIBLENESS

speech—‘her masterpiece’—many times over the years in an attempt to persuade audiences to grant women in the United States of America the right to vote (Campbell, 1989, p. 159). Second, a significant degree of its forcibleness may be described as logical since most of Shaw's discussion involves pointing to apparent inconsistencies in opponents' positions. In the opening lines, for example, Shaw notes:

women are still trying to persuade American men to believe in the fundamental principles of democracy, and I never quite feel as if it was a fair field to argue this question with men, because in doing it you have to assume that a man who professes to believe in a Republican form of government does not believe in a Republican form of government, for the only thing that woman's enfranchisement means at all is that a government which claims to be a Republic should be a Republic, and not an aristocracy. (1989, p. 434)

The opening lines also charge opponents with advancing irrelevant arguments (1989, p. 434). Third, given her reputation as an effective and successful speaker in her own time and the current status of the speech as an exemplar of the art of rhetoric (Linkugel, 1993, p. 410; Lucas, 1988, p. 247), we have reason to believe that its forcibleness transcends the immediate occasion.

The speech is comprised of three main sections. Following the introduction, Shaw notes past and present inconsistencies between American ideals and actual practices and laws (1989, pp. 435-39). She then notes inconsistencies in the course of answering possible objections to female suffrage: female ignorance, women are not fully human (1989, pp. 439-44). Finally, she answers anti-suffrage arguments in part by pointing to their inconsistencies (1989, pp. 444-58) and transitions to a peroration against war (1989, pp. 458-60).

The central inconsistency that Shaw notes in the speech is that between America's boast of a republican form of government in which citizens elect representatives, and the fact that women cannot elect representatives. Shaw presents the position in a logical form:

Now one of two things is true: either a Republic is a desirable form of government, or else it is not. If it is, then we should have it, if it is not then we ought not to pretend that we have it. We ought, at least, to be true to our ideals. (1989, p. 434)

Here the strategy of the disjunctive form may be expected to pressure addressees in part because addressees do not want to appear illogical. The issue at hand makes this desire particularly relevant: being logical is a sign that one ought to have the right to vote. Shaw urges attention to her argument on grounds relevant to being logical: ‘any man who goes to the polls on the second day of next November without thoroughly informing himself in regard to this subject is unworthy to be a citizen of this state, and unfit to cast a ballot’ (1989, p. 435). Shaw provides a reason to attend to her argumentation—not attending to it makes one unfit to cast a ballot—that supplements a reason created by the logical form of the discourse—logical form is a fallible sign that the arguer has carefully thought through the position and that it therefore deserves attention. The logical form also pressures addressees to acknowledge that Shaw herself is logical. It is a fallible sign that she is reasonable and therefore she and other women ought to have the right to vote.

If logical forces were sufficient to gain adherence to her thesis, then the argument quoted above ought to be sufficient. But she amplifies, and theorists working from a normative pragmatic perspective do not explain the amplification as, say, a concession to a weak audience; and do not delete it in reconstructing the argumentation. Instead they analyze it as a strategy that creates additional reasons for adhering to the thesis. What strategies does Shaw use to present inconsistencies, and what reasons are created by these strategies? I will focus on a strategy which

may be viewed as outside the scope of argument proper and for which Shaw is well known: humor (see also Conley, 2004).

### *Humor in the sound*

Humor in the sound is one strategy Shaw uses to amplify the position that women ought to have the right to vote. Consider the following argument:

The difficulty with the men of this country is that they are so consistent in their inconsistency that they are not aware of having been inconsistent; because their consistency has been so continuous and their inconsistency so consecutive that it has never been broken, from the beginning of our Nation's life to the present time (1989, p. 435).

From one perspective this may appear to be an argument *ad hominem*: Shaw attacks the inconsistency of 'men of this country' rather than the position that women ought not to have the right to vote. Or it may appear to be an explanation rather than argumentation—an explanation for why 'men of this country' inconsistently deny women the right to vote and boast of a republican form of government. These accounts of the passage focus on the reasons given in the discourse.

A normative pragmatic perspective asks: what reasons are created by the strategy of humor and the strategies that comprise the humor? In this case the humor seems to derive from what may be described as a surprising discovery that two antithetical terms—consistency and inconsistency—are closely linked. The words sound similar, and Shaw amplifies their sonic similarity in two ways: by using additional words that sound similar to each other and to 'consistency', namely 'continuous' and 'consecutive'; and by using parallelism between 'so continuous' and 'so consecutive'. What reason or reasons are created by these strategies? First, showing how easy it is to join inconsistency with consistency creates a reason for attending to her argumentation. The strategy acknowledges an opposing position and suggests that it is easy to see why people might hold it—that it is easy to connect incompatibilities. In doing so it offers a positive inducement to attend to the case because it acknowledges the potential reasonability of the opposing position. Other things being equal, argumentation that takes into consideration opposing positions pressures addressees to attend to it; to do otherwise would seem to be uncharacteristic of a reasonable person—of someone who aims to hold an informed position (Kauffeld, 1995, 1998). Of course Shaw does not mean to suggest that the inconsistency is in fact reasonable. A second reason the strategy creates is that the two ought not to be connected: they connect in sound only—not in sense. Thus the humor here generates a moment of shared understanding or common ground. Audience members who 'get' the humor are pressured to acknowledge that they at least share with the arguer the sound and meaning of 'consistency'. Arguers who show common ground with addressees offer good reasons for attending to the argumentation; the presence of common ground and the effort of pointing to it are fallible signs that the arguer is taking into account addressees' interests. Under the circumstances this is a good reason for attending to Shaw's argumentation, because to do otherwise would seem to be unreasonable and render one unfit to be called a citizen.

### *Humor and narration*

Some of the most humorous episodes in the speech come as Shaw points to inconsistencies in the antisuffragists' positions. Shaw intentionally and deliberately highlights antisuffrage



## NORMS OF FORCIBLENESS

inconsistency compared to suffrage consistency. This is apparent as she begins to counter antisuffrage arguments. She notes that the antisuffragists

cry that we are socialist, and anarchists. Just how a human can be both at the same time, I really do not know. If I know what socialism means it means absolute government and anarchism means no government at all. So we are feminists, socialists, anarchists and mormons or spinsters. Now that is about the list. I have not heard the last speech. (1989, p. 445)

To the antisuffragists' inconsistent charges, Shaw compares suffragists' position:

we have but one belief, but one principle, but one theory and that is the right of a human being to have a voice in the government under which he or she lives, on that we agree, if on nothing else. (1989, p. 445)

Clearly she intends to highlight antisuffragist inconsistency as a reason for not adhering to their thesis, and suffrage consistency as a reason for adhering to hers.

But she does not rely on logical or intellectual forcibleness alone. Consider another example of humor—one based in narration. Shaw begins:

I was followed up last year by a young married woman from New Jersey. She left her husband and home for three months to tell the women that their place was at home, and that they could not leave home long enough to go to the ballot box, and she brought all her arguments out in pairs and backed them up by statistics. The anti-suffragist can gather more statistics than any other person I ever saw, and there is nothing so sweet and calm as when they say, 'you cannot deny this, because here are the figures, and figures never lie'. Well they don't, but some liars figure. (1989, p. 446)

One of the inconsistencies Shaw suggests here is that the antisuffragist's position—that woman's place is at home—is inconsistent with her actions—leaving her husband and home for three months. Shaw does not apostrophize the young woman, scolding her for her hypocrisy. She does not here explicitly claim that the young woman's actions are inconsistent. If we reconstructed the argumentation, we would certainly be justified in adding a claim along these lines.

But if we focus on the discourse as actually presented and on the reasons created by its strategies, then we observe that one strategy she uses is humor. In this case the humor derives from what may be described as the surprise discovery that a woman has left home for three months to tell women that their place is at home. If auditors 'get' the humor, they are compelled to acknowledge that they share common ground with Shaw. Sharing common ground with Shaw is highlighted by the fact that her report is a first-person narrative; if addressees are surprised and amused by the antisuffragist's arguments, they see why Shaw would have been surprised. Since the humor depends on audience participation and shared understanding—the audience must 'see' for themselves that their expectations have been violated, that when they hear about a woman who has left her husband for three months, they do not expect to hear that she does so in order to tell women that their place is at home—the humor creates reasons for attending to the argumentation. It offers incentives: other things being equal, identifying common ground and inviting participation pressure addressees to engage in the argumentation. An invitation to share in the surprise and amusement may serve as a positive inducement for attending to the argumentation, because it is a fallible sign that the arguer is taking into account the audience's positions and perspectives. Dismissing such argumentation would mean that addressees are members of that class of people who are not thoroughly informing themselves about the subject and are therefore unworthy to call themselves citizens (1989, p. 435).

Shaw here also introduces the point that the antisuffragist has statistics to back up her

arguments and creates an expectation for humor—a kind of set-up for a joke. When Shaw observes that the antisuffragist can gather more statistics than any other person she has seen and uses dialogismus—speaking as and then replying to the antisuffragist—to report the ‘sweet and calm’ antisuffragist statement that figures never lie and her response that ‘they don’t, but some liars figure’, she creates reasons for attending to and adhering to the thesis of her argumentation. The strategy simultaneously immerses addressees in and distances them from the argumentation, thereby creating a space for judgment (Manolescu, 1998, pp. 63-66). Dialogismus immerses by creating a semblance of a first-hand experience of an exchange and distances since addressees are not directly apostrophized; the strategy makes them witnesses. By creating a space for judgment, dialogismus creates an incentive to attend to the argumentation; other things being equal, argumentation that invites judgment compels consideration because it is a fallible sign that the arguer acknowledges addressees’ capacity to make a judgment. Dialogismus may also pressure addressees in a way similar to a presentation of evidence: since addressees hear the opposing side’s claim and Shaw’s answer, no one can deny having heard the positions without being subject to criticism for lying or inattentiveness. Thus the strategy pressures addressees to attend to Shaw’s response to the antisuffragist and to acknowledge a shift in the burden of proof.

### *Humor and consequences*

Shaw continues by mentioning some of the young woman’s arguments and noting that they are incompatible.

When they start out they always begin the same. She started by proving that it was no use to give the women the ballot because if they did have it they would not use it, and she had statistics to prove it. If we would not use it, then I really cannot see the harm of giving it to us, we would not hurt anybody with it and what an easy way for you men to get rid of us. No more suffrage meetings, never any nagging you again, no one could blame you for anything that went wrong with the town, if it did not run right, all you would have to say is, you have the power, why don’t you go ahead and clean up.

Then the young lady, unfortunately for her first argument, proved by statistics, of which she had many, the awful results which happened where women did have the ballot; what awful laws have been brought about by women’s vote; the conditions that prevail in the homes and how deeply women get interested in politics, because women are hysterical, and we cannot think of anything else, we just forget our families, cease to care for our children, cease to love our husbands and just go to the polls and vote and keep on voting for ten hours a day 365 days in the year, never let up, if we ever get to the polls once you will never get us home, so that the women will not vote at all, and they will not do anything but vote. Now these are two very strong antisuffrage arguments and they can prove them by figures (1989, pp. 446-47).

Here Shaw amplifies a point we saw in the previous quotation: antisuffragists use statistics to prove contradictory positions—women will not vote and, when they do have the vote, will vote and produce harmful consequences. In doing so she not only discredits the arguments but also the method of argumentation. The inconsistencies offer reasons for believing women ought to have the right to vote, because a position based on logical inconsistencies, other things being equal, does not seem reasonable; the forcibleness of the argumentation is based in part on the intellectual or logical pressure it generates. We feel intellectual pressure to not believe a position discredited by evidence for a competing position, and to not accept argumentation that proves inconsistencies. As we have seen, the logical force has a pragmatic element: in this case logic is a sign that the argumentation deserves attention and that Shaw deserves to be granted suffrage. But here again Shaw does not rely on logical force alone.

In this case the humor derives from the way she discusses consequences of the different



## NORMS OF FORCIBLENESS

positions proved by the antisuffragist's statistics. The strategy of discussing consequences is a sign that Shaw chooses to not rely on intellectual forces alone. While intellectual force is generated in a discussion of consequences—we can identify stronger and weaker arguments for predictions of harmful consequences apart from context and based on the relevance and sufficiency of evidence, for example—here the strategy also involves Shaw answering opposing arguments. Answering opposing arguments not only creates a reason for attending to Shaw's argumentation but also forces a response from auditors: abandon the position or provide additional argumentation. Argumentation that takes into account opponents' positions deserves attention because, other things being equal, ignoring such argumentation would seem to mark auditors as unreasonable—as willfully remaining ignorant. Such argumentation also forces a response because to do otherwise—to ignore it—seems to be a fallible sign of willful ignorance. Under the circumstances—especially given Shaw's call to be informed—this is unreasonable.

To address the consequences identified and predicted by antisuffragists, Shaw could have answered the arguments in a wholly serious fashion. She could have pointed to evidence of benefits of woman suffrage, and to evidence that woman suffrage has not produced the harms or degree of harms claimed by antisuffragists. Instead, to answer the argument that women would not vote if they had the vote, Shaw humorously suggests that this is a good reason for giving women the vote: they would not hurt anybody and it would be 'an easy way for you men to get rid of us'. She humorously details the point: no more suffrage meetings, never any nagging, no blaming for the town's wrongs, someone they could tell to 'go ahead and clean up'. Addressees who 'get' the humor would need to be aware of the stereotypes—share common knowledge—and could even accept them to some degree—a sign that Shaw does not simply dismiss these stereotypes but takes addressees' perspectives into account. The humor is again based on the surprising discovery that someone fighting for suffrage—and Shaw was well known for her long and ardent fight—would accept the potential consequence that women would not vote, and that she would accept derogatory views of women. Since Shaw's response violates shared expectations, the humor again provides a reason for attending to her argumentation; 'getting' the humor is a fallible sign of common ground, and it is reasonable to engage in argumentation with someone with whom auditors share common ground.

Shaw again uses the strategy of humor to address the antisuffragist's argument that harmful consequences will result from women voting. Here the humor may be reconstructed as part of a *reductio ad absurdum*: if we assume that the antisuffragist's position is true, then we would have to accept that women would forget their families and so on. Again, Shaw could have addressed the antisuffragist's charges in a wholly serious fashion. Perhaps she could have argued that women's vote did not cause the 'awful laws', that woman suffrage has improved conditions in the home, that in any case homes have not been neglected and abandoned. Her position seems to exclude the possibility of making some of these arguments because she argues against the antisuffragist's use of statistics and because making the arguments would involve supplying statistics or taking the antisuffragist's statistics seriously. Shaw creates an expectation for humor when she says that 'women are hysterical'. Here she calls on two kinds of shared knowledge: the stereotype of the hysterical woman exists and her speech thus far provides evidence that not all women are hysterical. The shared knowledge necessary for 'getting' the humor as well as the evidence created by auditors witnessing Shaw's speech become reasons for believing that her argumentation deserves attention and that women ought to have the right to vote. Why does Shaw's argumentation work? Not because addressees do not believe the absurd consequences that women will think only of politics, forget their families, cease to care for children and love

husbands, vote ten hours a day 365 days each year, and never return home from the polls. Nor because they believe that Shaw or the antisuffragist believes these consequences will occur. It works because the humor creates reasons for attending to Shaw's argumentation and for accepting the position that women ought to have the right to vote. The humor is not an auxiliary appeal but central to the argumentation proper and its forcibleness.

## CONCLUSIONS

We can now summarize how a normative pragmatic perspective may explain situations where logical or intellectual force alone is insufficient for persuasion or even a disincentive to adhere to a thesis. First, addressees need reasons to attend to argumentation. Humor is a strategy that can create such reasons. It may serve as a fallible sign that arguer and addressees share common ground and that the arguer has carefully considered opponents' interests and perspectives. These reasons are exceptionally forcible in cases where attending to argumentation is a prerequisite for performing well—in this case for performing good citizenship—because to ignore argumentation that exhibits these qualities would mean that one is not a good citizen.

Second, addressees need concrete reasons for belief. It is an old commonplace that logic is insufficient for persuasion—that to persuade one also needs rhetoric. This study suggests that supplementing logic with rhetoric is not simply a concession to human weakness or a recognition that argumentation appeals to 'the whole person' (Perelman, 1982, p. 13; see also Gilbert, 1997, pp. 40, 102). Rhetorical strategies can create reasons for adhering to a thesis, and the forcibleness of these reasons is based in norms of argumentation as developed and maintained by the practice of argumentation in specific situations. From this perspective, the reason that logical or intellectual forcibleness alone is not persuasive may not be because the reasons in the discourse are insufficient. Rather, they may not offer signs that addressees' positions and perspectives have been taken into account, for example, or that arguer and addressees share common ground. In fact, intellectual forcibleness alone may be a fallible sign of the opposite and, as such, may create a disincentive to attend to argumentation or adhere to a thesis.

In sum, a normative pragmatic perspective helps to explain why it is reasonable for logic alone, narrowly understood, to not persuade, because it highlights pragmatic forces at work in the argumentation that cannot be separated from audience and context. Put differently, norms of forcibleness are not only logical but also pragmatic.

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