

Persuasion and Democracy

PROPAGANDA

IMAGERY, SYNTAX, AND ALL FORMS OF MELODRAMATIC GESTURE AND VOICE OVERWHELM IDEAS, IF THERE ARE ANY, IN ORDER TO MANIPULATE AUDIENCE EMOTION AND PSYCHE. THE STRUCTURE IS PRIMARILY RHETORICAL.

REASONED DEBATE

THE FOCUS IS ALWAYS ON IDEAS. EVIDENCE IS RELEVANT AND RELATIVELY SPECIFIC, AND RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN IDEAS AND EVIDENCE IS BASED ON PRINCIPLES OF SOUND REASONING. EMOTION PLAYS NO SIGNIFICANT ROLE. THE STRUCTURE IS DIALECTICAL: ARGUMENT→COUNTERARGUMENT→RESPONSE.

The health of a democracy depends of the quality of persuasion between political leaders, policy makers, commentators, the press, and electorate.

In times of crises especially, emotions tend to take over. This is when reasoned debate becomes most important.