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# practical, poetic, persuasive

## THE THREE P'S

The proficient use of language, as a system of signs, depends partly on its ability to incorporate forms of expression for the purposes to aid holistically in perception, recognition, and definition, and to help mediate the explicit and the implicit. The Greeks offered rhetorics as a system or “mode for” appeal; i.e., through LOGOS, or the appeal to reason; through ETHOS, or the appeal to ethics and value; and through PATHOS, or the appeal to emotions. Later, the art of rhetoric split into separate disciplines of logic and rhetorics.

I concluded that there are three principle modes or “*uses of language*” (admittedly borrowed first in name from literature—the practical, literary and hortatory—and these somewhat parallel the Greek modes of appeal): the PRACTICAL, the POETIC, and the PERSUASIVE (or the three P’s).

By PRACTICAL is meant language—use to communicate information with a singleness of meaning, characteristic of clarity for direct information (as opposed to metaphor or emotional devices). It is indifferent to ‘meta’ or connotative components.

By POETIC (or literary) is meant language—use to communicate with experience; experience through the senses (seeing, feeling, smelling), and by stimulating imagination and intelligence; a characteristic device is to expect one to *experience* the object of communication (i.e., it is not about the experience, but allows one to participate in the experience as if to become or to create the object); to broaden, or deepen, to satisfy an inner sense; to have a greater awareness of the content; the desire is for richness of meaning; it evokes principles & values, essence & vitality.

By PERSUASIVE (or hortatory) is meant language—use to communicate with encouragement, council, or persuasion (i.e., often with ulterior motives), as in advertising, propaganda, political speeches; to *have a design on* the reader or interpreter, giving, or characterized by exhortation (L. ex = out, hortari = to incite, encourage—Webster’s Dictionary). It provokes non-rational yet predictable responses; it argues from a single point of view.

## MORE ABOUT THE PRACTICAL, POETIC, PERSUASIVE EXPERIENCE

The PRACTICAL design approach is not inspired by the content but rather is interested in clarity—could also be referred to as INFORMATIONAL.

The POETIC should evoke an emotional response or add additional emotion information.

The POETIC should expand on or enrich the *experience*.

The POETIC may be ambiguous or offer multiple reads or possible interpretation.

The PERSUASIVE should provoke—there is no ambiguity or question and may almost throw the idea in the viewer's face.

The PERSUASIVE is more definite or not as open to interpretation.

The PERSUASIVE is a singular point-of-view.

Both PERSUASIVE & POETIC approaches are subjective—the POETIC is not as direct.