Hyper-Theatricality:

Melodramatic Polarities or Tragicomic Awareness

by Mark Pizzato

Professor of Theatre and Film
UNC-Charlotte
Melodrama, the most popular mode on the nineteenth-century stage, became the dominant mode in movies, with spectacular conflicts of **good versus evil**, focusing on clear-cut heroes fighting monstrous villains, while saving or avenging abject victims.

http://gutwizdom.com/2016/09/26/dramatriangle/
Melodrama, the most popular mode on the nineteenth-century stage, became the dominant mode in movies, with spectacular conflicts of *good versus evil*, focusing on clear-cut heroes fighting monstrous villains, while saving or avenging abject victims.

Such a *melodramatic framing of immersive passions, through objectifying ideals*, continues to be the dominant mode on numerous screens in our hyper-theatrical mass/social/gaming media, reflecting and affecting the social dramas of daily life through various political theatres.
Melodrama, the most popular mode on the nineteenth-century stage, became the dominant mode in movies, with spectacular conflicts of **good versus evil**, focusing on clear-cut heroes fighting monstrous villains, while saving or avenging abject victims.


Such a **melodramatic framing of immersive passions, through objectifying ideals**, continues to be the dominant mode on numerous screens in our mass/social/gaming media, reflecting and affecting the social dramas of daily life through various political theatres. **But more complex, tragic (or tragicomic) edges and alternatives** to melodrama have also emerged, as in previous periods of theatre’s history.
**Major Genres** (often mixed today, but derived from tragedy, comedy, & satyr-farce or pastoral romance as distinct, ancient & neoclassical genres, plus allegory in medieval religious drama)

- **Tragedy**: complex (good and evil) hero, with allies, versus complex opponents—catastrophic, cathartic ending

- **Melodrama**: purely good, struggling hero with comical ally and sympathetic victim vs. purely evil villain(s)—happy, vengeful ending

- **Comedy**: complex characters in laughable struggles, with allies who may also be opponents—happy ending for all

- **Farce**: simplistic caricatures in ridiculous situations with exaggerated actions—happy ending, perhaps with satirical bite

- **Allegory**: serious/comical characters with names representing ideas, set in opposition

- **Tragicomedy or other mixtures**
Ancient Theatre of Dionysus (at the foot of the Acropolis, Athens, Greece (with later Roman additions))
Aristotle’s ancient Greek theory of katharsis as purifying certain emotions (through plot, character, ideas, language, sound effects, and spectacle):

**tragic sympathy & fear** in the audience, through the hero’s seeking & conflicts

8 ancient Indian bhavas (emotions), each with a specific rasa (a flavor evoked by art):

- sadness/sympathy (as in Aristotle’s theory)
- **fear** (as in Aristotle’s theory)
- anger (or rage)
- erotic/romantic love or happiness (involving lust & caring)
- humor
- courage or heroic vigor (with conflict in the hero’s seeking, according to Aristotle)
- awe (suggested by Aristotle with the audience’s admiration for the tragic hero)
- disgust (indicated, too, by Aristotle’s notion of the hero’s tragic flaw or hamartia)

- & the 9th rasa of peace (shanta), as the goal of mindful attentiveness to such feelings [union with Brahman (the Over-soul), through tanmayibhavana (universal communion), as influenced by Buddhism, with calmness as the goal of Enlightenment, beyond sensual attachments, according to the Abhinavabharati, regarding the earlier Natya-Shastra]
Inner Theatres of Good and Evil
The Mind’s Staging of Gods, Angels and Devils

Mark Pizzato

368 pages  $65 softcover (6 x 9)  2011
43 photos, notes, bibliography, index

“Pizzato traces the ancient roots of theater to the right/left
brain hemisphere struggle between primitive limbic system
emotion and higher-order cortical functions”—Reference &
Research Book News, Inc.

Among the most intriguing questions of neurology is how
conceptions of good and evil arise in the human brain. In a world where we encounter god-like forces
in nature, and try to transcend them, the development of a neural network dramatizing good against
evil seems inevitable. This critical book explores the cosmic dimensions of the brain’s inner theatre as
revealed by neurology, cognitive science, evolutionary psychology, psychoanalysis, primatology and
exemplary Western performances, including film, theatre and television. In all eras and media, supernat-
natural figures express the brain’s anatomical features as humans transform their natural environment
into cosmic and theological spaces in order to grapple with their vulnerability in the world.

Mark Pizzato is a professor of theater and film at the University of North Carolina in Charlotte. He
has previously published books and plays and lives in Charlotte.
Beast-People Onscreen and in Your Brain
The Evolution of Animal-Humans from Prehistoric Cave Art to Modern Movies

Mark Pizzato

Vampire, werewolf, and ape-planet films are perennial favorites—perhaps because they speak to something primal in human nature. This intriguing volume examines such films in light of the latest developments in neuroscience, revealing ways in which animal-human monster movies reflect and affect human psychology. Examining specific films as well as early cave images, the book discusses how certain creatures on rock walls and movie screens express animal-to-human evolution and the structures of our brains.

The book presents a new model of the human brain with its theatrical, cinematic, and animal elements. It also develops a theory of "rasa-catharsis" as the clarifying of emotions within and between spectators of the stage or screen, drawing on Eastern and Western aesthetics as well as on current neuroscience. It focuses on the "inner movie theater" of memories, dreams, and reality representations, involving developmental stages, the "hall of mirrors," ape-egos, and body-swapping identifications between human beings. Finally, the book shows how ironic twists onscreen—especially of contradictory emotions—might evoke a reappraisal of feelings, helping spectators to be more attentive to their own impulses. Through this interdisciplinary study, scholars, artists, and general readers will find a fresh way to understand the potential for interactive mindfulness and yet cathartic backfire between human brains—in cinema, in theater, and in daily life.

Mark Pizzato, MFA, PhD, is professor of theatre and film at UNC-Charlotte, where he teaches theatre history, theory, playwriting/screenwriting, and various topics in film.
Is Donald Trump a werewolf?

#illuminati #DonaldTrump #werewolf #conspiracy
DONALD-TRUMP-IS-A-WEREWOLF

If Donald Trump were a supernatural creature of the night, there’s no doubt he’d be a werewolf.

http://monstrumathenaeum.org/if-our-politicians-were-werewolves-or-vampires-donald-trump-would-be-a-werewolf/donald-trump-is-a-werewolf/
Donald Trump's Related To Infamous Werewolf Of Bedburg

9,115 views • Nov 1, 2017

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAFTSSF3c1Q
Joe Biden Vampire 6 Results

Creepy Joe Biden Sniffing Hall... By Flirt-Teez
$17.51
$23.34 (25% off)

Joe Biden Halloween Long T-S... By Myshkyn
$19.44
$25.92 (25% off)

Bite'n into Halloween! Funny Joe... By ZbigArt
From $1.79

https://www.redbubble.com/shop/joe+biden+vampire
Is Nancy Pelosi a Werewolf?
Is Nancy Pelosi a Werewolf?
SPOT THE DIFFERENCE?

ONE'S A BLOOD SUCKING CREATURE OF THE NIGHT, AND THE OTHER'S A VAMPIRE!
“It's like a vampire being forced to hold a cross.”
Without being questioned, DePape told officers and medics at the scene that he was sick of the “lies coming out of Washington D.C.,” the filing said. “I didn’t really want to hurt him, but you know this was a suicide mission. I’m not going to stand here and do nothing even if it cost me my life.”

Left & Right Neocortical Processes (see Iain McGilchrist, *The Master and his Emissary, 2009*)

with unconscious to conscious *staging* of perceptions & ideas moving from Right to Left,
& then Left to Right again, yet with degrees of inhibition, especially of “sticky” Left against Right

**LEFT HEMISPHERE . . .** patriarchal *Slayer?*

*predator* (focused, objectifying, tool-using)
belief, competitiveness, conscious agency
abstract/analytical thinking [inhibiting →]
familiar, rule-based, orthodox ideas
examining parts in a linear, categorical way
sequential, cause & effect, literal language
manipulate the known, static, isolated, general
Self-referential (thing/machine-oriented)
Self-certainty, yet as virtual, unrealistic
optimistic, but with projection & anger
denotation (with confabulation to repress)
affinity to major keys & basic rhythms
concerned with social or willed emotions
focused attention, *grasping* (right hand)
*looks at other’s mouth* (detached from body)
identifies simple, easily categorized shapes
produces schematic representations
more dopamine (pleasure) networks
parasympathetic (quietsent) nervous system
schizophrenia, MPD, ASD, anorexia, BPD


**RIGHT HEMISPHERE . . .** pervers, mother-child *Vampire?*

prey or mate (broad awareness, life/death/sex-oriented)
care, cooperation, unconscious socio-environmental influences
emotional/sensory intuition (with limbic/subcortical ties)
“anomaly-detector” & Devil’s Advocate awareness of new
comprehending the whole in a cyclical, contextual way
deductive, parallel, paradoxical, & poetic associations
nurture individual, evolving, interconnected, incarnate beings
Other-engaged (toward living-world), empathic
responsibility, shame, & guilt, but more realistic
melancholic, yet sensitive to tears & alert to change
connotation, appreciating ambiguous meanings, ironic humor
minor keys, complex syncopation, & harmonic progression
primary-process, bonding, & unconscious emotions
sustained attention, *exploratory* (left-side facial expressions)
*looks at eyes during conversations*
identifies complex, varied figures
depth in time/space (Self-image & Theory of Mind for Other)
more noradrenaline (excitatory) networks
sympathetic (arousal) nervous system ties
depression with anxiety

*to these left and right hemisphere characteristics, given in McGilchrist, one could relate:*

Lacanian Symbolic/Imaginary, superego/ego
Imaginary/Real, ego/id, mirror stage (devouring breast/chora?)
*Slayer’s* words, mirror, crucifix, stake, sunlight
*Vampire’s* shapes, *aphanisis*, bloodlust, life-death cycle
Possible Steps of Rasa-Catharsis

1. sympathetic identification & pleasure/pain with the main character(s) via initial plot conflicts, evoking mirror/intuition neurons & emotional contagion (between viewer’s inner actor/character/director/stage-manager/operator/audience/stagehands & scenes onstage or onscreen—with a sense of Self in relation to Other—also involving the inner mime-improviser/scene-designer & critic/scripter)
2. various emotions evoked, such as fear at the villain’s threats, rage at victim’s suffering, & courage in taking revenge or stopping the villain, against overwhelming odds, perhaps with paradoxical contradictions as the viewer sees tragicomic flaws in the hero’s efforts or sensible motivations in the villain’s acts
3. ironic twists that alter the viewer’s perspective and feelings (through plot twists and recognition scenes, according to Aristotle)—from the hero’s initial situation, challenges, conflicts with villains, ties to victims, and commitment toward a course of action, through increasing conflicts & potential changes in the hero, toward the climax & resolution of the overall conflict with the villain/antagonist
4. changes in the viewer’s inner theatre (neural networks) with moments of awareness at sympathetic emotional impulses with those onstage/onscreen, through immersion in the fictional action and yet a distancing effect at the ironic twists (as in the theories of Antonin Artaud & Bertolt Brecht)
5. refinement of the viewer’s bhavas through shifts of hot/cold emotional perspectives, evoking inner mimesis & yet critical questions, with resonance & distance in the savoring of rasas (as aesthetic flavors & cognitive reappraisals)
Forthcoming
In May 2024

AAHP3704,
RELS4000,
THEA4001

Churches and
Temples as
Inner/Outer
Theatres

Fall 2024
TR 4-5:15

Mark Pizzato

European Churches
and Chinese
Temples as Neuro-
Theatrical Sites