**Hyper-Theatricality:**

Melodramatic Polarities or Tragicomic Awareness
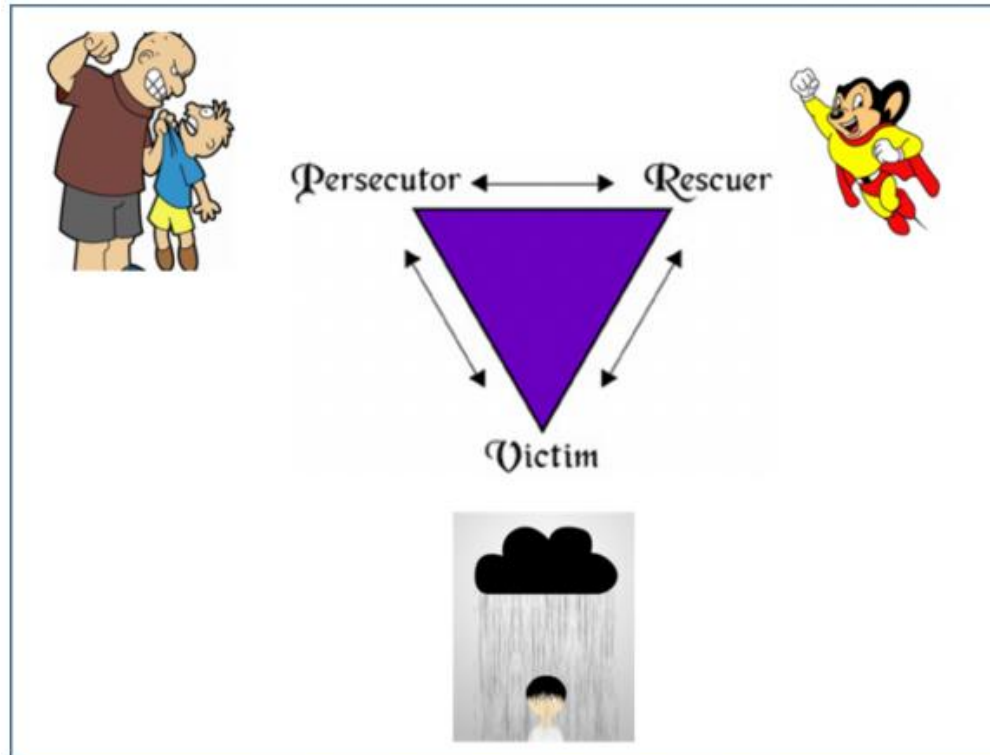
by Mark Pizzato

Professor of Theatre and Film
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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/
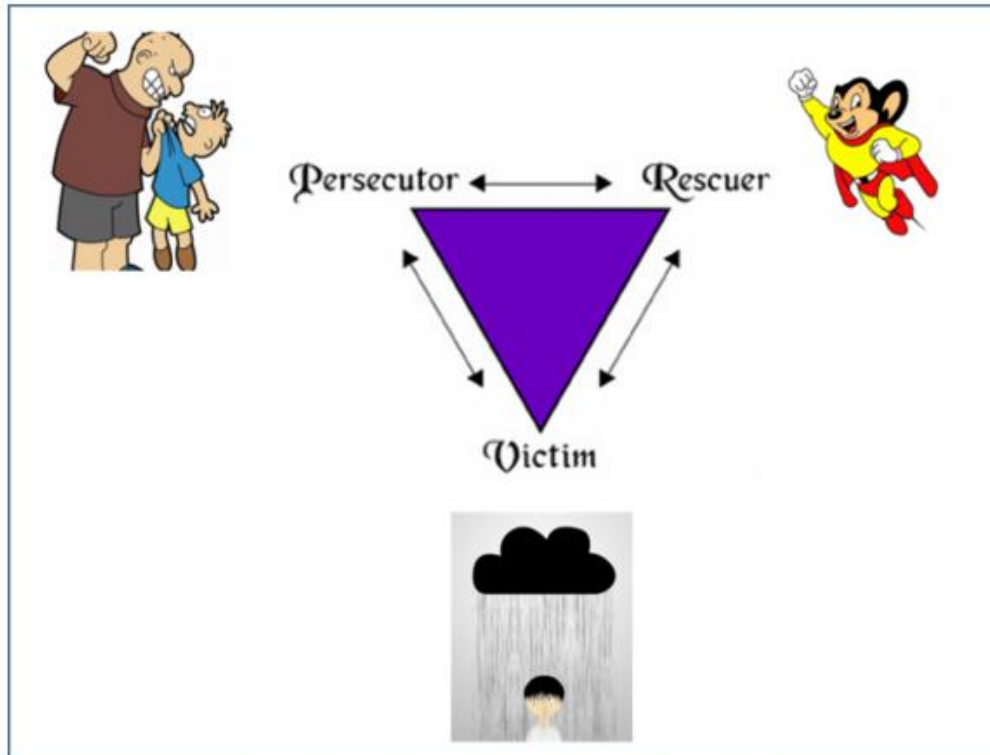
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Such a **melodramatic framing of immersive passions, through objectifying ideals,** continues to be the dominant mode on numerous screens in our hyper-theatrical mass/social/gaming media, reflecting and affecting the social dramas of daily life through various political theatres.
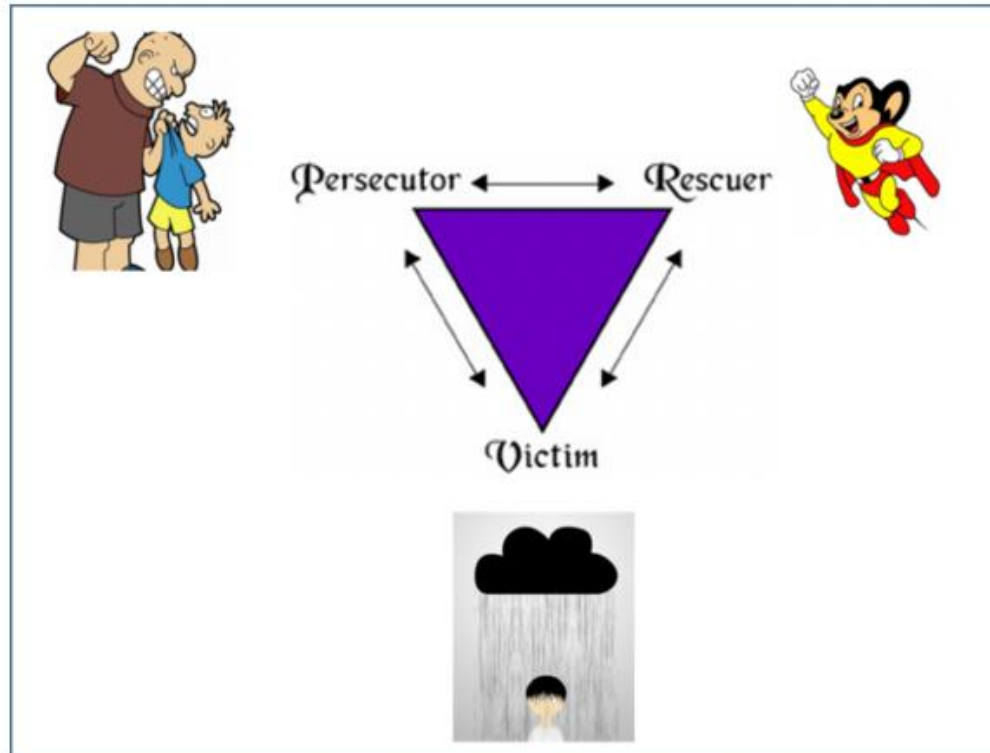
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Such a **melodramatic framing of immersive passions, through objectifying ideals,** continues to be the dominant mode on numerous screens in our mass/social/gaming media, reflecting and affecting the social dramas of daily life through various political 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]

RELS 4000-5000, FILM 3051, THEA 4001

Supernatural Figures in Theatre, Film, and the Brain

Second Summer Term 2024 (online asynchronous)
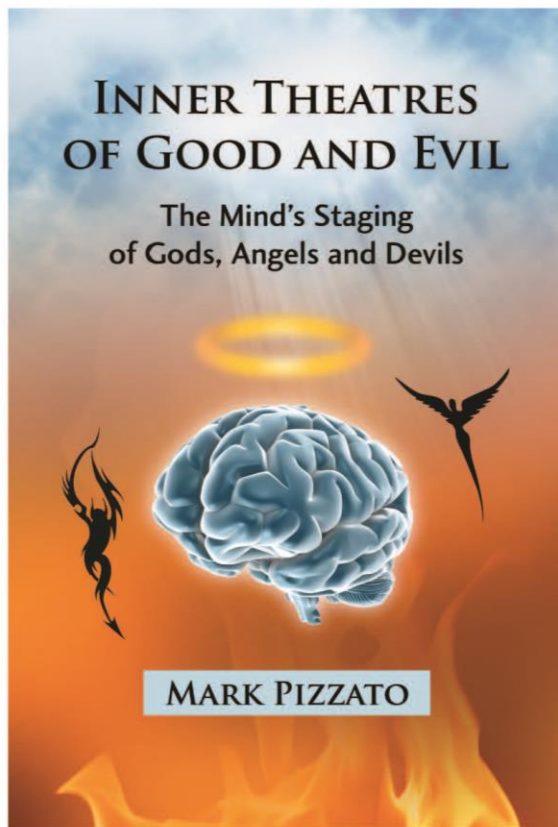
Inner Theatres of Good and Evil

The Mind's Staging of Gods, Angels and Devils

Mark Pizzato

"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.*
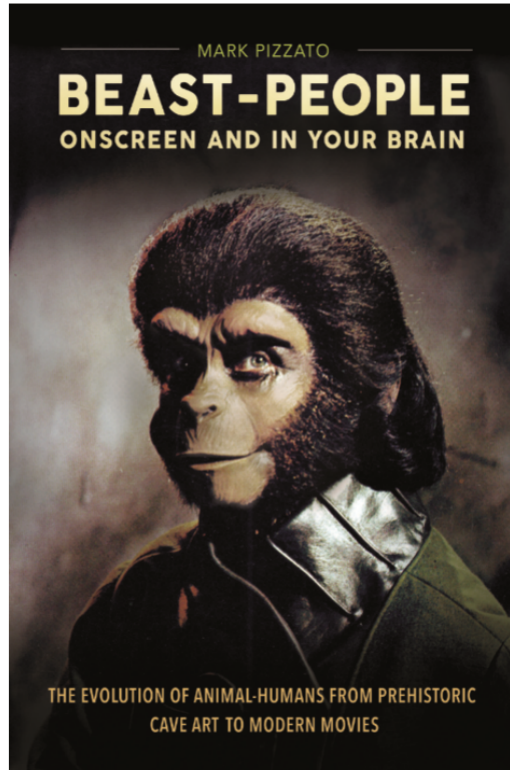
Among the most intriguing questions of neurology is how conceptions of good and evil arise in the human brain. In a world where we encounter god-like forces in nature, and try to transcend them, the development of a neural network dramatizing good against evil seems inevitable. This critical book explores 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, supernatural 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.

FILM 3051, RELS 4000, THEA 4001 in Spring 2025?
Beast-People Onstage, Onscreen, and in Your Brain

February 2016, 417pp, 6 1/8x9 1/4
Print: 978-1-4408-4435-5, ~~$73.00~~ **$58.40**

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.
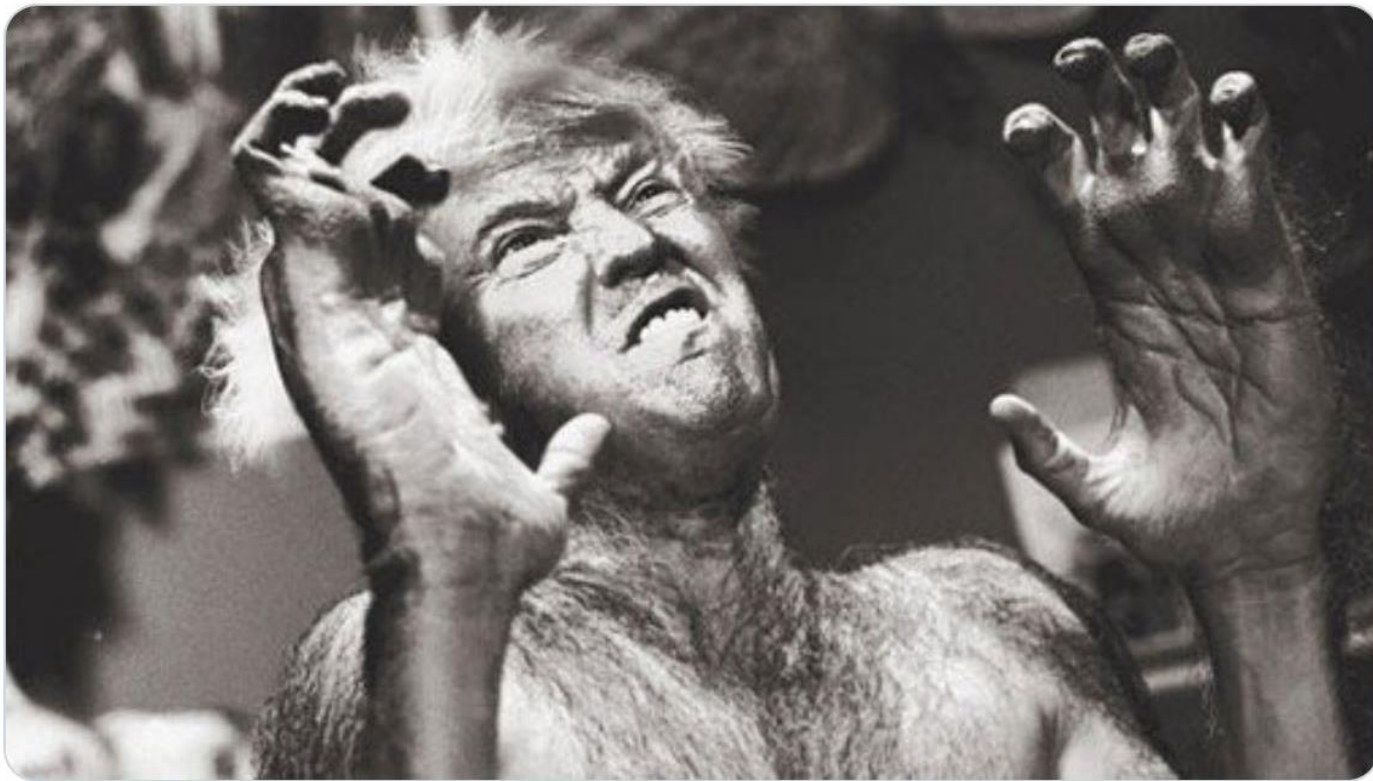
The book presents a new model of the human brain with its theatrical, cinematic, and animal elements. It also develops a theory of "rasa-catharsis" as the clarifying of emotions within and between spectators of the stage or screen, drawing on Eastern and Western aesthetics as well as on current neuroscience. 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?
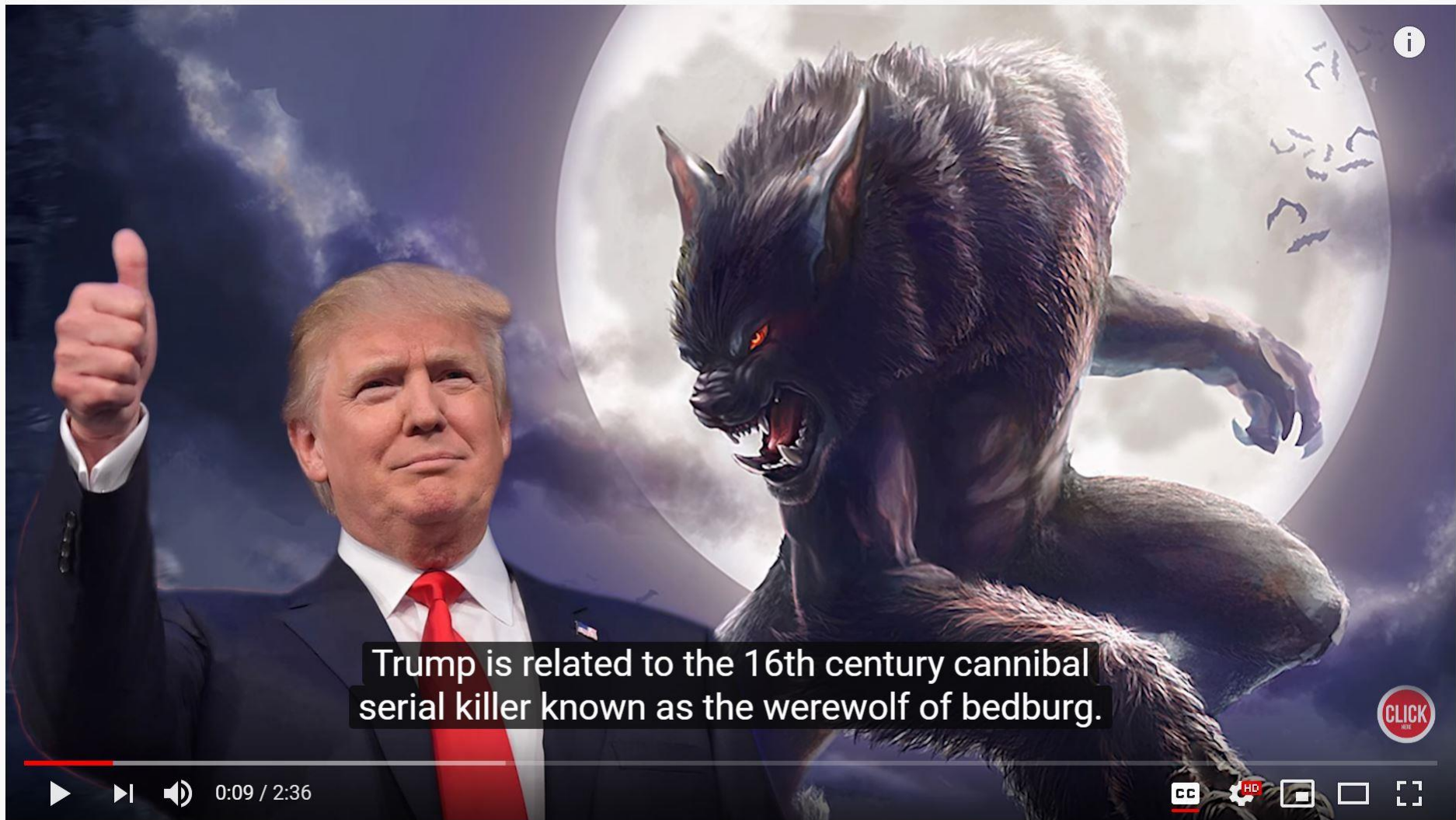#illuminati #DonaldTrump #werewolf #conspiracy

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/

Trump is related to the 16th century cannibal serial killer known as the werewolf of bedburg.

0:09 / 2:36

Donald Trump's Related To Infamous Werewolf Of Bedburg

9,115 views • Nov 1, 2017

👍 574   👎 43   ➡ SHARE   ⊞+ SAVE   •••

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAFTSSF3c1Q

Pin on Vampire Surreal

Donald Trump Vampire
BY **FurnaceFairy** | + WATCH

https://www.deviantart.com/furnacefairy/art/Donald-Trump-Vampire-582996396

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 Jo...
By ZbigArt ✔

From $1.79

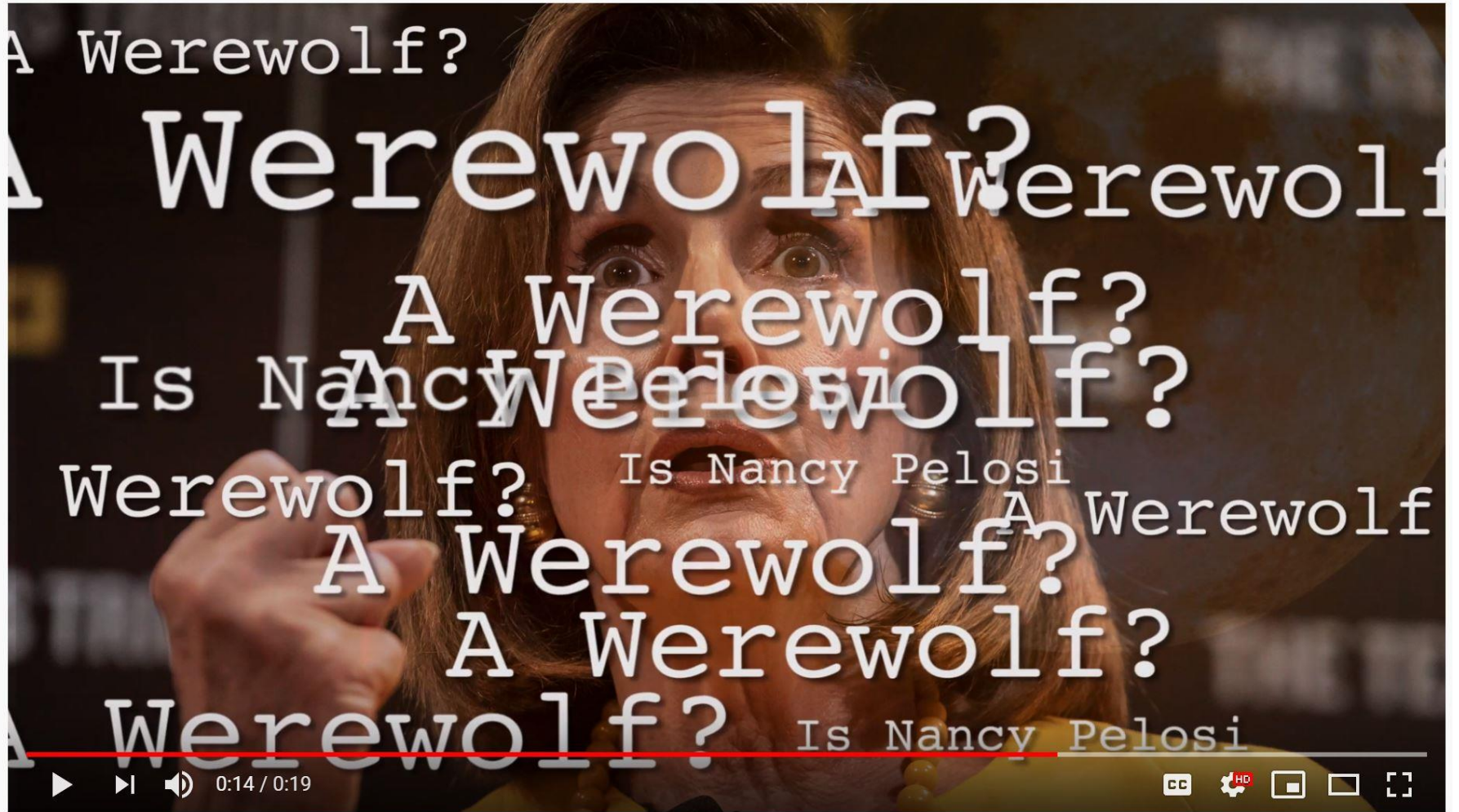▶ ▶| 🔊 0:14 / 0:19   CC ⚙HD ▣ ▭ ⛶

Is Nancy Pelosi a Werewolf?

Search

0:06 / 0:19

Is Nancy Pelosi a Werewolf?

Veteran For Trump
@Veteran4Trump

"It's like a vampire being forced to hold a cross."

It's like a vampire being forced to hold a cross.

melodramatic characterizations with consequences: "villains" evoking "heroic" act

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."

https://apnews.com/article/california-san-francisco-nancy-pelosi-government-and-politics-paul-985a574966438975ec9ccdc39061d83c   (about the attack on Paul Pelosi, Oct. 28, 2022)

Left & Right Neocortical Processes (see Iain McGilchrist, *The Master and his Emissary*, 2009)
with unconscious to conscious *stagings* 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?*	RIGHT HEMISPHERE . . . perverse, mother-child *Vampire?*
predator *(focused, objectifying, tool-using)*	*prey or mate (broad awareness, life/death/sex-oriented)*
belief, competitiveness, conscious agency	care, cooperation, unconscious socio-environmental influences
abstract/analytical thinking [inhibiting →]	emotional/sensory intuition (with limbic/subcortical ties)
familiar, rule-based, orthodox ideas	"anomaly-detector" & Devil's Advocate awareness of new
examining parts in a linear, categorical way	comprehending the whole in a cyclical, contextual way
sequential, cause & effect, literal language	deductive, parallel, paradoxical, & poetic associations
manipulate the known, static, isolated, general	nurture individual, evolving, interconnected, incarnate beings
Self-referential (thing/machine-oriented)	Other-engaged (toward living-world), empathic
Self-certainty, yet as virtual, unrealistic	responsibility, shame, & guilt, but more realistic
optimistic, but with projection & anger	melancholic, yet sensitive to tears & alert to change
denotation (with confabulation to repress)	connotation, appreciating ambiguous meanings, ironic humor
affinity to major keys & basic rhythms	minor keys, complex syncopation, & harmonic progression
concerned with social or willed emotions	primary-process, bonding, & unconscious emotions
focused attention, *grasping (right hand)*	sustained attention, *exploratory (left-side facial expressions)*
looks at other's mouth (detached from body)	*looks at eyes during conversations*
identifies simple, easily categorized shapes	identifies complex, varied figures
produces schematic representations	depth in time/space (Self-image & Theory of Mind for Other)
more dopamine (pleasure) networks	more noradrenaline (excitatory) networks
parasympathetic (quiescent) nervous system	sympathetic (arousal) nervous system ties
schizophrenia, MPD, ASD, anorexia, BPD	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)

Cognition, Poetics, and the Arts

Mark Pizzato

European Churches
and Chinese
Temples as Neuro-
Theatrical Sites

ONLINE RESOURCES

BLOOMSBURY

Forthcoming
In May 2024

AAHP3704,
RELS4000,
THEA4001

Churches and
Temples as
Inner/Outer
Theatres

Fall 2024
TR 4-5:15