

The Picaro / Elements of Drama

Dear Students;

I hope you had a great long Easter weekend!

This week we will be watching a documentary called “Barefoot Bandit” which is a true story about a fugitive teenager from Washington state. We want to get at several things in this documentary:

1. The nature and variations of the picaro or antihero; and what function this plays in drama;
2. The story itself (what it reveals about human nature):
3. The way in which the story is told (tone of the documentary);
4. Elements of drama.

I have watched this documentary a few times, and am struck by the number of classical dramatic elements in both the story and the way in which it is told. In the forum, we will unpack these elements together! In general, I am hoping we can use this drama to get at the very nature of drama itself: what it is, and what its function is.

When asked what drama is and what its function is, students are often tempted to say, “to entertain”. Good drama certainly does entertain, but this is more of an effect rather than a cause. We want to get at the cause of drama, so to speak.

First, study the powerpoint on the elements of drama. Pay attention to the literary, technical, and performance elements of drama and be prepared to identify as many of these elements in the docudrama as possible.

Study the poetic analysis of the role of the picaro. Because the central character of the barefoot bandit saga is not fictional, we would say that he has picaresque elements: what are they?

While watching the video, pay attention to and identify the following:

1. Use of language (this determines tone, mood, and also reveals characters and plot substructures);
2. **In terms of mood, what in particular is about this character that generates a sense of empathy or sympathy?**
3. The use of music and rhythm (Aristotle lists this as one of the key elements of drama);
4. Other technical elements of the docudrama;
5. What do we “do” with this story?

We will open a couple of forum threads to discuss these issues.

Fingers crossed, we will start answering many of the questions we have looked at over the course of the term so far!

Enjoy!

Steve