

Godfathers and Sons: Tripping Over the Unconscious

Timothy O'Leary

University of Hong Kong

Towards the end of *Analyze This* (1999), during a shoot-out, the psychotherapist played by Billy Crystal falls in front of the mobster played by Robert de Niro and takes a bullet in his shoulder. De Niro thanks him for taking the bullet, but Crystal protests that he just tripped up. De Niro replies, 'No Doc, you tripped on your unconscious!' In this observation, the mobster not only provides the key to this film, he also opens up a way of understanding something essential about *The Godfather* (1972). One of the central and, for me, unexplained problems in *The Godfather* is the motivation for Michael Corleone's transformation from model citizen and war-hero into the ruthless Don who takes his father's place at the head of one of New York's mafia families. In this paper, I will use *Analyze This* – and Freud – to explain this transformation as a form of 'tripping over the unconscious'. My suggestion is that *Analyze This*, in its self-consciously pop-Freudian fashion, actually gives us the basis for a more serious Freudian interpretation of Michael's transformation. If we approach Coppola's film as a tragedy in which the ostensible rise to power of Michael is, in effect, his downfall, then we are faced with the question of how to understand the nature of the forces that bring him to that end. Against the idea that Michael is simply

destined to take over his father's position, I will give an account of the underlying psychological forces that bring him to that culmination.¹

Analyze This is a comedy that derives its humour from a number of sources. First of all, the premise that a Mafia boss should need therapy because he suffers from panic attacks; secondly the idea that Robert de Niro, who has made his career playing 'wise guys' and 'goodfellas', should parody the conventions of the genre; and most importantly, the continuous play of role reversals – between fathers and sons, doctor and patient, good guys and bad guys. But the thing that makes it really work as a film – at least for me – is that even though it parodies *The Godfather* it also expresses its basic psychoanalytic truth: that is, that sons endlessly trip over their unconscious when it comes to relations with their fathers. And even though it makes fun of therapy, it shows an understanding of Freud that is uncommon in popular culture.

The central action in *The Godfather* is the process by which the son Michael (played by Al Pacino), slowly turns into his father, the mafia boss Don Vito Corleone (played by Brando). This transformation is presented with an almost perfect economy – we are shown just enough of these men to see how they become what they are. Michael, the returned war hero, is a non-combatant in the inter-family wars, until his father suffers an attempted assassination and he is gradually dragged into what is euphemistically called the 'family business'. In the closing scene, which echoes the opening, Michael is finally secure as the new godfather. He has become his father (ruthless, dishonest, violent) in the same room in which we had seen his father at the beginning of the film. A perfectly structured plot, of which the Aristotle of *The Poetics* would highly approve.² But Francis Ford Coppola, in his representation of this transformation, seems to provide no answer as to why it takes place. In particular, the film

¹ My aim is not to draw on, or to develop, a psychoanalytic account of film *per se*, but to treat Coppola's film as a complex dramatic narrative that demands an interpretation that makes sense of its central dramatic turn. Freud offers us *one* way of doing this; a way that has the virtue of offering a motivation on the part of Michael that goes beyond any claim of simple destiny.

² It is interesting to note that Puzo's novel, on which the film is based, is almost totally lacking in the beauty of the plot structure that Coppola has devised; and this, despite the fact that Puzo worked on the film's script. See, Mario Puzo, *The Godfather*, New American Library, New York, 2002.

ignores the unconscious – there is no exploration, or even recognition, that Pacino's character may be driven by unconscious motives in his slow process of taking his father's place. And that is where *Analyze This*, almost despite its parody and its humour, makes possible another interpretation.

A *godfather* is a person who combines the functions of god and father – in a way which is more marked than that of a mere father. This is especially clear in the image we have of the Mafia boss – particularly as given to us by Brando – who rules his 'family' with an iron law and an iron fist. He metes out justice – punishments and rewards – from the throne in his study. And he does so out of love, not hate: when we first see him, he is telling a suppliant that he is not a killer – he is a family man and a defender of justice. The first of many connections between this father and the mafia boss in *Analyze This*, is that Robert de Niro, who plays the neurotic boss in *Analyze This*, had also played the younger Vito Corleone in *The Godfather, Part 2* (1974). If the child is the father of the man, does that make de Niro's character the father of the godfather? Or is he rather the son of the godfather?³ In fact, in a dream sequence, *Analyze This* puts de Niro's character in the role of Fredo Corleone, the son who fails to respond effectively to the assassination attempt on the Godfather. But more on that dream later – since it is actually the dream of the therapist.

The therapist, Dr Sobel, has his own father and son to worry about. His father is a psychiatrist turned highly successful self-help guru and Dr Sobel, needless to say, 'has issues' with him. The son, who Sobel seems to be bringing up on his own, listens in to his father's therapy sessions through an air-vent in their home, and knows enough of the theory to be able to needle his Dad about his relationship with his own father. Then, into this mix, comes the uninvited father – the father of crime, Mr Vitti. Mr Vitti, as boss of one of the 'five families,' isn't used to being in the position of son. In fact he hasn't been in that position since he saw his father gunned down – in classic mob movie style, at an Italian restaurant, just before the pasta arrived – at the age of 12. When he first visits

³ See also, this curious comment from a reviewer: '...Al Pacino, as the college-educated son who takes over the family business and becomes, in the process, an actor worthy to have Brando as his father.' Film review by Vincent Canby, New York Times, March 16, 1972.

Sobel (to discuss a 'friend's' problems) he takes the seat of the doctor – the father – and Sobel finds himself, for the first time ever, sitting on the couch.

From then on, what we get is a proliferating series of fathers and sons – a series in which any father can become a son, just as easily as any son can become a father. Where *Analyze This* differs from *The Godfather*, however, apart of course from its humour, is that it situates these relations in the context of a certain understanding of Freud – in particular his theories of transference and parapraxis. For Freud, parapraxis – the bungled action – is the most common, and easily noticed, form of everyday psychopathology.⁴ It is important to remember that parapraxes are not just so-called slips of the tongue, although these are the most commonly acknowledged form. They may also be actions, such as for example the mislaying or breaking of objects, the failure to keep appointments – or even a literal stumbling or tripping up. They can also, quite often, be seen as warnings which we fail to heed. Freud gives many cases which relate, for example, to the forgetting of wedding preparations being followed by unhappy marriages. And also, at least one similar case, with a happy ending. The story is told of a famous German chemist that his marriage did not take place, because he forgot the hour of his wedding and went to the laboratory instead of the church. He was wise enough to be satisfied with a single attempt and died at a great age unmarried.⁵ Freud goes on to comment that in these cases the parapraxis appears to be a kind of omen or augury, and remarks that historically, 'some omens were nothing else than parapraxes, as, for instance, when someone stumbled or fell down.'⁶ When the therapist in *Analyze This* trips up and takes a bullet for Mr Vitti – the father-patient – it isn't exactly an omen, but we are justified in suspecting, along with Mr Vitti himself, that this accidental action may have been unconsciously deliberate. But why would Dr Sobel do this? Why would he take a bullet for Vitti?

⁴ See, for example, Sigmund Freud, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Standard Edition, Vol.VI, Vintage, London, 2001; and *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis, Parts I and II*, Standard Edition, Vol.XV, Vintage, London, 2001.

⁵ Freud, S., *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, op. cit., p.58.

⁶ Ibid.

To answer this question, we need to say something about Freud's account of transference and counter-transference. Transference, in its strictly defined sense, is a phenomenon that occurs in the context of an analytic therapy. However, it shares many features with a whole range of other relations – such as that between teachers and students, parents and children, and even between lovers. In the analytic situation, it is the phenomenon in which the patient transfers their feelings about someone significant in their early life (e.g. father or mother) onto the person of the analyst. It is, in other words, a form of repetition in which the patient relates to the therapist according to a previously experienced model – a model chosen from a series of what Freud calls 'clichés'.⁷ This transference may then lead to feelings of aggression, love or erotic attachment towards the therapist which are based on the earlier experiences. In an early essay on transference, Freud is concerned to explain why this phenomenon is frequently a form of resistance to the therapy. In an obvious way, a negative transference can interrupt the work of analysis, but even positive transference can have the same effect.

The first two meetings between Mr Vitti and Dr Sobel demonstrate this effect. Mr Vitti has come, as we saw, to speak to the doctor about a friend's problems. Dr Sobel, naturally sees through this ruse instantly, to which Vitti responds with one of his trademark phrases in this film – 'You're good Doc, you're good!' There follows a 3 minute analytic session (perhaps Dr Sobel is a Lacanian?) after which Vitti declares 'The load, gone. Where is it? Don't know. You're good Doc,' and then he leaves. Here, we might say, Vitti's instant positive transference has actually harmed the therapy, because in imagining an immediate – and painless – cure he is justified in leaving before the work has even begun. He quickly finds, however, that it's not as simple as that. After failing to have an erection with his mistress, he pursues Sobel to Miami (where Sobel is about to be married) and unleashes the full force of his negative transference: 'You did nothing for me. Whatever you did for me the other day, it didn't take. I'm still fucked up.' Sobel, however, refuses to continue the treatment, and there

⁷ Sigmund Freud, 'On the Dynamics of Transference,' in *Wild Analysis*, Penguin Books, London, 2002, p.22.

follows one of the turning points in their relationship. In saying No to Vitti, Sobel is doing something which nobody has done to him since his father died. Sobel, therefore, becomes available to Vitti as a figure onto whom he can transfer his, as he says, 'conflicted,' or as Freud would say, ambivalent⁸ feelings about his father. And, with the opening up of this transference, an analytic therapy becomes possible. The significance of this phenomenon of transference for the technique of psychoanalysis cannot be underestimated: despite (and because of) the fact that it is often a form of resistance it is, in effect, the most powerful tool at the disposal of the therapist. As Freud says, conducting an analysis is a matter of 'influencing an individual by means of whichever transference-phenomena are possible in his case.'⁹

But, yet again, it is not as simple as that – for either Sobel or Freud. Freud points out, in an essay on love in transference, that one of the pitfalls faced by any therapist is counter-transference. That is, the risk that the analyst will respond to the patient's transference by, in effect, accepting the position they are being put in. Hence, for example, the analyst who, in response to an erotic attachment on the part of the patient, sleeps with them; or, the analyst who reacts with aggression or hostility to a negative transference. Freud's objection to analysts sleeping with patients is not primarily a question of ethics – it is a question of analytic technique. In the first place, the analyst has made an error in thinking that the patient's feelings are owing to his own fine qualities, while they are simply due to 'the analytical situation.'¹⁰ In the second place, the analyst has jeopardised the analysis by allowing the transference to interrupt the work. It is like, Freud says, the case of the priest and the atheist insurance agent: 'At the behest of his relatives, a priest is brought in to convert this seriously ill unbeliever before he dies. The conversation goes on for so long that the waiting relatives begin to be hopeful. Finally the door of the sickroom opens. The atheist has not been converted, but the pastor goes away insured.'¹¹

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.27.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.26.

¹⁰ Sigmund Freud, 'Observations on Love in Transference,' in *Wild Analysis*, op. cit., p.68.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.73.

Now, when Vitti, the godfather of crime, puts Sobel, the overshadowed son, in the role of father, the temptation proves too much – a counter-transference emerges, and Sobel's ambivalence about his own father begins to influence the therapy. Basically, Sobel is like Vitti – he has a dominant father who he both loves and hates; a father he wants to replace and a father he wants to repudiate. And now the two enter into a spiral in which it is not clear who is analysing who. Vitti, in the grip of his own negative transference, begins to needle Sobel about his own father. Meanwhile, Sobel dreams the scene from *The Godfather* in which there is an attempted assassination on Brando's character, Don Vito Corleone. In that scene, the Don is buying fruit while his son Fredo waits in the car. The gunmen walk by, shoot the Don, and Fredo comes out of the car fumbling with his gun and dropping it. He sits on the kerb side and begins to cry 'Papa, Papa.' We will come back to this scene shortly – and to the possibility that this fumbling may be another parapraxis. But for the moment, let's focus on Sobel's dream. In the dream, he puts himself in the position of the Don (the father), and Mr Vitti (the real life godfather) in the role of Fredo, the ineffectual son. After he has been shot, it is Vitti who sits on the pavement, beside the wounded Sobel, crying 'Papa, Papa.' After having this dream, Sobel immediately rushes to Vitti to tell him that his problem is all to do with his father. But Vitti quite rightly points out that the dream is Sobel's, not his. 'You're starting to lose it Doc,' he says, 'you may need therapy yourself.' True. But Sobel is also right – because, in fact for both men, and for Michael Corleone too, the problem is indeed with their fathers.

Dr Sobel and Mr Vitti now engage in a spiral of transference and counter-transference, a spiral which culminates, towards the end of the film, in Sobel's comic attempt to take Vitti's place at the meeting of the bosses. Echoing a similar scene in *The Godfather*, the bosses gather to make a peace between the families, but Vitti, suffering from a panic attack, has to allow Sobel to take his place. Vitti, however, arrives just in time for the outbreak of shooting – and the police raid. It's then that Sobel stumbles in front of Vitti and takes the bullet in his shoulder. He trips, as Vitti observes, on his unconscious.

Let's turn to Michael Corleone, son of the Godfather, now. The central action of *The Godfather*, as we have seen, is the transformation of Michael from law-abiding war-hero into a cold, ruthlessly effective Mafia boss. Michael, as everybody knows, *becomes* his father Vito, and that is the story of *The Godfather*. But how and why does this happen? If the film itself gives a preliminary answer to this question, it is perhaps something like this: Michael steps in to take the place of his father, because none of his older brothers (for a variety of reasons) are able to do the job. It is simply, as we are told again and again, a matter of 'business' – it's nothing personal. The reading I am proposing here, however, suggests that it is indeed personal and that the 'business' is simply a smokescreen. If Mr Vitti's interpretation of Dr Sobel's stumbling as parapraxis is correct, then we would have to say that Sobel is sacrificing himself for his father – in protecting his father from the bullet, he is doing what Fredo, in the assassination scene from *The Godfather* could not do, and he is doing what Vitti, in Sobel's dream, could not do, and he is doing what Vitti, the 12 year old child could not do for his real father in the restaurant. In effect, he is taking the fall for his father, he is rescuing him – he is, in a sense, giving his own body to his father. And this, I suggest, is exactly what Michael Corleone does in *The Godfather*.

It must be stressed, first of all, that the process through which Michael becomes his father, is also, to a significant degree, the process of becoming a man. This might seem strange – that a war-hero should still not be a man – but in the Corleone family, it is clear that all 'civilians' (Michael is a civilian in the Mafia wars), are either women or children. In the early part of the film, Michael is continually referred to as 'Mikey', he has his cheek pinched, his face slapped, and gets teased by the men because his girlfriend wants him to say that he loves her. But at this stage, Michael seems to be perfectly at ease with his form of civilian masculinity. He is aware of the family business, but he is firmly opposed to getting involved in it. In the opening scene, at his sister's wedding, for example, he tells his girlfriend Kay a story about one of those famous Corleone offers – the ones you can't refuse. Kay is shocked, but Michael says – 'That's my family Kay. It's not me.' Later, however, once the process of transformation is well under way, Kay reproaches him with 'I thought you weren't going to become a man like

your father.’ To which Michael replies that his father is ‘no different than any other powerful man...Like a senator or a president.’ Just like them, he too sends men to get killed. For Michael, the distinction between his father and other men is now blurring. And finally, at the end of the film, Michael cements his position as father and new Godfather, in a scene which excludes Kay from the study – the room where men’s business is transacted.

This process of transformation begins immediately after the attempted assassination of Vito Corleone. In that scene, Fredo, the ineffective son, jumps from the car and fumbles with his gun while the hitmen shoot his father. This bungled action on the part of Fredo may also be interpreted in the light of what Freud says about parapraxis. Because Fredo, the marginalised son will never be able to have a position in the family as long as his father is alive. In any case, after the attempted hit, a family crisis ensues in which Michael, as a non-combatant, is confined to the sidelines. His older brother, Sonny, who is the heir-apparent, tells him to just hang around the house and look after their mother. Everything changes, however, when Michael visits the hospital one night and finds all the bodyguards have been sent away. Realising that another assassination attempt is about to occur, Michael is cool and level-headed; he gets a nurse to help him to move his father to a different room and then he enlists the help of a visitor – Enzo the baker, for whom his father had done a favour – to stand outside the hospital to deter the new hitmen. But before he goes outside he leans over his father’s bed and says, ‘Just lie here pop. I’ll take care of you now. I’m with you now. I’m with you.’ He strokes his father’s head and kisses his hand. Vito’s response, greatly muted because of his condition, is what appears to be a smile – or maybe it’s a grimace – and a definite tear line down his cheek. It is, no doubt, never easy for a father to be helpless in front of his son,¹² but this is the opening that Michael was waiting for. His father is helpless and he steps in to protect him, to, literally, throw his body between his father and the bullets. But, in order to protect his father, Michael must first become a man – he must enact, consciously, a certain form of masculinity. In an earlier scene, the

¹² A Jewish Proverb expresses this idea well: when a father gives to his son, both laugh; when a son gives to his father, both cry.

singer Johnny Fontaine cries in Vito Corleone's office, saying, 'Oh Godfather, I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do.' At which Vito jumps up angrily, hitting Johnny and saying, 'You can act like a man! What's the matter with you?' Now, outside the hospital, Michael shows Enzo how to act like a man: he throws away the flowers Enzo is holding, turns up his collar, and gives him this piece of crucial advice: 'Put your hand in your pocket like you have a gun.' And so, acting like men, they wait for the hitmen to arrive. Even Michael, however, is surprised at how well he takes to this new role – once the danger has passed, Enzo fumbles with his cigarette lighter, but Michael's hands are rock steady and after lighting Enzo's cigarette he looks at them with surprise, as if he has discovered something new about himself.

This scene is crucial in explaining the transformation that Michael is undergoing, but I would identify a different scene as the moment when Michael 'trips'. After the hospital incident Michael and his brothers discuss whether they should kill Sollozzo (who is responsible for the repeated assassination attempts) and the police Captain who protects him. At first, Sonny in his usual hot-headed way wants to have Sollozzo killed straight away, but the adopted brother, Tom Hagen, convinces him that that would be to allow personal animosity to get in the way of business – 'Even the shooting of your father was business, not personal,' he reminds Sonny – so, they should wait until things cool down. Michael, however, taking part for the first time in the family business, insists that it must be done immediately – and he devises a plan to do it himself. Michael is now, for the first time, centre stage: he sits in the leather armchair and the camera slowly pans in so that the other people in the room are excluded – we hear their voices, but we don't see their faces. We even see the first signs of the hand gestures, so characteristic of his father, which Michael will later adopt as his own (see, for example, his discussion with his future father-in-law in Sicily). In fact, in the opening scene of the film, our first view of Vito Corleone is simply his hand – silently gesturing to an assistant to get a drink for one of his suplicants. These gestures serve to differentiate the cool, calculating power of Vito, and now Michael, from the recklessness of Sonny – whose hand gestures are quick, jerking and almost histrionic.

When Michael first suggests that he himself will kill both Sollozzo and McCloskey, Sonny laughs and accuses him of taking it personally – but Michael succeeds in convincing his brother Tom Hagen, and he concludes the scene with the chilling words: ‘It’s not personal, Sonny. It’s strictly business.’ And, this, in my view, is where he trips, because even though Michael seems to be the most level-headed and ‘business-like’ of the brothers, it is in fact more personal for him than it is for any of the others. His father’s incapacitation has given him the opportunity to become his father, an opportunity which requires him to re-make himself as a certain kind of man – a cold, calculating, violent man – but a kind of man which, as he discovers, he can perform better than any of his brothers. And from now on, Vito, the father and Michael, the son, come together in a way that excludes the others. Sonny is assassinated (as a direct consequence of his violent temper), Tom Hagen loses the role of *consigliere*, Fredo is sent to Las Vegas, and Michael ends up having the thing that both Dr Sobel and Vitti, in *Analyze This*, wanted – he is the favoured son, the son who perpetuates the father by embodying the father.

We can understand this outcome as the acting out of a childhood phantasy on the part of Michael. Freud, in another essay on love,¹³ discusses the possible meaning of rescue-phantasies in relations between fathers and sons. These phantasies, he suggests, are a derivative of the ‘parental complex’, which he explains in this way: ‘When a child hears that he *owes his life* to his parents, or that his mother *gave him life*, his feelings of tenderness unite with impulses which strive at power and independence, and they generate the wish to return this gift to the parents and to repay them with one of equal value’ (p.239). In the case of rescue-phantasies relating to the mother, Freud suggests that a boy finds an outlet for his tender and grateful impulses; whereas, in the case of phantasies relating to the father, the boy expresses these impulses, but also all his defiance and hostility. It is, Freud remarks, as if the boy were to say, ‘I want nothing from my father; I will give him back all I have cost him’. He then forms the phantasy of

¹³ Sigmund Freud, ‘Contributions to the Psychology of Love: A Special Type of Choice of Object in Men,’ in *On Sexuality*, Penguin Freud Library Vol. 7, Penguin Books, 1991.

rescuing his father from danger and saving his life; in this way he puts his account square with him.' (p.239-40). My suggestion is that we can see Michael's transformation into his father as the acting out of just such a phantasy – a phantasy which places Michael in the role of rescuer and which therefore allows him to usurp his father's position (and also that of his elder brothers) under the veil of virtue and filial piety. Unfortunately, it would be difficult to extend this interpretation in the direction of Michael's relations with women, and especially his mother, because apart from the fact that Coppola gives us very little material to go on – in fact Michael's mother only barely has a speaking role in the film – we would also risk offending Mr Vitti, the other godfather who, on being told about the Oedipus Complex, proclaimed to Dr Sobel: 'Freud's a sick fuck.' But so far as his father is concerned, Michael is put in the enviable position of both protecting and replacing his father at the same time. In the hospital he tells his father, 'Just lie here, Pop. I'll take care of you now.' Before he kills Sollozzo he tells him, 'I want to straighten everything out tonight. I don't want my father bothered anymore.' When his father is worried about future attacks, he says to him, 'I'll handle it. I told you I can handle it. I'll handle it.' With this constant display of solicitude – which is no doubt genuine – and with his father pushed to the sidelines, the field is now open for Michael to take his place, to become him. It is a temptation he can't resist; an offer he can't refuse. In hindsight, then, we can say that Michael was perhaps not being untrue when he claimed that his plan to kill Sollozzo and McCluskey wasn't personal but was 'strictly business' – at least if we accept that the Corleone 'family business' is something that Freud might have understood better than Vito.

It is important to remember, however, that while sons may have reasons to phantasise about rescuing their fathers, fathers, perhaps sensing the aggressivity and ambivalence of their sons, rarely want to be rescued by them. In fact, it is very clear that the godfather does not want Michael to do what he is doing. I have already underlined some hints, in the hospital room scene, that Vito is not happy that he needs to be rescued by his son. And later, when he is at home recuperating, his reaction to the news that it was Michael who killed Sollozzo and McCloskey clearly shows how his hopes for his son have been

betrayed – a reaction which is conveyed again with a silent hand gesture. It is clear that Michael's transformation is not what Vito, the father, wanted for his son. And, in general, throughout the film we are reminded that the Corleone family – and especially the godfather himself – had great hopes for Michael. He was the one who would gain power in the legitimate world. He was the one, for example, who had promised Kay that the family business would be completely legitimate within five years. In a particularly poignant scene, which is the last time that Michael and his father are on screen together, Vito swings from giving advice about where the next attack will come from, to bemoaning the fact that Michael is living this kind of life. Vito says that he knew that his other sons, Sonny and Fredo, would have to go through it, but that Michael was supposed to be different. He was supposed to be one of the *'pezzo da navanta'*, one of the bigshots. Vito sums up his life, and his aspirations for Michael like this: 'I worked my whole life. I don't apologise for taking care of my family. And I refused to be a fool, dancing on a string held by all those big shots. I don't apologise, that's my life...but I thought that when it was your time, you would be the one to hold the strings. Senator Corleone. Governor Corleone. Something...There just wasn't enough time, Michael. Wasn't enough time.' Michael replies to the old man, 'We'll get there, Pop. We'll get there.' But what we the viewers know, is that Michael is wading deeper and deeper into blood all the time. And, like Macbeth in a similar situation, he has gone so far that it is better to carry on than to turn back.

Michael's birth as the new godfather, his baptism of fire, is illustrated by Coppola in a montage that juxtaposes the sacrament of baptism with the bloody Corleone family business. Now, with the old godfather dead, Michael has decided to settle all the family's old scores – not just its feuds with its rivals outside, but also with the insiders, like his sister's husband. So, just before he has that man killed, he stands godfather to his son, and while the priest conducts the ceremony, and Michael vows to renounce Satan with all his works and pomps, all the family's enemies are mercilessly gunned down.

The irony of Michael's transformation, of his re-birth as ruthless crime boss, is that not only did his father, Vito, never want him to become that kind of man,

but the price Michael has to pay for the transformation is that he loses himself, that is, the self he embodied before. And not only does he lose himself, but, as the later installments of this film show, he ends up losing his family, his friends, in fact everything which he, and his father, supposedly stood for. The tragedy of his transformation is that all of this happens on account of an unconscious identification – a sort of stumbling, or *parapraxis* – which Mr Vitti, for all his comic excess, might have recognised as Michael Corleone tripping over his unconscious.

Bibliography

- Canby, Vincent (1972). Review of *The Godfather*. In, *New York Times*, March 16.
- Freud, Sigmund (1991). 'Contributions to the Psychology of Love: A Special Type of Choice of Object in Men' in *On Sexuality*, Penguin Freud Library Vol. 7. London: Penguin Books.
- Freud, Sigmund (2001). *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Standard Edition, Vol.VI. London: Vintage.
- Freud, Sigmund (2001). *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis, Parts I and II*, Standard Edition, Vol.XV. London: Vintage.
- Freud, Sigmund (2002). 'On the Dynamics of Transference.' In *Wild Analysis*. London: Penguin Books.
- Freud, Sigmund (2002). 'Observations on Love in Transference.' In *Wild Analysis*. London: Penguin Books.
- Puzo, Mario *The Godfather* (2002). New York: New American Library.

Filmography

- Coppola, Francis Ford (1972) *The Godfather*. USA.
- Ramis, Harold (1999) *Analyze This*. USA.