Francis Ford Coppola’s Godfather Trilogy

The films that make up The Godfather trilogy are among the most acclaimed works of American cinema. Taken together, they provide a perspective on almost a century of American life and culture as refracted through the conventions of the crime genre. Five original chapters illuminate the form and significance of Coppola’s achievement. Together they demonstrate the complex ways that cinema aesthetics, cultural ideologies, creative personalities, and the circumstances of the American studio system came together to produce an epic vision of an American criminal dynasty.

Nick Browne is Professor of Film Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles.
THE CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS FILM HANDBOOKS SERIES

General Editor
Andrew Horton, University of Oklahoma

Each CAMBRIDGE FILM HANDBOOK is intended to focus on a single film from a variety of theoretical, critical, and contextual perspectives. This “prism” approach is designed to give students and general readers valuable background and insight into the cinematic, artistic, cultural, and sociopolitical importance of individual films by including chapters by leading film scholars and critics. Furthermore, these handbooks by their very nature are meant to help the reader better grasp the nature of the critical and theoretical discourse on cinema as an art form, as a visual medium, and as a cultural product. Filmographies and select bibliographies are included to help the reader go further on his or her own exploration of the film under consideration.
Francis Ford Coppola’s Godfather Trilogy

Edited by
NICK BROWNE
For Mona and Sabrina
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledgments</th>
<th>page xi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Contributors</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Fearful A-Symmetries

**Violence as History in the Godfather Films**

**NICK BROWNE**

1

### 1 If History Has Taught Us Anything . . . Francis Coppola, Paramount Studios, and The Godfather Parts I, II, and III

**JON LEWIS**

23

### 2 The Godfather and the Mythology of Mafia

**ALESSANDRO CAMON**

57

### 3 The Representation of Ethnicity in The Godfather

**VERA DIKA**

76

### 4 Ideology and Genre in the Godfather Films

**GLENN MAN**

109

### 5 Family Ceremonies: or, Opera in The Godfather Trilogy

**NAOMI GREENE**

133

- **Filmography**
  - 157

- **Reviews of the “Godfather” Trilogy**
  - 167

- **Select Bibliography**
  - 183

- **Index**
  - 185
Acknowledgments

With appreciation to Dr. Jess Kraus, Director of the Southern California Injury Prevention Research Center, UCLA School of Public Health, for continuing advice and support and to the students in the seminars in the UCLA Department of Film and Television on “Violence in American Film” for continuos insight into this topic.
Contributors


Alessandro Camon is Vice-President of Production of Edward R. Pressman Film Corporation, the producer of such films as *Badlands, Conan the Barbarian, Wall Street, Reversal of Fortune, Bad Lieutenant,* and *The Crow.* Camon took his degree in philosophy at the University of Padova in 1987 and studied film at UCLA as a Fulbright Scholar. He has been a programming executive for a major Italian TV network and entertainment columnist for an Italian newspaper. He is the author of several Italian language books on American cinema, notably *Il Killer dentro di noi: crimine e violenza nel cinema americano* (*The Killer Inside Us: Crime and Violence in American Cinema, 1987*).

Vera Dika holds a Ph.D. in Cinema Studies from New York University and teaches American cinema at both UCLA and the Uni-
CONTRIBUTORS

University of Southern California. She wrote Games of Terror, a study of the contemporary American horror film (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1991), and published film criticism for The LA Times, Art in America, and Artforum.

Naomi Greene is Professor in the Department of French and Italian and is a faculty member in the Film Studies Program at the University of California at Santa Barbara. She has published books on Artaud, René Clair, and most recently on Pier Paolo Pasolini (Princeton University Press, 1990) and is currently embarking on a study of the relations between opera and film.


Glenn Man is Professor and Chair of the English Department at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. His articles on film have appeared in the New Orleans Review, Film Criticism, Literature/Film Quarterly, and East-West Film Journal. His study of American film, Radical Visions: American Film Renaissance, 1967–1976 (Greenwood Press), was published in 1994.
Francis Ford Coppola’s Godfather Trilogy
Francis Ford Coppola, the director. Copyright Paramount Pictures, 1972. Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art Film Stills Archive