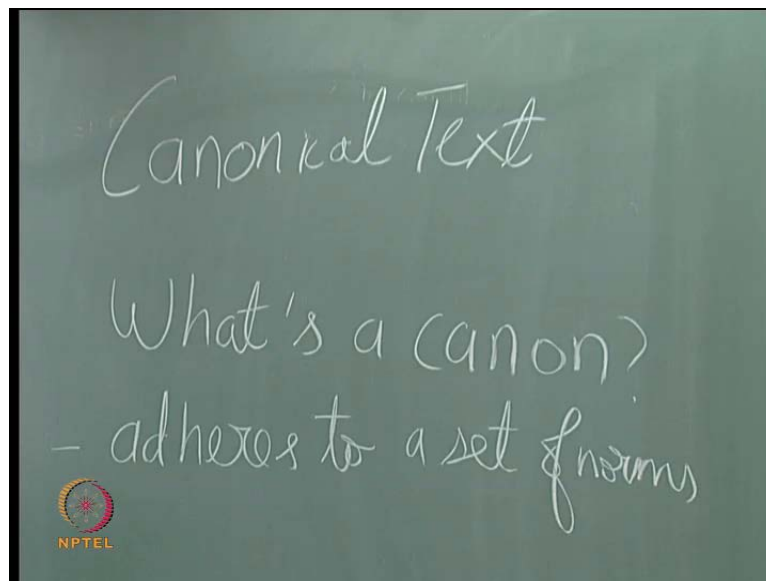


Introduction to Film studies
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Lecture No. # 19
Canonical Text - The Godfather (1972/1974)

Good morning. So, we will be talking about canonical text the god father has one? So, we have been discussing citizen kane as a canon and now we will talk about the godfather and what makes the godfather such a big canonical text.

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Now I will just recap I will just repeat what we have been talking, because it has been quite a while since on last class. So, how are canons formed, one of you already gave a very good response to it that canons adhere to certain set of standards. Cinematic brilliance, commercial success, but not always there has to be some magic combination. You know there is a term called **(C)** is a French term, which I do not know. I cannot exactly point my finger, but there is a mysterious enigmatic quality about this text. Can we are basically talking about cinematic text so, we are not literatures confined our conversational to cinematic text.

Now etymologically that is the root of this word canon is derived from the ancient Greek word and I am not giving you the Greek word, but I will give you the meaning and it means measuring rod that itself should tell you know there is a standard there is a bench mark sort of measuring rod against which other works are measured or set against. In literature those text or in cinema those text, which are worthy of academic study. So, this is something we should remember and membership to canons ideally is fixed for a long time, but is not necessarily permanent. Ranks are always fluid entries are strict, but extremely fluid there may be at canonical text which may exist on that list for 20 years and then one day it may find itself out of that.

So, there is every possibility to there is no guarantee that once a canon always a canon, but there are certain text and certain cinematic text which have the places assured and citizen kane and the godfather are two such films. So, canons comprise and I am quoting (()) in the words of (()) the great British critic and poet, the best that has been taught and set in the world. So, the best of all who defines best we will look at that. Canon in other word is high culture cinema may be popular culture canon is still is if it belongs and movie belongs to a canon it is high culture. Feline's works (()) they are not low culture they are not low brow, do you agree to that?

So, (()) feline (()) they are definitely works of art. Cinematic canons now literary canons are formed and they have a certain standard, there are certain parameters for example, if you award a book with a booker or a Pulitzer or a Nobel. There is a canon there the writer belongs to that editor set. How was cinematic canons formed of course, award bodies you have been recognized by (()) bafta or academy. So, you are part of a canon yes there are flukes also lets not think of flukes. Canons are formed by influential critics also and we have seen cahier du cinema and it is critics Andre bazin and even those directors who are critics for example, (()) trufa who was the American cousin of these French. (()) critics many people credit (()) of America for raising the art of reviewing to the level of art. So, the practice of reviewing to the level of art.

Previously reviewing was just a very general kind of a job where people would most often talk about heroin's dress and the hero's hair their makeup's sets etc. All those superficial thing in India much of our film criticism is centered on these films is good tell me why film is boring why do you get bored. Now there is some kind of awareness about film review, but there was a time for a very long time people would just take out their

personal grudges on the director or on the actor you do not get x, y, z and you would trash his films regardless of his quality. There were some directors about many of a critics were extremely prejudice.

This is a director who will who has made a movie any movie it will invariably get a great review. That is of film criticism are done for a very long time of course, I am not saying that (()) was entirely unprejudiced, if you read a biographies of her you will find that her work too was extremely jaundiced was in favor of certain film maker. For example, she was always extremely favorable towards Robert (()) (()) there were certain people who she just whatever they would make we would praise them to the skies, but (()) is defined the standard. Film scholars for example, you have David Thompson have you heard of David Thompson you must you know. If you go to US library for example, and Vijay I am talking to you.

Go to US library and there is a history of American cinema by David Thompson. Please go through it. David Bordwell is another eminent film scholar, David Thompson is basically a historical film historian and he has written a phenomenal book called have you seen. Very accessible is not a review, is not a collection of reviews, but a very personal take on 1000 great movies of all times in all languages. Extremely ill diet work, but very very personal, very subjective. Phenomenal reading extremely well written (()) writer (()) of course, great movies volume one and two and then you think of critics writers of sight and sound magazine.

For example, they also form canons then who formed who are the other people or bodies that can form a canon organizations like AFI what is AFI? American film institute and British film institute, BFI these are the bodies that canonize works of cinema. So, canonization does not happen just because of you and I some random bloggers starts liking movie and then they give some like a teenage writing in the middle of the night my list of top 10 fight club number one better than the god father or citizen kane second movie I like this actress a lot Monika (()) always figures. Some (()) you know some (()) such nonsense so, you know those are the top 10 films.

So, things like that canons are very serious study very serious effort and they are respected of course, canons are not insoluble canons can be prejudice people have a criticize the formation of canons of course, it is there, but by and large we do go by the

canon otherwise it will become all very random study. Now coming to the god father why godfather is such a canonical text. Now this is the bad story Mario Puzo wrote the draft of a movie called mafia of course, he had already written called the god father and there is only one god father and not god father 1 and 2. I am talking about those days early 1970s.

So, the he had written he had gone to paramount pictures with a draft of a screen play called the mafia and he submitted it to Robert havens he was the head chief executive of paramount pictures Robert havens turned it down. Robert havens who was once married to the beautiful Ellie McGraw. Ellie McGraw does she mean anything to you, she is the star of love story one of the sophiest and most sentimental movies of all time love story, but she was rhyming beauty and Robert havens was once married. So, that is not his only claim fame he was also very formidable executive of paramount pictures and he could not see any Maritan the mafia.

He said that there was a movie called the brotherhood recently very recently released with some there was a movie called the brotherhood recently then recently released with (()) Douglas, Michael Douglas's father. It had recently bombed and it was another gangster picture and he felt that the gangster journey had outlived his life. No people or no longer interested in this kind of cinema. However the book remained on top of the charts for so long and there was glamour to buy it and to buy the rights and Mario Puzo was extremely keen that paramount produced. So, Robert haven felt that oh perhaps may be some sense that making this movie, because the novel is such a huge success.

So, why not and he bought the rights of the god father he bought high commissioned Mario Puzo to come up with the more refined version of the screen play. However the problem was not finding the right director Peter (()) high from the success of the last picture show, he refused it and we will see why they refused it was Serge Leone another great director who turned it down. Havens felt that he had his misgivings about Coppola. Coppola was did not have a great success record so, do you of any other works by coppola before godfather after godfather I know you mentioned apocalypse now before the godfather what had you rehan the film what had he done.

He was a very well respected film maker who is not extremely successful and we will look at some of his films. I am sure that none of you those titles you have ever heard of

before this class. Now havens felt that anyway Coppola is a good choice although he does not have a success ratio, because he is a guy who could smell the spaghetti that means Italian flavor of the novel. Coppola is the only one true blue Italian who can capture the essence of the novel Francis (()) Coppola born in 1939 and prior to the god father he had made three films you are a big boy now.

1967 phonies rainbow with Fred Ester, because a musical and rain people in 1969 which was a road movie and all commercial disasters, but his work was appreciated it was felt that generally this guy knows his craft versus reputation. He had studied at the u c l a film school and the influence was there unlike martin Scorsese who had gone to famously see all these new wave Hollywood film makers they had gone to and there were only two major film schools those days u c l a or n y u. So, Scorsese etc they come from n y u so, when you watch their movies you feel the Newyork essence the Newyork flavor Coppola Los Angeles, but he there was a reputation inspite of the commercial disasters.

He had won an Oscar of a screenplay of (()) (()) is a war movie starring George c Scott it is a very well known war movie in 1970 he had won the academy for the best screenplay. So, he knew that guy knew how to write their story their screenplay and he knew how to direct the movie so people, but coppola himself was not interested in taking up the godfather script and why, because like all new Hollywood directors he felt that he should be the auteur and you remember an auteur is a person who is in complete control of his product, remember that he should be allowed to choose his own material his own team and he should have complete control in other words especially on the writing of the film and they did not believe the these new Hollywood new way Hollywood director did not believe in adapting material.

Because they felt (()) did not do it (()) Godard and trufa do not do it why should we are their disciples we come from their school. So, we do not have to, but he considered himself as an artist he said I was into new wave and (()) and therefore, I do not want to do this, but at the same time his dream was to establish facility studio an alternative studio called (()) have you heard of that. (()) pictures that is Coppola's own studio (()) movies. Coppola's father I am just giving you his mother was an actor performance artist coppola's father was a artist he also did a bit part in godfather first and if you watch

Newyork stories which is an anthology film I keep on talking about Newyork stories woodyallen Scorsese and coppola.

In that anthology Coppola's contribution is a segment called life without (()) where the father of the family is the (()). So, Coppola makes what I am trying to tell you immensely intensely personal film he calls himself he called the godfather the greatest home movie ever made it has a sister, who is Coppola's sister? which part did she play in the movie well (()) cannot be his sister (()) who later become (()) wife. So, she (()) is Coppola's sister his father come in did a big part sofy Coppola is the kid who gets (()) in the movie. So, it is a home movie one of the gangsters, but not a very major part this is (()) I am just (()) is actually a cinematographic (()) which produces the illusion of motion from the rapid succession of (()) pictures this is what it looks like and trufa in 400 blows pays homage he wanted to develop this technique and there is a scene where the little boy goes you remember that.

If you do 400 blows with him and it starts rotating that is trufa's homage to (()). Now Coppola's recurring motives I am just assuming that all of you have watched the first and second godfather, but let me just revise and then I will ask you something ask you to revise and then I will ask you something asks you to do an activity. So, recurring motives in Coppola individuals' conflict with him as well as with the society he lives in think the godfather conflict is as much internal as external. We have been talking about conflict as a plot device right apocalypse now. Extremely internal the conversation all these subsequent films, if you would watch them carefully you will find recurring motive questions of guilt responsibility loyalty that is very important, loyal to whom?

So, that is the recurring question moral ambiguity we will talk about it all his characters are in shades of grey. Another import of the new wave influence, because of before that it was all good anyway. Now this is very important in coppola we find celebrations and traditions and rituals, watch the movie the two weddings on screen of course, there are several weddings, but the onscreen we actually get to watch two weddings what are those? Which are those?

(()) and (()) and wedding

To whom?

Apolina

Good then there is deaths. Apolina dies sunny dies so, they all that is another godfather's funeral there is a funeral child birth and baptism and everything is celebrated ritualized. So, we feel as if we are a part of this particular family so, recurring motive now fame reason for fame first reason is the family for Leone the god father is epic an scope, it is a huge movie not just in terms of length, but the scope itself is so much huge. You know it covers birth death rituals weddings and everything it is in the tradition of films like gone with the wind ten commandments unfolds like a Greek tragedy you look at this structure very linear I am talking about the first part extremely linear almost built like a Greek tragedy leading to denuma.

There is an exposition fine there is a climax there is a denuma final catastrophe one reason for his popularity is nostalgic earning for a not so distant past, but something that can never be retreat. Then again very universal element of ideas of families coming together all of us have families, we do recognize the importance of family traditions and rituals and importance of celebrating things together. So, here we have people dining together, celebrating together, mourning together and we identified with the (()) again the emotions are very universal greed betrayal thrust for revenge and how power passes from one generation to another.

So, that is what I meant by Greek tragedy Greek construction it is always a conflict between a face of between a father and son we have done literature some of you are aware of (()). So, the son always takes over from the family any questions here we have been talking too much too long. So, any questions and comments here. Universal wisdom movies full of universal wisdom godfather tells his son Michael the man who comes to you to set up a meeting that is the traitor and very true people who try to mediate they are the ones who most often plunge the knife into you. Like most block buster's, it was all things to all people the other day we are talking about Casablanca right intersexuality Casablanca is not one movie, but several movies.

Who said that? (()) did (()) said that or did (()) to (()) said that

(())

Good you remember that (()) to (()) told us Casablanca is not one movie, but several movies likewise if there is the formula this is the formula that blockbusters means several things to several people there is something for everyone and watch a blockbuster citizen kane is a canon for another reason. It is becomes a canonical text for what reasons which are quite different from the godfather?

Techniques

His audacity and completed doing away with the conventional narrative structure. Here Coppola actually does not do that actually he tries some innovation, some techniques, some new techniques, but he does not do away with universal emotions therefore, godfather will remain a greater hit. 3 idiots I am told as the biggest hit ever made in India it has surpassed all other record d d l j sholay etc. 3 idiots do you think sholay is not this one movie, but several movies do you agree to that? Is not the (()) movie sholay is many things to many people there is something for everyone. Do you agree to that or not? Even if you do not have the stomach for violence the (()) most violence still you can watch sholay. Do you agree to that?

If you do not like violence skip those parts and watch basanth or the jailer for the sentimental kind you can watch Sanjeev kumar as many times as possible. If you are you know the more heroic adventurous kind (()) and (()) several stories several things for several people there is one hallmark of a commercial. Coppola for the first time and this is he achieved a feat of creating heroes out of gangsters before that yes we had the public (()) I am talking our favorite (()) movie I am talking about James (()) version there was a Scarface, but they were all die or (()) on screen. So, they were not canonized heroes on screen, they were still gangsters who had to meet a terrible death. Here the godfather does not meet a terrible death his powers continue his dynasty continues.

Coppola creates heroes out of gangsters don (()) for all his fault still the moral center of the film, why do we call him moral? He had a code of conduct which is never violated no drugs. He is family and family honor before everything so, that is another very recognizable trope something that contributes towards making the godfather such a big blockbuster such an important canon. Of course, there had been imitators and no one did better than him, family honor and family before everything else john (()) (()) (()) can you will come in from the (()) now.

Viji my question is to you the dress the way these men are dressed?

They are all following certain fashion which is which shows class and (()) and the hat also shows a little influence to it to be a gentleman the (()) and even the police costume has a ...

Well that is (()) now my question she says there are three men who are almost dressed alike, if you watch the movie you will know. So, my question now is for you Sandeep (()) stands out by way of dressing so, what is he playing in the movie?

He has written from the (()) ...

And why does he stand out even in terms of cloths, because he is an outsider in that family. He is not the boy who is not supposed to be inducted in the family this you remember he is the boy who use to become one with the family and he is the part of the family, but the godfather never wanted him to take over the (()). Sunny is the boy therefore, he stands out initially even by the way he is dressed he is the war hero he has come back today and he is participating and discussed with the other men of the family all dressed alike, because they are one, but Michael (()) is different we are told that from the beginning. So, pay attention to cloths tell you a lot of thing the way the godfather is dressed throughout the movie especially at the beginning of the story.

So, in the way he dress when he dies amidst tomato gardens there is difference, because now he is more retire he is leading a retired life and you will see Michael (()) and how he changes how the way he dresses he is in his army regalia right now military regalia later on. When he is just dating k he dress something in a very different you know one of those upper class boys, but by the amendment he assumes (()) he starts dressing up like his father pay attention to these little elements the movie also got Oscars for his costumes. Memorable lines of course, no one can forget I will make him an offer that he can I mean these dialogues have come to become a part of our everyday conversation one reason for fame sholay dialogues that still remember d d l j people remember the dialogues.

Therefore, all great movies here think gone with the wind.

(())

Thank you my dear as god is my witness I will never be hungry again. Tomorrow is another day scarlet to hara memorable lines which we remember even today. He is looking at your kid played again Sam memorable lines, say hello to my little friend this movie Scarface say... I believe in America and that is the way the movie begins American dream and sub version of the great American dream godfather is a great subversion of the big American dream that is my family k not me who says that reference to context Michael and when does he say that at the riding and the still innocent and what happens at the end of the movie?

(())

Closes the door on her face by the end of the second godfather she speaked out, he is very much his family much more sinister than his brother and his father. Do not ever take size against the family who says that ...

Michael again

Good, you know the movie claim to fame and this is recurring motives in most blockbusters. Women's pictures do not make that much fun they may be artistically claimed, but movies that I want masculine words that always make it big now. So, godfather is nothing if not a monument to the world of authoritarian patriot. Men make all the decisions you do not even know what (()) is called godfather is called she is never a part of the business she is always in sunlight or in the kitchen or in the dining room never in the part of those closet rooms that godfather conducts his business. You will never find even the godfather shuts k out second godfather. Who is the godfather in the movie?

(())

Who is the hero of the film (()) (()) and why do you call (()) the hero give me one reason he gets the girl what else he gets the girl what else?

His progress it his journey.

Good. It is his journey his progress what to say his point of view, we are through the we are taken through the story with him along with him. We sympathize with him, because we know, because he is just a sweet little boy like Ranjith and now he has come to

something else so, when he begin he was a very sweet innocent boy and now he is something else. We do not condemn him we do not judge him we sympathize him, because circumstances which turn him into what finally becomes so, he is the hero. (()) unfortunat husband he is always a hanger on he wants to be included, but he is just thrown above to get a living, but you are not a part of it, because after all you are one of the family you know we are nothing more that we are not our blood you will never you will never take size against the family.

Although he is a son in law brother in law, but not the son or the brother you are always out, even tom (()) is never taken into confidence when it comes to the most seriousness. So, loyalty to the family and Michael does not even trust tom (()) that he is played so, brilliantly by (()) when he decides to assassinate the heads of the arrivals gangs he never told. Memorable line and when I watched the movie first time that must have some 20, 22 years ago and I could never forget could never get over actually (()) famous lines godfather I hope that their first child be a masculine child. He is invited to the wedding of godfathers daughter Connie and he is honored that he has been invited he is the trusted loyal bodyguard and I hope a first child is a masculine child it matters a lot in a patriotic system.

Godfather to (()) a man who does not spend time with his family can never be a real young man. (()) is a miserable singer and this is (()) when first time in Sicily women are more dangerous than short guns go figure whatever it means. Respect I do not know what I have done to earn your disrespect he tells it to the guy who comes asking for help. So, you have to respect is extremely important. Now I am giving you an activity take a break 2, 3 minutes discuss it among yourself give me a list of the grade scenes I am assuming you know the movie even if you did not watch it last weekend I am just assuming you know something about the movie. Make a list of the grade scenes time up you two at the back.

(()) Collins husband's father and he says no and...

I did not do it

After that still watches him before you come I like that scene.

You like that scene transformation. Good Is want you to guess Rehan in front Rehan

(()) murdering in (()) (()) that is one then Coney's husband murdered and Michael (()) strangled then the baptism scene the baptism

Yes.

When Michael says I would never make my sister widow very next scene he kills him.

That is the ironical that is his transformation what he has become now. Yes you

There is a hospital scene where he wakes him up

My favorite. Yes anything else.

Do you get there is a hospital scene where Michael wheels his father up, because he suspects that he is going to be take the chance in the hospital and the police they are all aligned with the rival gangs. So, they know the protection at the hospital and he the nurse you got to help him that is my dad.

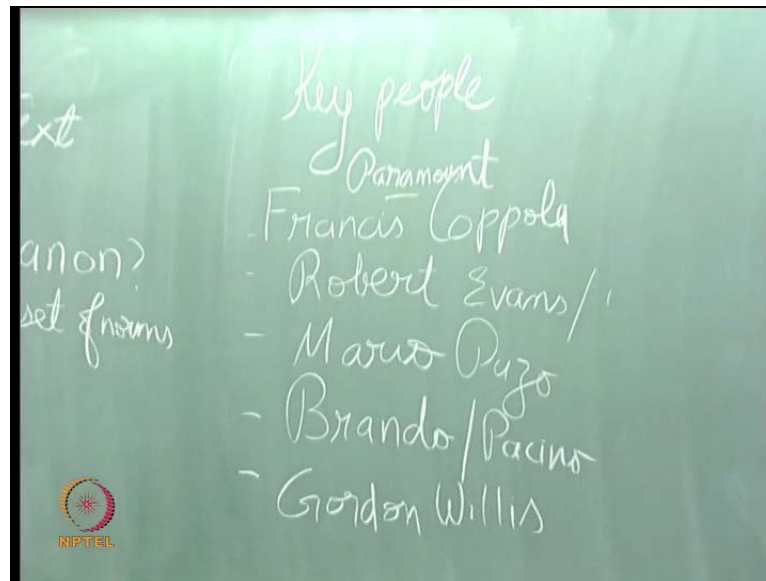
There is a scene where policeman attacks Michael and breaks nose and there is a discussion with the family he what is his (()) desire for revenge and sunny laughs and says this life is not for you and later on sunny gets blood all over him.

Connection. Anyone here you?

The wedding of the first wedding received it is very simple it is more involved with people not on the business level, but more personal level.

And also notice the intercutting between the lights and shades outside it is all sunny bright and normal wedding taking place in any regular family inside it is all closeted it is very dark. So, that is the way (()) I mentioned (()) is the cinematographer of the movie and Coppola and (()) should have endless quarrels of how to cinematograph and how to photograph the movie.

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Because they could not see eye to eye, but it is one of those collaborations that in spite of the differences, and so impressed was Coppola that later he hunted him out for the Godfather Part 2 also and Willis said I want to work with you, but then he made him an offer Willis could not refuse. He paid him you know some unheard amount of money so, set pieces or scenes which are universally acknowledged the horses herd in bed and that was a real horse I mean do not think it was a dummy they brought it from meat makers or butchers shop and actually place so, it was real blood and real. Wedding scene outside and in the way it cut with the dark closeted chambers of the Godfather, while he conducts his business (()) shooting a cop it marks a major that is the climax of the movie the first one.

The total change a major transformation happening in the you know a major change happening in the look at the way he trembles before that he is an army man, he must have killed several people, but not the enemy was someone else the other here. The enemies within and he kills a cop that is his first murder, Pacino wheeling Brando out of the emergency as you just mentioned. James (()) sunny the hot headed brother gun down at a check post phenomenal scene wonderful. And the grand finale the montage baptism and intercuts with shooting down of the heads of the rival gangs and here montage it may be a homage to (()) not ideologically the same because (()) use montage to depict a certain ideology the powerless the weak versus the powerful.

Therefore, the powerful are at the top of the (()) and the weakest people are one is even cripple remember a mamed guy just on the clutches in battleship (()), but here it is the montage is more like a browera editing device. A narrative structure and the fight is between equals is not ideological. So, that is the way it has been interpreted same and memorable scenes Pacino and Brando when Brando realizes that Michael could be his true here. He realizes that sunny was one was his son who never meant to be, but this is the sunny who has all the capability to carry on. The Michaels transformation from a war hero to you know this is a perfect symmetry while the godfather is being homage and when Michael takes over and this is symmetry this is called a framing device.

You begin the movie with respect being shown to the godfather we end the movie with respect same kind of homage being payed to the new godfather and look at the similarity of the way he has shot. Fame other reasons you know one we have been talking about the reasons claim to fame, when the movie was being shot or preproduction before it was shot, but once the movie was shot and the once the movie becomes such a success then the miss and legends that develops around it. And one was how Brando got that look so, very often it said that Brando stuffed his cheeks with cotton balls not really, he stuck raising blocks to the back to his back teeth and that is how he got that blotted look you know that thick heavy set jaw look.

The baby that is baptized that is Sophie Coppola the great director of lost in translation, Johnnie (()) struggling scene the character is based on (()) and Henry (()) the Columbia president, he was never in favor of casting (()) in his epic movie from here to eternity that is a war movie and (()) very badly wanted the part and he had mafia collection. And therefore, Henry (()) the executive was coerced into casting (()) and that is something Mario Puzo has, because he had his mafia connection. So, that was an inside story thus picture was one of them screenplay adopted Mario Puzo and coppola shared honors and Brando for the best actor which he famously declined, because he profess sympathy for the way the native Americans were treated by America and then he sent a fake native American a fake Indian girl to accept and decline his honor.

So, that was the big drama the big tamasha that he created and later he was criticized a lot for that, any comments pacino remember was never wanted for this post. Everyone was against him except coppola the only guy who believed in pacino and if you believe the movie can you imagine it without pacino there is no one I mean at there was a point

when they actually want robert (()) for the role and you can well imagine what. So, thank god he turned it down (()) called it the best gangster film ever made in this film of course, canonized we will continue with the movie, but tomorrow also with the discussion take a couple of minutes to watch the beginning of the film just to refresh.

Now why do we like this scene so much? And why do we begin the movie with the Brando hand (()) imperial majestic and his enormous head? Why should we begin the movie this way? I believe in America famous lines, why what is so, great about the American dream anyone can make it begin America that is the idea. I am an Italian America, but I believe in American dream American law, American code of justice and equality be and law justice for all. That is the one of it is legal (()) justice for all, but here we get the justice no, his daughters tragic story and why does he come to god father here you will find justice no matter what. So, that is what makes him such an important person and respect and honor so, from the beginning we are told respect and honor are the key and keywords here and they went throughout the film. Loyalty respect honor and therefore, it makes it such an important character. We will continue with our discussion tomorrow. Thank you so much.