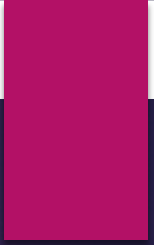


# Presentation Post-Modern looking at Sopranos

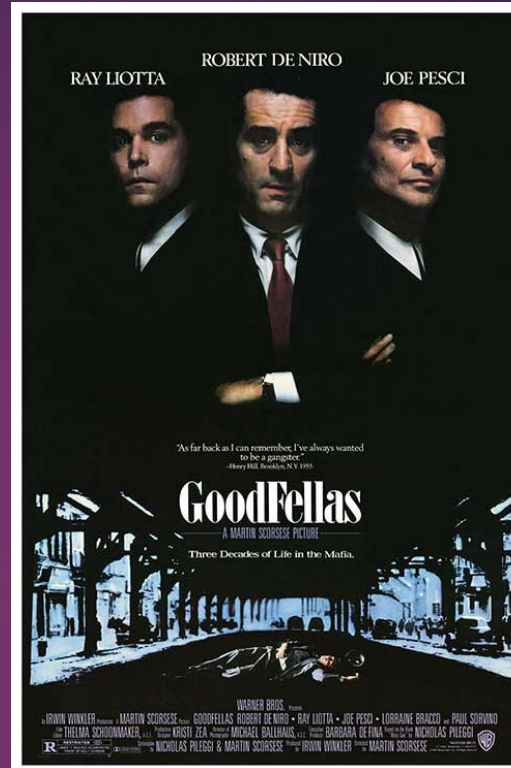
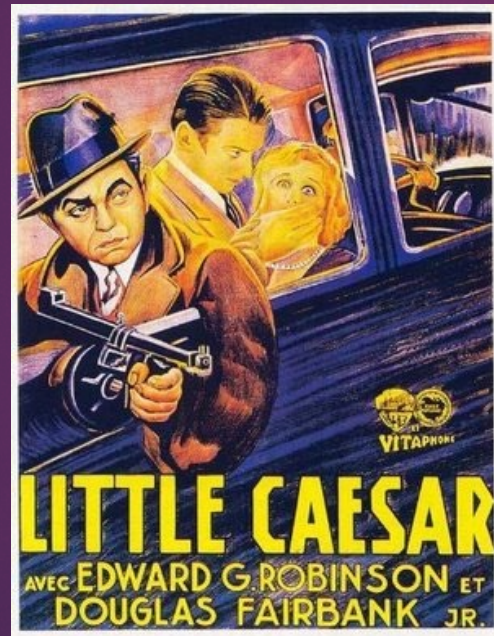
1707584 – AMY WATLER-THOMAS – CAMF6007

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- Sopranos 1999 – 2007
  - Gangster Genre
  - Post Modern
  - Subverts the Genre

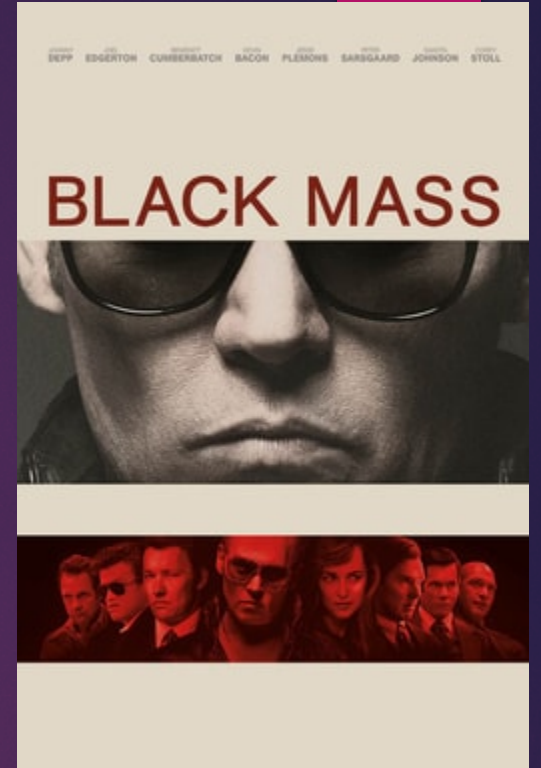
**Public Enemy (1931)**



**Little Caesar (1931)**



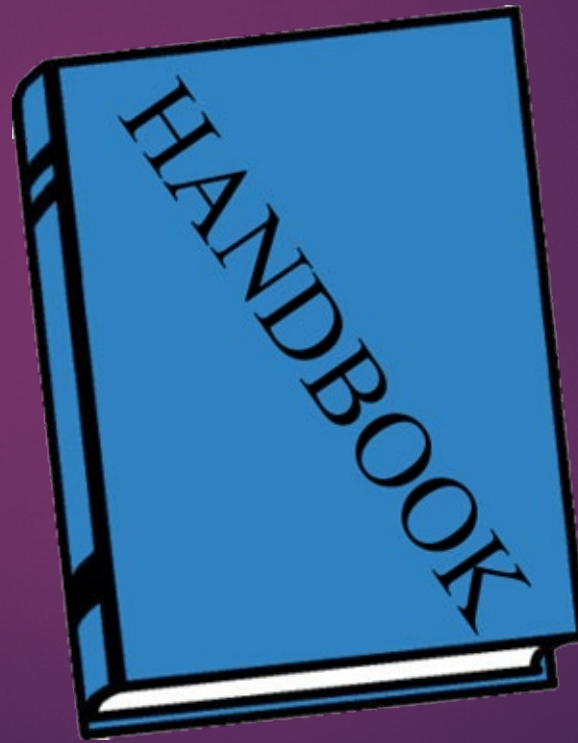
**Goodfellas (1990)**



**Black Mass (2015)**

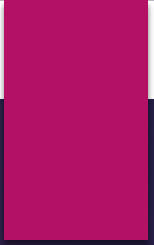
- The Gangster Handbook

- Language
- Family Dynamics





John  
Gotti –  
"Teflon  
Don"



*Sopranos* is not based on true story, but is inspired by many other films and is fully submerged in being self-aware of this. Rather than being all about the glamour of a gangster lifestyle, it looks at the why of the gangster, his motives and his life.

# Subverting and deconstruction ideals of gangsters

- Tony sees a psychiatrist, Dr Melfi





- His reputation and what he represents is so important and that is why he has the first of his panic attacks



## 3 Types of references Sopranos uses

- Non-diegetic references
- Diegetic,
- And Intra-Diegetic

# Non-Diegetic Reference

- Tony's sister Janice betrays him



# Non-Diegetic Reference

- Tommy gets  
killed in  
*Goodfellas*

What is the  
relevance?



# Diegetic Reference

- Silvio quoting  
Al Pacino in  
*Godfather III*  
(1990)



# Diegetic Reference

- *Godfather III*  
(1990)

What is the  
relevance?



# Intra-Diagetic

-*Goodfellas*  
scene

-*Sopranos*  
Scene

WHY?



The code decides the ending



## Assesment 1 - Genre Case Study Presentation – Amy Watler-Thomas - 1707584

In this presentation I will be looking at *Sopranos* (1999 – 2007), as a series which fits into the gangster genre and looking at the theoretical debates that make it a post-modern production.

*Sopranos* follows the life of Tony Soprano, the head of a gangster family. The series looks at the family dynamic, both the gangster family and his home life family.

While the series fits every aspect and fulfils every trope found in gangster films, it also subverts long standing ideas and ideals in the Genre.

- *Sopranos* (1999 – 2007)
- Gangster Genre
- Post Modern
- Subverts the Genre

The genre started in the 1930s with films such as *The Public Enemy* (1931) and *Little Ceasar* (1931) . Stories that inspired the films were taken from real life newspaper stories of real people, which often is still the case. *Goodfellas* (1990) and *Black Mass* (2015) are true of this. While others are more loosely inspired such as *Donnie Brasco* (1997).



Texts in this genre have inspired and it could be said have been used as a handbook for Gangsters coming up through the ranks. The films explain exactly how you should act, the language and the family dynamic.

- The Gangster Handbook

-Language  
-Family Dynamics



Interestingly, in the real-life trials of John Gotti in 1992, the real life Gangster, the lines were so crossed between real life and media that he was seen as a celebrity rather than a felon and thousands of people turned up at his trials. Perhaps John Gotti got so tied up in this media persona that he may not have been taken seriously as the boss of the Gambino crime family, the family fell apart with him when he was sent to jail.



John  
Gotti –  
"Teflon  
Don"

*Sopranos* is not based on true story, but is inspired by many other films and is fully submerged in being self-aware of this. Rather than being all about the glamour of a gangster lifestyle, it looks at the why of the gangster, his motives and his life.

*Sopranos* is not based on true story, but is inspired by many other films and is fully submerged in being self-aware of this. Rather than being all about the glamour of a gangster lifestyle, it looks at the why of the gangster, his motives and his life.

The main ways in which *Sopranos* subverts and deconstructs conventions or ideals of gangster genre films are these two points

1<sup>st</sup> point - Tony seeing a psychiatrist. We are introduced in the first episode, when triggered by ducks leaving Tony's pond at his home, to have a panic attack. This is not what we expect from a gangster to show a more

vulnerable side, and especially not to go and see a shrink. Not taken seriously for a long time, shrinks in the 90s were just starting to really gain their popularity, but this was definitely a first step for this genre. So why introduce this aspect? Starting at why it was triggered, Tony's ducks represent his longing to be free like them, but he has many ties to the life that he leads. His crime family, his wife and children and what is expected from him from his parents and what was passed down to him, the title of mob boss and fulfilling the ideal of the American dream which is why his ancestors would have moved from Italy, searching for a better life.



Video Link - Tony's first panic attack - <https://youtu.be/lKbamjdyw5M?t=25>



What he represents is much more than just him and he knows this and is why he 'cracks' under the pressure and sees a shrink.

Through seeing doctor Melfi he is not totally honest of course in his line of work though she soon realises what he does but not wanting to be in a situation of knowing too much, this is not approached directly in conversation.

Video of Doctor Melfi talking about her work - <https://youtu.be/eiD5PDILNwY?t=7>

- His reputation and what he represents is so important and that is why he has the first of his panic attacks



There are three ways *Sopranos* references other works, being:

- Non-diegetic references, in which there are shots which are very similar to those from past works and don't directly effect the characters.
- Diegetic, where characters directly quotes past works.
- And Intra-Diegetic, when past works influence the characters behaviours and reactions, the 'how a gangster should behave' because that's the rules in the handbooks.

### 3 Types of references Sopranos uses

- Non-diegetic references
- Diegetic,
- And Intra-Diegetic

This is an example video of a Non-Diegetic Reference where Tony smashed his house phone when angry - <https://youtu.be/jHQvaZdS8U>

### Non-Diegetic Reference

- Tony's sister  
Janice betrays  
him



This is an example video from *Goodfellas* where the character also smashed a phone when angry - <https://youtu.be/Dk-a1RAX2mU>

They draw a parallel between the two, that they have been betrayed – angry at themselves for letting these things happen, that allowing Janice to live in the house she is taking it a step too far and in *Goodfellas* for letting Tommy walk into the situation where he was killed.

### Non-Diegetic Reference

- Tommy gets killed in Goodfellas

What is the relevance?



Here is a video link to Silvio using Diegetic reference, quoting Al Pacino from *Godfather III* (1990) - <https://youtu.be/242H7F8DKHA>

### Diegetic Reference

- Silvio quoting Al Pacino in *Godfather III* (1990)



Here is a link to the same line from *Godfather III* - <https://youtu.be/S-lkWpm7TSQ>

This Diegetic reference is directly and knowingly reference characters that have place characters like them, directly being aware and then laughing it off, as to show that they are not taking it seriously, but to also show that these older Gangster films directly influence them.

### Diegetic Reference

- *Godfather III* (1990)

What is the relevance?



Here is an example of an intra-Diegetic Reference. The clip contains both one clip from *Goodfellas* and one from *Sopranos* - <https://youtu.be/1dgyiGZAnAA>

When past works influence the characters behaviors and reactions. Tommy shoots Michael Imperioli's character in the foot for disrespecting him in *Goodfellas*. Michael then comes back in *Sopranos* and shoots a baker in the same manner and shoots him in the foot – Why, because this is absolutely directly referencing and passing the story on by using the same actor.



Sopranos season ends not as is conventional with how Gangster films are suppose to end. It should never be a happy ending because when they started the code would not have been able to have gangster stories pass with the bad guy getting away with it, he would have to meet a bad end as to not give the wrong message to the audiences.

Sopranos does end with a happy ending. Tony and his family work it all out and in the end it all works out and they carry on their lives. Tony is head of the family, both this family on screen and his crime family – Some believe though that as the music cuts short at the end it means he was shot by the chap that went to the bathroom, but I do not believe that is the case.

Link is to the last scene of the series - <https://youtu.be/1x9YACdBUrU>

**Word Count 1078**

## Filmography

*Sopranos*. (1999 – 2007). [Video] USA: Tim Van Pattern .et.al

*Godfather III*. (1990). [Video] USA: Francis Ford Coppola

*The Public Enemy*. (1931). [Video] USA: Willian A. Wellman

*Little Caeser* .(1931). [Video] USA: Mervyn LeRoy

*Goodfellas*. (1990). [Video] USA: Martin Scorsese

*Black Mass*. (2015). [Video] USA: Scott Cooper

## References

Grievesson, Lee, Esther Sonnet, and Peter Stanfield. *Mob Culture : Rethinking the American Gangster Film*. Oxford: Berg, 2005. Print.

Wilson, Ronald. *The Gangster Film : Fatal Success in American Cinema*. London ; New York: Wallflower, 2015. Print. Short Cuts (London, England) ; 58.

