

Západočeská univerzita v Plzni

Fakulta filozofická

Bakalářská práce

**Mario Puzo's *The Godfather* as Business
Allegory**

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Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

Plzeň, duben 2019

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Hana Štětková

Poděkování

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1 Introduction

The objective of this bachelor's thesis is to examine Mario Puzo's novel *The Godfather*, which was published in 1969 and is still regarded as the classic bestseller, with focus on the Mafia practices in the United States after the World War II. The analysis aims to either prove or disapprove as to whether the practices depicted in the novel can be compared to the "world of business".

This bachelor's thesis will be divided into two segments, theoretical and practical. In both parts, mainly a descriptive method will be used. The first chapter of the theoretical part will concentrate on Mario Puzo's biography in order to ascertain the circumstances, which coerced him into the creation of the novel, and the sources from which he derived. By that time, the protective barrier of the Mafia began to flounder, among others, owing to Valachi's breach of the code of silence (*Omertà*), and the public investigation of the organized crime commenced.

The second chapter deals with the situation of the Italian community in the United States in the first half of the 20th century, since the way how the Italians are perceived by the Americans and vice versa is also discussed in the novel. Moreover, their origin is also of great importance, because Italy, particularly Sicily, is considered as a homeland of the Mafia.

And finally, the third chapter of the theoretical part will focus on a brief summary of *The Godfather* for a better understanding as the novel is quite voluminous due to its saga-like features.

The practical part will consist of two segments. The first one will place emphasis on the literary analysis of the novel concerning setting, time, protagonists, themes and motives. It is worth mentioning that it is possible to trace some connections between events and characters described in the novel and the true ones.

Lastly, the second segment will aim its attention to *The Godfather* as the business allegory.

This bachelor's thesis draws upon a number of primary and secondary sources related to the subject matter. These sources will be properly cited in compliance with the given norm. Subsequently, they will be mentioned in the bibliography, which will be included in the final part of this thesis, together with the conclusion and résumé.

Last of all, a small appendix with the pictures of the cover of the novel *The Godfather* and Mario Puzo's photograph will be incorporated.

2 Mario Puzo's Biography

2.1 Birth of a Classic

"*Behind every great fortune there is a crime.*" In the case of *The Godfather*, this initial quotation of the French writer Honoré de Balzac, which opens the novel, can be transformed into "Behind every single *The Godfather's* success there is indebtedness." As a matter of fact, Mario Puzo, the author of this best-selling novel in the 1970s, wrote it himself in his short essay called *The Making of The Godfather*: "I wrote it to make money".¹ In addition, he explained: "I was forty-five years old and tired of being an artist." He owed a debt of twenty thousand dollars to his relatives, finance companies, and bookmakers, so he concluded that the "time to grow up and sell out"² had come. On the grounds of that reason, he agreed to write a book that would develop the minor Mafia tales contained in *The Fortunate Pilgrim* (1964), after his editors had been urging him to do it.

2.2 Mario Puzo's Life

For a better understanding, it is necessary to look back into the past and write more about this exceptional man's life. Mario Gianluigi Puzo was the son of immigrants from Naples. After emigrating to the United States, his mother, Maria, was left alone with four young children in the Italian Lower West Side of Manhattan in New York City known as "Hell's Kitchen" as a consequence of her first husband's death in a dock accident while he was working in New York Central Railroad.³

In 1920, his mother remarried a "mystery", a "Southern Italian with blue eyes,"⁴ Antonio, and on October 15, Mario was born. However, when Puzo was twelve, Antonio disappeared and Maria had to take care of seven children herself,

¹ Chris Messenger, *The Godfather and American Culture: How the Corleones Became "Our Gang"* (New York: SUNY Press, 2002), 56.

² Messenger, *The Godfather and American Culture*, 56.

³ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 53.

with the aid of welfare assistance. She was a strong woman, and it was she who became the model for the godfather Don Corleone in the novel, as Puzo later claimed.⁵ In Don's personality, there can be found some hints of dignity and ruthlessness that were based on Puzo's mother and her voice that sounded in his ear while he was writing is reflected in Vito Corleone's dialogue.⁶

After Antonio's disappearance, Puzo was also working for the same railroad as his father. The young Puzo really loved reading – he spent a considerable time following his avocation anywhere, at home as well as at work. When he was older, he even admitted that reading was his addiction. Besides reading, as an adolescent, Puzo started to be interested in writing as well.⁷

At the age of twenty-one, Puzo joined the army after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 and during the World War II, he served in the United States Army Air Forces in Germany. Thereafter, he enrolled at the City College of New York on the G. I. Bill⁸ (officially the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, providing benefits for war veterans, for example, stipends), and wrote short stories.

2.3 Writing Career

Puzo's first novel, *The Dark Arena*, was published ten years after the end of the World War II, in 1955. It is a semi-autobiographical war story about a veteran called Mosca, who comes back to Germany trying to find his lover Hella. The novel won him critical acclaim, for example, Maxwell Geismar wrote in *The Saturday Review*, an American weekly magazine founded in August 1924: "It is a very good novel indeed, and one reads it with the sense of discovery and pleasure that a new talent evokes."⁹

⁵David Willbern, *The American Popular Novel After World War II: A Study of 25 Best Sellers, 1947–2000* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Incorporated Publishers, 2013), 45.

⁶Eric Hoberger, "Mario Puzo: The author of the Godfather, the book the Mafia loved," *The Guardian*, July 5, 1999, 18.

⁷Willbern, *The American Popular Novel After World War II*, 45.

⁸Ibid., 45

⁹Maxwell Geismar, "Pit of Decay", *The Saturday Review* (February 1955): 12, <https://www.unz.com/>.

In 1960, Puzo's occupation was an assistant editor of a group of men's magazines and a writer of war stories. At the time, he created all writings under the pseudonym Mario Cleri.¹⁰

His next novel, *The Fortunate Pilgrim*, a semi-autobiographical writing that was published in 1964, is according to Chris Messenger, "his best novel by all measures and comprises an excellent rendering of New York's Lower West Side Italian immigrant culture".¹¹ This novel gained positive critical acclaim again. *The New York Times* found it "a small classic," and Gay Talese, i.e. an American writer and a journalist for *The New York Times*, called it "the best novel ever written about Italian immigrants in America"¹². Puzo himself regarded this novel as his best work. However, he received a small amount of money again and for that reason, he wrote *The Godfather*. It was only for money, as it was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

2.4 Bright Mind

Mario Puzo was an intelligent man with a highly developed sense of deduction. In reality, the entire story of the Mafia and Don Corleone's family was based on his interest in this theme. Thus, he took advantage of his abilities and did his own research in libraries and newspapers. He also derived from transcripts of Senator Kefauver's investigation concerning organized crime during hearings that were broadcasted on television in the early 1950s. Many people even believed that he had something in common with the Mafia, despite his assertion that he had never met a gangster in his life.¹³

2.5 "just give me enough money to get started" – and then the success reached

After urgencies by his editors, Mario Puzo had one condition: "just give me enough money to get started".¹⁴ In connection with this requirement, he received

¹⁰ Willbern, *The American Popular Novel After World War II*, 45.

¹¹ Messenger, *The Godfather and American Culture*, 52.

¹² Willbern, *The American Popular Novel After World War II*, 45.

¹³ Ibid., 45

¹⁴ Messenger, *The Godfather and American Culture*, 57.

an advance payment of five thousand dollars to create the story of *The Godfather*, and he became a millionaire even before the foreign rights, movie rights and paperback rights were sold.¹⁵

The Godfather became the best seller number one in the United States and held stable at the *New York Times* list of best sellers for 67 weeks. Its popularity spread also to European countries like England, France, Germany and others, and more than 21 million copies of this novel were sold. Then Francis Coppola made his classic film of the same name, which tripled the success of the novel. Puzo and Coppola's cooperation was very fruitful, brought millions of dollars, and the phrases such as "an offer he couldn't refuse" have entered the American lexicon.¹⁶ In 2009, *The Godfather* was named one of the best-selling books of all time. Puzo achieved great success in Hollywood and the profit resulted in his decision to stay there. He wrote screenplays for Coppola's *Godfather* sequels.

Moreover, Puzo was also the screenwriter of other films, including, for example, *Earthquake* (1974), *Superman* (1978), *The Cotton Club* (1984)) and *Christopher Columbus: The Discovery* (1990), and he continued his career as a novelist. His novel, *Fools Die*, was written in 1978, telling the story of professional gamblers (according to his friend Joseph Heller, the success had changed Puzo, and he took a fancy to high-stakes gambling).¹⁷ Other notable works of Puzo's later career include: *The Sicilian* (1984), *The Fourth K* (1990), *The Last Don* (1996), and *Omerta*, published posthumously in 2000.

Puzo was a prolific writer. He wrote numerous essays and reviews for contemporary magazines and published two works of non-fiction, *The Godfather Papers and Other Confessions* (1972), memoirs in which Puzo described the making of *The Godfather*, his Italian background, crime, gambling and others, and *Inside Las Vegas* (1977), telling the truth about casinos and how they function. He even tried his hand at children's fiction. *The Runaway Summer of*

¹⁵ Homberger, "Mario Puzo," 18.

¹⁶ Gussow, Mel, "Mario Puzo, Author Who Made 'The Godfather' a World Addiction, Is Dead at 78," *The New York Times*, July 3, 1999, B7.

¹⁷ Gussow, "Mario Puzo," B7.

Davie Shaw, published in 1966, is a story of a young boy's adventure which he experiences across America on horseback.

2.6 Last Years

He spent his last years on the Long Island in Bay Shore, where he had lived since 1968. Erika, his first wife, died in 1978 and his next partner became his nurse, Carol Gino. He was a father of five children. Before his death, Puzo managed to finish the novel *Omerta* which he regarded as the third book of the Mafia trilogy comprising *The Godfather* and *The Last Don*. He died of a heart failure on the Long Island on July 2, 1999, at the age of 78.

3 Italian Immigration

3.1 Italian American Dream

One of the interesting themes which can be found in the novel *The Godfather* is undoubtedly immigration. It reflects the life of Italian immigrants in America, predominantly in the first half of the 20th century. The primary aim of this chapter is to draw a comparison between two different perspectives on immigration. The first point of view is historical. The second one is as seen through Mario Puzo's lens and takes into consideration how he perceives life of the Italians in America.

3.2 Historical Connections and Stimuli

Before its unification in 1861, Italy was a mix of states that were subordinated to Vatican administration and foreign powers. Life there was not easy for Italians at all, particularly for the inhabitants of Southern Italy. They were afflicted by political tyranny, economic exploitation, famine, diseases, and unemployment, not speaking of natural disasters in the form of earthquakes, which could hit no matter when and destroy human habitations.

People were hopeful of change for the better after the unification. But the exact opposite became the truth. Together with the loss of South's autonomy, steep rise of taxes, political disfranchisement and oppression by the landowners arrived. The interests of the new government (called *Risorgimento*) were focused entirely on the North of the Italy.¹⁸

It is no wonder that desperate southern Italians commenced searching for some solution to this injustice. The resolution arrived in the form of emigration to America, followed by the vision of better livelihood (= American Dream).

¹⁸ George De Stefano, *An Offer We Can't Refuse*, (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2006), 20–21.

3.3 Problems in Paradise

Although it can seem, at the first glance, that the new life in America was noticeably better for the Italians, no circumstances were suggesting it. Many of the Italians were uneducated, untrained, and came from rustic conditions. In result, there was only a slight probability of being successful in this industrially and economically developed country.

3.4 Italian Resolve and American Worries

Nevertheless, the Italians were propelled ahead by their stubborn resoluteness to obtain financial security and comfortableness for their families. On the top of that, they were used to working hard. They benefited from their eagerness for work and amorality. The Italian immigrants already established in the United States were concentrated in docks waiting for newly reached ones and recruiting them "into packaged labour gangs, a form of contract labour known as the *padrone* or boss system".¹⁹

By the end of the nineteenth century, the United States passed laws against the *padrone* system consisting in imposing a ban on the importation of foreigners under any type of contract relating to carry out labour across the US territory. However, it was an arduous struggle on the grounds of insufficiency of determining what constituted a contract and what is more, the intricacy of laws caused that *padrone* system had some possibilities how to circumvent these laws: for example, simply swap written contracts for oral ones.²⁰

As a consequence of it, the native Americans commenced to worry about these foreign-born radicals and called for new legislation to safeguard their country against immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, who allegedly would imperil America due to their unsafe radical beliefs and occupy themselves with violent and subversive activities.²¹

¹⁹ De Stefano, *An Offer We Can't Refuse*, 23.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 23–24.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 24–25.

3.5 Facing to Offences and Racism

The Americans perceived the Italians as people with "a natural inclination toward criminality" which was proclaimed in the headline of a *New York Times* editorial from 1876.²² The sociologist Edward Alsworth Ross even averred "that the Mediterranean peoples are morally below the races of Northern Europe is as certain as any social fact".²³ Furthermore, in the 1880s Italian immigrants were blamed for conspiracy to infest the United States with Italian fleas, at least according to a *New York Times* editorial of November 8, 1883.²⁴

3.6 Better Times Coming

This negative perception of Italians ceased with the arrival of World War II. During this period, Italian Americans could be seen even in politics and many of the young men joined the U. S. Armed forces. This fact is demonstrated in *The Godfather* by Michael Corleone, who was a member of the U. S. Marine Corps. Moreover, Mario Puzo himself served in the United States Army, as mentioned in the previous chapter.

In the course of the years after the World War II, the Americans began to accept the Italians. However, they still saw there a connection between organized crime and southern Italians. This was strengthened by its widespread harmful reputation during the 1950s and the 1960s, when Congressional investigations and public hearings were significantly announced in public (based on this information, *The Godfather* was created).

3.7 Immigration as Commonplace

On the contrary, Mario Puzo describes the immigration to America as an ordinary action without any profound stimuli. For instance, when he characterizes Sandra, Sonny's wife, he writes she "*had been born in Italy but brought to*

²² Ibid., 25.

²³ Ibid., 26.

²⁴ Ibid., 27.

*America as a small child.*²⁵ It is considered a natural thing. He does not attribute any importance to explanation of the incentives why she was brought there.

3.8 Separated Community and Mutual Disputes

A further significant comparison is Puzo's perception of Italians living in America. From his point of view, the Italian Americans have their private community and acknowledge only their authorities. They separate themselves from the others and the Americans perceive them as strangers. This fact is reflected in the Don's reply to an article in the newspaper where it is said that his youngest son Michael is awarded for his deeds during the World War II. Don Corleone responds disdainfully, *"He performs those miracles for strangers."*²⁶

Additionally, at the beginning of the story, Amerigo Bonasera confesses he believed in America and that was the reason why he fell into disgrace with Don Corleone. Vito Corleone is described here as someone who is more powerful than American justice and he feels somewhat offended that Bonasera had at first claimed his justice just before the New York Criminal Court instead of asking him.

Vito Corleone's view of Kay Adams, an American woman who is Michael's fiancée, is not flattering as well. According to his words, she is *"the washed-out rag of an American girl."*²⁷

On the other hand, the Americans consider the Italians as being inferior to them. In the novel, this demonstrates the affront from Johnny Fontane's second wife, an American woman, saying to him he *"always will be a dumb romantic guinea,"*²⁸ which is a slang, an offensive word used for an Italian or a person of Italian descent, as interprets Collins Dictionary²⁹.

Another example of disdain is the situation when the Corleone family moves into a new residence on the Long Beach, and shortly after, a group of

²⁵ Mario Puzo, *The Godfather* (London: Arrow Books, 2009), 26.

²⁶ Puzo, *The Godfather*, 13.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁹ Guinea definition and meaning | Collins English Dictionary. Collins Dictionary | Definition, Thesaurus and Translations [online]. Copyright © Collins 2019 [cit. 29.03.2019]. Available from: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/guinea>

three workers arrives and asserts they are furnace inspectors for the town of Long Beach. They intentionally dismantle the furnace and subsequently demand money for putting it together and passing for district inspection.

In *The Godfather*, the Italians are described as people who are not necessarily poor. On the contrary, they are predominantly small businessmen who are self-sufficing and financially secured, living in good conditions.

It is obvious, there is a little tension between the Americans and the Italians that brings occasionally some conflicts and affrays. Otherwise, their relationship is relatively harmonious, according to the book, because both of them have their own "world".

4 Plot Summary

With its almost 600 pages, the story of *The Godfather* is relatively voluminous – the novel comprises of nine books and thirty-two chapters and there appear several significant characters and their destinies. The aim of this chapter is to encapsulate the plot for better understanding.

4.1 "Every man has one destiny"

The story opens in the late summer of 1945 with a joyful event after the war. Various friends and neighbours who are invited to the wedding of Vito Corleone's daughter Constanzie Corleone and her bridegroom Carlo Rizzi are coming together to his residence in Long Beach. Vito Corleone, respectfully referred to as Don, Godfather or *padrino*, is on the one hand a greatly esteemed and capable businessman, on the other hand also the head of the most powerful Mafia family in the United States. He is a father of four children – three sons and a daughter. He can be compared to a fairy tale king whose sons have characteristic features.

For the oldest son, Santino (often called Sonny), it is irascibility, uncontrollability, tempestuousness and a lack of father's humbleness. He is tall and strong. Despite his considerable support of the family business, he was not supposed to become his father's heir.

The second son, Frederico, called Fred or Fredo, is decent, dedicated and always at his father's services, feeble and indistinctive. Short and of a medium build, he is inclined towards being dour. Fredo has never disputed his father. Nevertheless, he lacks that personal magnetism that is so indispensable for taking the lead of men. He is also not deemed to be the heir of the family business.

The third son, Michael, is the only one who has disassociated from Don's business. He is handsome, with the same calm strength and intelligence as his father, as well as the innate instinct to act in such a way that people have not had another possibility than to respect him. Before the war, he was Don's favourite.

Nevertheless, as soon as the war had erupted, Michael voluntarily joined the Marine Corps despite the Don's clearly expressed ban. He became a Captain and received a whole range of military decorations. When he was discharged from the army to recover, Michael enrolled at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, without saying a single word to his family. He returns home only to introduce his fiancée, an American girl Kay Adams, at sister's wedding, and manifests ostentatiously the distance of his father and his family by sitting in the further corner of the garden.

According to tradition, *"no Sicilian can refuse a request on his daughter's wedding day."*³⁰ At this occasion, some wedding guests are going to request Don for a favour. Among them, there is also Amerigo Bonasera, a mortician, whose daughter has fallen victim to a frightful action and is in hospital now, her broken jaw wired together. Bonasera is in disgrace with Don Corleone, because the mortician always stayed away from Don's help and at first, he demanded justice in a court not at his Don, since he dreads to feel obliged to him. Nevertheless, the court does not render Bonasera justice, albeit he has always believed in America. As a native Sicilian, Don does not agree with this way of thinking and he is unwilling to help Bonasera. However, at last, the mortician pronounces Don Corleone as his friend and Vito assumes the justice in his hands. In return, Don can call upon Bonasera to do him a service *"some day and that day may never come."*³¹ Sonny is supposed to be present during this talk to learn how to lead the family business, but he does not seem to be concerned. Shortly after, both young Americans are brutally beaten and Bonasera obtains justice.

Later, Johnny Fontane, a Hollywood singer, actor and Don's godson appears at the wedding. He contends with vocal cord disorders, as well as with his second wife. He explicates Don that his boss Jack Woltz, the head of a film company, rejects to cast him in a new film, because Johnny had a romance with a girl who Woltz was interested in. Tom Hagen, the Corleone family's adopted son, is entrusted to settle this issue in California.

³⁰ Puzo, *The Godfather*, 26.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 34.

Meanwhile, Don obtains a phone call from a hospital that his *consigliere* Genco Abbandando is dying, so Don visits him, accompanied by his three sons and Johnny Fontane to pay Genco their last respects. After his death, Tom Hagen becomes a new *consigliere*. In fact, Tom has held this position since Genco was confined to bed. Other families do not approve it, because Tom is not a trueborn Sicilian, he is German-Irish.

Hagen comes back from California, where he negotiated with Woltz. The chief of the film company refuses an agreement and shortly after he finds a severed head from a body of his most "precious gem", a famous English racing horse Khartoum worth six hundred thousand dollars, in his bed. Transfixed by this heartless action he agrees on Johnny's cast.

In the meanwhile, Hagen and Don are preparing for an important business appointment with Virgil "the Turk" Sollozzo concerning narcotic. The Tattaglia family vouches for him. Sollozzo wants to ask the Corleone family for financial support of two million dollars and primarily a certain protection before the law, because it is generally known that Don has friends in the right places among judges, politicians and policemen. Vito does not agree with getting involved in narcotics. He is afraid of jeopardizing his politic and police power. His friends in these spheres consider drugs as a problematic trade. For that reason, he refuses Sollozzo's offer. Sonny is present during this appointment and he commits an unpardonable fault by his question about the return of the Corleone family investment. Due to this inauspicious Sonny's act, Sollozzo discovers the divergence of opinions between Don and Sonny and he later makes use of this finding. Three months later, Tom Hagen is kidnapped by Sollozzo.

Michael returns to New York with Kay. On their way back from the theatre, Kay reads in an evening paper about an attempt on Don's life. Luckily, Vito is not dead, but he is seriously injured. Michael immediately phones home and after a talk with Sonny, he arrives at the residence in Long Beach. Luca Brasi, one of the most redoubtable members of the Corleone family, is also missing. Whilst Don is in hospital, Sonny takes over the governance.

Sollozzo tries to convince the kidnapped Hagen of inducing Sonny to accept a new agreement, because he believes that Don is dead. However, then the phone rings and they learn about Vito's survival. Thanks to his brilliant juridical articulacy, Tom escapes from Sollozzo's clutches.

In the residence, Michael notices that Pete Clemenza and Paulie Gatto fell into a suspicion of the betrayal. One phone call confirms that the traitor is Paulie. Mike wants to help Sonny as well as the family and despite his former unwillingness he is slowly involved in the family business.

Clemenza prepares for the punishment and he appoints Rocco Lampone as Gatto's successor. Together, they dispatch the betrayer.

Luca Brasi is charged with a secret task to give the impression of dissatisfaction with the Corleone family before Sollozzo to gain valuable information about "the Turk". Nevertheless, he is killed during a rendezvous with Bruno Tattaglia and "the Turk" and his body is hidden.

Meanwhile, Michael visits his father in hospital, and he discovers another betrayal. Nobody guards his father. It is Sollozzo's second attempt to murder Don. Thanks to Mike's arrival, nothing happens to him. Shortly afterwards, when the police arrive, Mike realizes that the police Captain Mark McCluskey is the Turk's ally. Captain hits him brutally in the face. Later on, Michael wakes up from anaesthesia to find his jaw is wired together.

In retaliation for Luca Brasi's death, the Corleone family kills Bruno Tattaglia. Sollozzo requires an immediate appointment and he demands Michael as a mediator. During the meeting in their residence, Mike propounds an idea that he will kill both Sollozzo and his bodyguard McCluskey. It seems impossible at first, but they agree in the upshot. Thanks to their informants, the Corleone family finds out the destination where the meeting takes place and their members hide a firearm in the lavatory. Mike must evoke an impression that he does not have any gun. In the course of events, he goes to the toilet. When he returns, he shoots both men. Because of it, he must leave the country and hide in Sicily until the affair quietens. Killing a New York City Police Captain is a serious crime which can inflict serious problems in the underworld across the United States.

Carlo Rizzi proves to be a dishonest man. Furthermore, he beats his wife Constanzia. Rizzi makes use of Sonny's irascibility that is commonly known and lures him into a trap, when he trashes the pregnant Connie. Sonny loves his sister and does not let anyone hurt her, so when he finds out that she was beaten once again, he is prepared to kill Rizzi. However, he is riddled with bullets on the motorway during a prearranged scenario.

The time has come to debt repayment. Don, who is now in domestic treatment, calls upon Amerigo Bonasera to do him a service. He visits Bonasera's funeral parlour and makes a request that he puts together Sonny's body, because Don does not want his wife to see him in this state.

Afterwards, Don arranges an appointment of all *famiglie* in the country with the main aim. He tries to ensure peace among the warring families and primarily a safe return for his son Michael to the United States. Don warns others about an immediate response if something happens to him. The representatives of the families strike a deal concerning drug trafficking (in order to be at least somewhat regulated) and certain protection against the law in the east of the United States which secures the Corleone family.

To ensure Michael's safe return, Don must, with the help of others, convince the police and the authorities of his innocence and procure him a clean criminal record. Then he transforms his residence into a fort and retires from the busy business life. Contemporaneously, Don dispatches his fellows to Las Vegas (where Fredo is convalescing from shock after the attempt on Don's life) to scrutinize the possibilities for entrepreneurship concerning casinos.

Mike's return is arranged almost one year later. In Sicily, he marries a beautiful local girl Apollonia. However, she is killed during a reversing attempt because in Michael's car there has been planted a bomb intended for him. Michael was betrayed by Fabrizzio, one of his bodyguards. In fact, the initiator of the bomb attack was Barzini, Tattaglia's and Sollozzo's ally.

In America, Michael gets a basic training in the family business. He bears a resemblance to Don in his behaviour and the way of expressing. Kay Adams becomes his second wife and they have two sons. Mike pays Fredo a visit in Las

Vegas and familiarizes him with the family plans – to move and start a business there. However, Moe Greene, the first person who saw the possibilities of Las Vegas and built one of the first hotel casinos on the Strip, refuses to sell his interest in hotel to family. Ere long, he is shot dead.

Don Vito Corleone dies of a severe heart attack in his garden surrounded by men, holding the hand of the son he most loved. His last words are "*Life is so beautiful.*"³²

Michael and Tom find out that they have a betrayer inside their family. It is Tessio, leaving aside Clemenza, the second *caporegime* of the Corleone family.

4.2 "Revenge is a dish that tastes best when it is cold."

Almost three years after Mike's return, the time of *vendetta* has come. In the course of a twenty-four-hour period, all the people who betrayed the Corleone family are punished: Tessio, Fabrizio, Philipp Tattaglia, Barzini and Carlo Rizzi, as well as the infiltrators of the family domains. This way, Michael obtains a popular reverence and attains back the privileged position among families in New York. Furthermore, the majority of the most eminent *caporegimes* of the Tattaglias and the Barzinis defect to the Corleone family.

One year later, Don Michael is the head of the most powerful *famiglia* in the United States. He and his family move into a new house in Las Vegas and they live an ordinary life there.

³² Puzo, *The Godfather*, 545.

5 Literary Interpretation

This chapter focuses on the literary critical interpretation that includes main theme, narration, time, place, characters, structure, gender, and language. It is divided into two main parts, the first one is the analysis of the novel, the second one is about *The Godfather* as business allegory.

5.1 Part One: Analysis

5.1.1 Main Theme

The Godfather describes the Mafia's practices of Italian immigrant minority in the United States between the forties and the fifties, which is represented in the novel by the Corleone family headed by Don Vito Corleone. Outwardly, he acts as an orderly U. S. national under the guise of a decent businessman who possesses a company dealing with the importing of the olive oil. On the contrary, he is regarded as the boss of the most powerful *famiglia* in New York's underworld. One day, in the course of a business appointment, Don refuses to get involved in a support of the drug traffic. However, ill-considered behaviour of his oldest son during the appointment later triggers The Five Families War in New York. These circumstances cause that Vito's youngest son (up to now trying to avoid any kind of family business), is gradually dragged into this dark world. In the upshot, he takes over his father's reins and a war hero changes over time in a cold-blooded murderer.

5.1.2 Motivation of the Story

Even though fictitious characters appear in the story of *The Godfather*, some of them are based on true personages. Firstly, Don Corleone as the major persona, is a politically influential man with the majority of judges, politicians and police officers on his side. In the first half of the twentieth century, Frank Costello (1891–1973) was one of the most powerful representatives of Italian-American organized crime. He was nicknamed "The Prime Minister of the Underworld" and as same as Vito Corleone, he was regarded as a man of honour and exercised more political power than any other member of the organized crime and the

national syndicate. He even referred to judges as "*my boys*". Costello took an advantage of the FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover, who had a passion for gambling and who was an inveterate horseplayer and was giving to Hoover a tip on winners. There is even considerable evidence from FBI agents about how munificent Hoover was when he had a successful day. Thanks to it, Hoover kept the truth about the Mafia and organized crime quietly and with his statement that "*the FBI has much more important functions to accomplish than arresting gamblers all over the country,*"³³ the Mafia and organized crime could continue to thrive.

Other personalities who provided an inspiration to Puzo, and it is possible to find something that they have in common with Don Corleone in the novel, are Joseph Profaci (1896–1962), the leading importer of olive oil to the United States, whose luxurious and monumental funeral took place in compliance with the best underworld traditions, and Carlo Gambino (1902–1976) who preferred being inconspicuous and was a firm traditionalist, demanding every sign of respect due a godfather.³⁴

Moe Greene's story is based on Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel (1905–1947) who was the owner of the plush hotel and casino called Flamingo in Las Vegas, and similar to Moe Green, he was not thriving in running a business. The casino was loss making and Siegel owed pots of money to the Mafia. He was also shot to death and the Mafia took over Flamingo as Corleone family in the novel.³⁵

Last but not least, the episode in which Michael has the business appointment with Sollozzo and McCluskey and he returns from the lavatory with the gun hidden there and then he kills both of them, originates in the true event, too. However, in a slightly different way. On April 15, 1931, Charles "Lucky" Luciano (1897–1962) decoyed Giuseppe Masseria (1880–1931) nicknamed "Joe the Boss" (who was by that time the head of one of the largest Mafia family in New York and Luciano's chief) into a restaurant in Coney Island. Masseria's rival became Salvatore Maranzano called "boss of bosses" (1868–1931), when his power commenced growing sharply and the war started. It was certain that one

³³ Carl Sifakis, *The Mafia Encyclopedia* (New York: Facts on File, Inc, 2005), 125-128.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 180.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 418.

boss had to kill the other. So, Luciano took charge of it and arranged a dinner with Masseria. When they finished the meal, they were playing cards. Meanwhile, all the other guests cleared out. Luciano went to the lavatory and while he was there, four men invaded the restaurant and open the fire of twenty bullets. When Luciano went out of the men's room, Masseria was dead with six bullets in his body.³⁶

Finally, it is necessary to mention Frank Sinatra (1915–1998). His star shone more than anybody else's in the world of the popular music in the 20th century and he was an actor and a producer as well. Even though Mario Puzo had never pronounced Sinatra was a model for Johnny Fontane, the resemblance between them was even so plausible that the overwhelming majority of the readership and thereafter the audience believed that the severed head of the horse in producer's bed gave cause for Sinatra's casting in the film *"From Here to Eternity"* (1953) as Angelo Maggio. Kitty Kelley resolutely refuted this rumour in her biography of Sinatra *"His Way"* (1986), as well as Puzo's implication that Sinatra was released from his contract with bandleader Tommy Dorsey by means of his friends-mobsters notorious for their practices.³⁷

³⁶ Ibid., 300.

³⁷ De Stefano, *An Offer We Can't Refuse*, 37.

5.1.3 Compositional Principles

5.1.3.1 The Principle of Causality

The principle of causality is based on a fact that the effect does not arrive before the cause. This principle is based in the literature either on the existence or the absence of logical causal links between components of a work. From this point of view is *The Godfather* a novel with the causal composition. It means that one theme in the novel follows from another in a logical sequence. For example, the case of Amerigo Bonasera:

*"I believe in America. America has made my fortune."*³⁸

Even though he is an Italian immigrant, he endeavours to live as a native American and tries to be a good citizen, because America has been good to him. He believes in its law and order and benefits from it. He also raises his daughter this way. In exchange for this persuasion, he assumes America to provide him justice, when his daughter is brutally beaten by two young Americans. However, the New York Criminal Court does not bring him the fairness and both boys go, in fact unpunished, besides other things thanks to their politically influential fathers. He feels betrayed as well as humiliated and this cruel retribution for his American Dream forces him to call for justice at his *padrino*. In this case is the cause the failure to provide justice and the effect is the entreaty at Don Corleone in exchange for provision of service.

5.1.3.2 The Principle of Tectonics

Tectonics is the inner construction of the work: introduction – conclusion, contrast, parallelism, etc. The principle of tectonics is based on the overall compositional character of the work from the point of view of the either compositional closing or compositional openness. In the case of *The Godfather*, it is about tectonic closed structure, which means in a simplified way it has its own introduction, contents, and conclusion.

³⁸ Puzo, *The Godfather*, 29.

5.1.4 Compositional Procedures

On the ground of the principles mentioned above, it is possible to come to the conclusion that *The Godfather* is chronologically ordered, because the principle of causality is logically most used on the occasion of classical chronological composition. Nevertheless, this statement about chronological order is not exactly accurate, since the retrospection, i. e. a look in the past, also can be found in the novel. For instance, part three, chapter fourteen, which devotes to the description of Don's forced leaving from Sicily to hide himself in America at the age of twelve in order to save his life against mafiosos who murdered his father after he had killed a local Mafia chief. It is possible to observe Vito's transformation from a destitute young man into the most powerful and highly regarded "king of an empire" that he creates.

Throughout the story, direct speech dialogues are predominantly used, however, there can be found inner monologues and indirect speech and as well.

5.1.5 Subplot

In the story there appears long digressions, i. e. a temporary straying from the main topic, into the lives of Lucy Mancini and doctor Jules Segal, Nino Valenti and Johnny Fontane, which take place in California. These stories are not directly connected with the Corleone family, but the characters come into contact with them in the course of the narration and for that reason they together shape the whole story of *The Godfather* and pertain to the book inseparably.

5.1.6 The Perspective of the Narrator

Mario Puzo bears in *The Godfather* as an omniscient narrator and he behaves as an observer. It means, he is not a part of the story, he stays out of it. It follows that the situations in the novel are described by means of third person singular, i. e. the er-form. Every chapter is alternately depicted from a different perspective of the characters. For example, at the beginning the novel the reader is acquainted with particular issues, which Amerigo Bonasera, Johnny Fontane

and the baker Nazorine have to contend with. Their feelings are described, among others, through rhetorical questions and inner monologues, e. g.:

*"His beautiful young daughter was still in the hospital with her broken jaw wired together; and now these two animales went free? It had all been a farce."*³⁹

Or another example: *"It was hopeless, Don Corleone thought. If he refused to be instructed, Santino could never run the family business, could never become a Don. He would have to find somebody else. And soon. After all, he was not immortal."*⁴⁰

5.1.7 Time

The novel commences in the post-war era (or to be more precise, the story begins on the last Saturday in August 1945) at the wedding and ends eleven years after this event. There is an explicitly expressed time in the book and the subplots take place simultaneously with the main plot. The time plays a very important role in *The Godfather*, because a black market specialized in narcotics gradually took deciding position after the World War II. The most widespread drug by that time was heroin. Thanks to it, the reader has an opportunity to notice how the black market changed over time.

5.1.8 Place

The setting of the novel is predominantly situated in New York on Long Island. However, the story takes place also in New Hampshire, Kay Adams' homeland; in California, associated with Johnny Fontane (and later with his friend Nino Valenti) and their life in show business; in Sicily, where Michael is exiled after murdering Turk Virgil Sollozzo and Captain Mark McCluskey; and in Nevada, where Fredo is sent to recover after the attempt on Don's life and subsequently to lay the foundations of business for the Corleone family. Finally, Nevada (or to be more accurate Las Vegas) becomes Corleone's new home.

³⁹ Puzo, *The Godfather*, 4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 34.

5.1.9 Characters

There is a great number of main characters in the story of *The Godfather* and the overwhelming majority of them are members of the Corleone family. Nevertheless, the most important characters who influence the story most of the time are, without a doubt, Don Corleone, Tom Hagen and later also Michael Corleone. In fact, they have control of other characters in the book.

A few exceptions can be found, for example, in the shape of Johnny Fontane, Lucy Mancini or doctor Jules Segal, who are less important, but without them, the story would not be complete. As it was mentioned above, these characters are not involved in the family business, they are only connected with the Corleone family to a certain extent: Johnny Fontane is Don's godson; Lucy Mancini was Sonny's mistress and for that reason the Corleone family take care of her after his decease and she is sent to Nevada, where doctor Segal is also sent. Segal is a surgeon who performed abortions illegally and the family helped him. He then holds the post of the hotel house physician in Las Vegas. However, their love story is not contrived by the Corleones.

5.1.9.1 Don Vito Corleone

The most important character in the novel is undoubtedly Don Vito Corleone. The man who transformed from the impecunious youth assisting in a grocery shop into the head of the most powerful *famiglia* in the gangland of New York. He is a high-principled and capable businessman out of the ordinary, who never refuses help to anyone. The only condition is that the supplicant must pronounce Don his friend personally. In fact, Vito Corleone can be regarded as a "king", who intends welfare to his subjects and together with his *Consiglieri* Tom Hagen controls his kingdom. The safety is provided by the military personnel in the form of caporegimes.

It is possible to notice in the novel, how easy is to circumvent the laws in America and injure innocent people. For instance, the baker Nazorine, who pays in advance a considerable sum of money to wholesaler of furniture. The wholesaler already anticipates that he will go bankrupt, but regardless of this fact,

he accepts the money anyway. When Nazorine has recourse to his advocate, he finds out that under the law there is nothing to be done. This treatment is unbelievable for Don, because in his world something like that is unimaginable:

"Don Corleone listened to this story with amused disbelief. It was not possible that the law could allow such thievery."⁴¹

For that reason, it is possible to say, that he dubs himself lawmaker and provider of justice and he feels superordinate to America as it is evident in the following example:

"One of the men, trying to explain this to his caporegime, said, "This country has been good to me." Upon this story being relayed to the Don he said angrily to the caporegime, "I have been good to him."⁴²

When speaking of Don's personality, it must be mentioned that he does not consider "no" to be an answer. This fact is possible to notice in the case of *Padrino's* most favourite sentence: *"I'll make him an offer he can't refuse."⁴³* Behind this quite innocent statement a dark threat is hidden.

5.1.9.2 Consiglieri Tom Hagen

Tom is no less intelligent than Don or Michael and devoted to the family. He holds the post of Don's advisor and simultaneously the post of the family's advocate. Hagen was found by Sonny as a child and regardless his German-Irish origin, he was adopted by the Corleones. His specialization in law proved to be inestimable merit for the family as well as his ingenuity. The incentive to make the choice of this career was when he once heard Don said:

"A lawyer with his briefcase can steal more than a hundred men with guns."⁴⁴

⁴¹ Puzo, *The Godfather*, 296.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 295.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 60.

5.1.9.3 Michael Corleone

And finally, the next important character is certainly Michael Corleone, who is as intelligent and able as his father and in the novel can be found his transformation from a young Italian man descending from the Mafia family and trying to live a normal life as an ordinary American, to the new Don, as well as his inner fight against his destiny, because at the beginning of the story he makes an effort to disassociate from the family business. This effort is finally conquered, since the family's bond and allegiance are more powerful than it is visible at first sight. The launching factor is in Mike's case a thirst for retribution for the attack on his father's life and his broken jaw caused by Captain McCluskey, because:

"It's all personal, every bit of business. (...) They call it business. OK. But it's personal as hell."⁴⁵

5.1.10 Theme

As it was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the main theme is the Mafia practices in America between the forties and the fifties. But it should be noted that the Mafia and its activity worked for a long time quite covertly, besides other things, thanks to FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover, who still denied the existence of this state-widely working syndicate in the late fifties.

The principle of "*Costa Nostra*" which means "our thing" was revealed in 1962 when the detained Joseph M. Valachi broke his vow of silence called *Omertà* (the code of silence). Until this avowal, the public had never known the term "*Cosa Nostra*". Among the main motives for Valachi's confession was longing to wreak vengeance for condemnation of death of Vito Genovese, who branded him as a supposed "rat" (this condemnation was in Valachi's opinion unfair), and simultaneously his craving for survival because on the grounds of his murder of an innocent person in prison, he faced up to death. He made this decision after his vain efforts to get in touch with the leaders of the syndicate who cut him off and thwarted his plans to rescue, so he wrote down his memories. These memories were made by journalist Peter Maas (1929–2001) in 1966.

⁴⁵ Puzo, *The Godfather*, 189.

However, their publication raised so sharp political fight, that president Lyndon B. Johnson (1908–1973) himself reversed the original decision to publish the book under the pressure of "Italian-American Civil Rights League" and he, de facto, prohibited it. Finally, the book was allowed by the court and published in 1969. The memories called "*The Valachi Papers*" become a best-seller, mainly for its theme, which breached *omerta*.⁴⁶ Thanks to this testimony as well as Kefauver hearings (officially The United States Senate Special Committee to Investigate crime in Interstate Commerce, lasting from May 10, 1950 to May 1, 1951) and other factors, the story of *The Godfather* could come into existence.

5.1.11 Gender

It is possible to describe the novel as an exclusively male story, because they represent the majority of the characters there. In connection with this fact, it is worth mentioning that the Mafia has always been only an all-male society without exception. In other words, the masculinity emanates from all deeds in the novel and *The Godfather* shows traditional male and female roles: Women are pictured as housewives rather than strong personalities. They have nothing in common with the family business and their role is basically babysitting, cooking, and cleaning, whereas men are responsible for providing for their families. In *The Godfather*, men also have no scope for expressing themselves and their real emotions – when Johnny Fontane complains about being treated badly in Las Vegas, Don's response is eloquent when he shouts at him "(ACT) LIKE A MAN!"⁴⁷

5.1.12 Language

The use of Italian words is a greatly characteristic feature of *The Godfather* and makes the story more authentic. Most frequently, these words are utilised for the appellations of the ranks in the family's hierarchy and occur in the Czech translation (made by Tomáš Korbař) as well. For example, *Consiglieri* as a consultant or adviser, *Caporegime* as a high-ranking member or captain, who has soldiers under his command. Nonetheless, there can be found other Italian words

⁴⁶ Tomáš Korbař, *Kmotr* (Praha: Rudé právo, 1974), 497-98.

⁴⁷ Puzo, *The Godfather*, 39.

which designate, for instance, food (*taralles*), shotgun (*lupara*), typical Mafia's words (*mafioso*, *omertà*, *gabbellotto*), or insults (*animales*) and disapprovals (*infamita*), etc. Although Puzo uses Italian words in English text, he subsequently provides the reader with their English equivalents or appropriate explanations to avoid any misunderstanding. Example: "*The gabbellotto, a sort of overseer to the estates of the rich.*"⁴⁸

In the direct speech, colloquial expressions (gotta, gonna, wanna), swear words (damn), abuses (dirty bastard) appear quite often. However, it is possible to notice some euphemisms (to croak instead of to die) and idioms (to make sb's bones). Because *The Godfather* centres around a gangster theme, there also appears argot, i.e. a language of a specific group of people used in order not to be grasped by the uninitiated: *to let someone wet his beak* (a demand for part of the loot), or *.90 calibre*, or *big shot* (a person of great importance). The sentences are predominantly short and easy to understand, rather than long and complicated ones.

⁴⁸ Puzo, *The Godfather*, 432.

5.2 Part Two: The Godfather as Business Allegory

5.2.1 Definition of the Mafia

There are many definitions of the Mafia, and it is very difficult to determine which one is the most accurate. However, the overwhelming majority concurs usually in the following characterization: This type of the organized crime can be described as an immense syndicate composed of transnational enterprises which core business resides in combining an unlawful activity with a lawful one.⁴⁹ The lawful activity is of great importance for the Mafia – it is carried on in order to hide its crime business, because it secures the legitimate incomes and provides a kind of protection in a way.

Even though enormous profits are shown in these realms, they are not included in the calculation of the Gross National Product (GNP), because of their illegal nature. Moreover, the incomes are paid in cash in most cases, which means that their origin is seldom provable, and it also follows that the money are not declared to the tax. For that reason, the activity of the Mafia is linked to shadow economy (also called underground economy).

On the grounds of the findings mentioned above, it is possible to perceive every single Family in the novel just as the enterprise dealing with the sundry illegal activities such as prostitution, usury, gambling, drug-trafficking, and the like. The Mafia is quite often also associated with a very strict organisational structure and thanks to this hierarchy it works very effectively, sometimes even better than some enterprises or institutions. Together with the stern internal rules, it is quite often greatly arduous to reveal its activity.

In the case of the deeper examination into the organized crime, there is no gainsaying that in the world of the Mafia, the Families may be even considered (due to its interventions into politics and its running) as a "state". The veracity of this statement can be found in the novel, when Don Corleone convenes the meeting of all the Families in New York (and representatives from other ten Families across the United States) after the decease of his oldest son Sonny,

⁴⁹ Clotilde Champeyrache, "Destructive Entrepreneurship: The Cost of the Mafia for the Legal Economy," *Journal of Economics Issues*, vol. LII, no. 1 (March 2018): 159.

with the aim to propose the peace as well as to debate the business issues. In fact, all these participants can be regarded thanks to their demeanour as the heads (or representatives) of the "states", and for that reason, the entire event can remotely resemble a summit.

5.2.2 Free Competition is Wasteful, Monopoly Efficient

In the process of carrying on business, the position in the market is the crucial criterion to the company, because it depends on its profits or on the contrary losses. To become the sole seller of a unique product in the market and for that reason be able to influence the price (among others), it is necessary to restrict the entering of other companies into the branch. It means being divested of the competition. This exclusive position is called a monopoly, and in the novel, Don Corleone makes an effort to achieve it as the head of the firm *Genco Pura* Oil Company. It should be noted that his methods are rather emphatic.

5.2.3 Great Men Are Not Born Great, They Grow Great

Every great entrepreneur contrives to intuit an opportunity for doing business and it is not different, but the same in *The Godfather*. When the Prohibition was enacted in 1920, the alcohol prices went up sharply, which led to the black-market flourishing and it meant easy money. Don Corleone realizes it and for that reason, he decides to take part in the carriage of whiskey and other spirits from Canada to the United States, after a group of Italian smugglers turns to him, because they need trucks and deliverymen to distribute their production over New York City. Don Corleone also supports Italian families who open speakeasies (clandestine places where alcoholic beverages are sold illegally, especially during the Prohibition). However, in the course of the transporting, there is a danger that the police stop some of Don's trucks. For that reason, it is necessary to adopt measures, and Genco Abbando hires a fine lawyer with widespread contacts in the Police Department and the judiciary. On the grounds of this, a system of bribes is established together with a considerable list of officials entitled to a monthly sum, and the strength of Don's empire rises.

5.2.4 Potency Lurks in Politics

The power of Don Corleone is growing bigger and bigger thereafter the Italians turn to him asking for a counsel when they did not know whom to vote to represent them in the state legislature, in the city offices, in the Congress, and he becomes a significant political power. This power is consolidated by his foresighted statesmanlike wisdom, for example, he supports gifted boys descending from poor families in studies, and later, these boys are becoming lawyers, assistant district attorneys, and even judges.

5.2.5 New Field of Activity

After the end of the Prohibition in 1933, Don Corleone starts to be interested in all the gambling activities in Manhattan: the crap games on the docks, the shylocking, the bookmaking on sports and horses, the illicit gambling houses that run poker games, the policy or numbers racket in Harlem. They are controlled by a man whose name is Salvatore Maranzano. However, he refuses Vito's offer which concerns the equal partnership beneficial to both parties: Don Corleone with his organisation can provide him with the auspices thanks to his police and political contacts, as well as new opportunities for broadening his business in Brooklyn and Bronx. This refusal leads to the war with Don Corleone as the winner, Maranzano is killed and his empire incorporated into the Corleone organization. And as a bonus, Don has a foothold in the unions of the garment industry which proves extremely important during the time of World War II.

5.2.6 Beyond the Boundaries of Mere Enterprise

In New York, tens of guerrilla wars started to burst out roused by gangsters striving for grabbing themselves a part of empire, whereas men like Don Corleone try to defend their territories and their illegal activities against interventions from the outside. These riots are fertile grounds for the press and government agencies, because they exploit them for enforcing stricter and stricter laws and for exercising more inconsiderable police methods. Don realizes that public nuisance might even lead to a suspension of democratic procedures, which would

be fatal to his organization. For that reason, it is necessary to establish peace, not only in New York City, but also in the nation.

"Like other great rulers and lawgivers in history Don Corleone decided that order and peace were impossible until the number of reigning states had been reduced to a manageable number."⁵⁰

The quote shows that the Families are achieving even further than mere enterprise thanks to their operation and essence, and they act like a state, as it was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter: Every state as well as every Family has demarcated its territory, where it exercises its power and in any case of incursion into this territory, a war comes about. Just as the state, the Family has its own leader who governs it and represents it in summits and sundry negotiations and he has bodyguards at his disposal (for example, Luca Brasi, Albert Neri, Rocco Lampone). The organisational structure circumscribing the remits and obligations of its members is another common feature. Furthermore, it is possible to perceive the principle of a "protection racket" as a tax-collecting.

5.2.7 The Organisational Structure of the Corleone Family

The enterprises as well as other establishments are complex wholes with many people who are employed there (or embodied in). Among them, a natural division of the labour is used. For an attainment of goals and making profit happen, it is necessary to manage the enterprise (or the state) together with people in a right and effective way. For that reason, in every organisation, the management must be arranged in advance. It means that three essential questions are bound to be answered: who will be in charge, whom or what he will manage, and how he will manage. Owing to it, a certain organisational structure of the institution determining the relations can arise. Concerning the novel, it is possible to draw up the structure of the Corleone family:

⁵⁰ Puzo, *The Godfather*, 293.

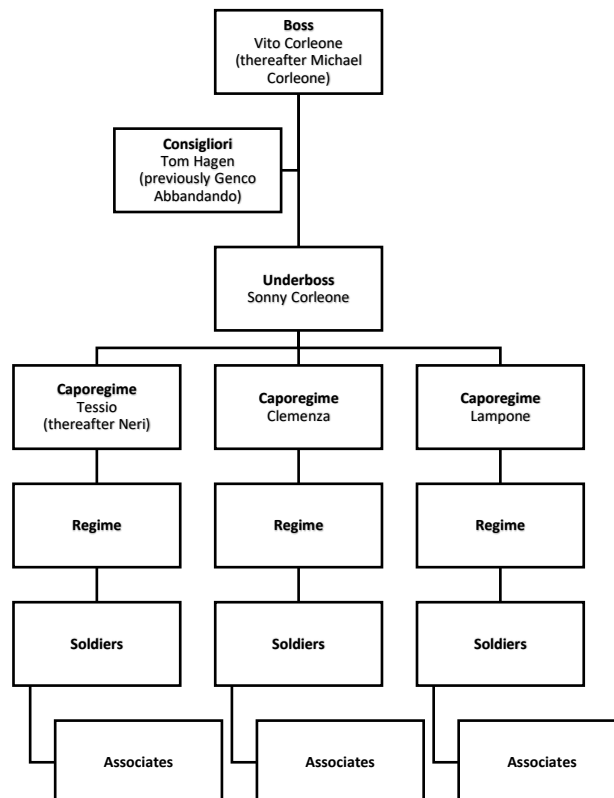


Figure 1 - The Structure of the Corleone Family

The head is Don Vito Corleone (later Michael Corleone), who is called the Boss. He is responsible for running the business, achieving the goals, making the decisions. He also represents the family at the business appointments, negotiations or summits. In fact, the Boss may be regarded almost as a dictator, because he exercises the autocratic leadership. This type of leadership is plentifully used, for example, in the army, where faultless outcomes and quick decision-making are necessary. There are three levels (some kind of buffers) separating the head of the Family, who determines the policy, from a group of men (soldiers) performing Don's orders in practice. This system guarantees, that the top of this imaginary pyramid remaining untraceable. The Boss is de facto the manager and his functions are planning, systematization, selection and deploying of the staff, managing, and supervision. The Boss together with the *Consigliori* and the Underboss rank among top management.

The Boss has at his disposal the *Consigliori*, Tom Hagen (previously Genco Abbandando), who performs the function as the advisor and counsellor, as well as his companion and the closest friend. He keeps a good track of every

step in the organization. The *Consiglieri* can also act on the behalf of the Boss. In fact, he is the only person, who might overthrow the Don. However, this situation has never happened yet in the history of the Mafia.

An Underboss is in fact a successor to the Boss who is in "apprenticeship" and he gets an initial training in the family business. In the case of the Boss decease or his retirement, the Underboss takes his position. This role belongs to Sonny Corleone and after his death, Michael picks up the baton.

The *Caporegimes* are appointed by the Boss himself. They have the function as captains and manage their own groups of men called *regimes* made up of soldiers. Even though they are quite self-governing, they are subordinate to the Boss orders. The *Caporegimes* are responsible for their own family territories: Tessio controls Brooklyn and Clemenza Bronx. Later, under Michael's leadership a new *regime* is established. Rocco Lampono takes the lead and after Tessio's betrayal, Albert Neri replaces his post of the *caporegime*, and Clemenza secedes from the Corleone family establishing his own Family when Michael shifts his business to Nevada. *Caporegimes* rank among middle management.

The soldiers are the lowest rank in the Family structure. They carry out all the "dirty job" and fulfil the commands of the *Caporegimes*. To obtain a membership in the Family, it is necessary for every soldier either to kill someone – "make his bones" or to do something significant in order to prove his allegiance.

Associates are not members of the Family in the proper sense of the word and do not have such importance in the organization. They just take part of the criminal activity.

5.2.8 Where is the Border of Organized Crime?

The Godfather arouses many questions, for example, where the borders of the organized crime reach. It seems that it is generally known about its existence, however actually, it is tolerated, among others, through the system of the bribes. Otherwise, how it is possible to explicate the situations when a so important person such as a Senator is, apologizes to the chief of the Mafia for his absence at the wedding of his daughter and sends him a valuable gift? Or that a

bank president provides him the executive suite of the bank and the conference room when he wants to assemble the meeting in order to propose the peace? All these questions are not easy to answer. Nevertheless, the fact that bureaucracy, politicians, police and judiciary de facto cooperate with the organized crime says much about its power and size.

5.2.9 Opportunity Makes the Thief

After a careful examination of Don Corleone's actions, it is possible to come to a conclusion that the organized crime capitalizes on society mistakes to its profit and tries to eschew them. Even though, the Prohibition was well-intended, in reality, it caused expansion of smuggling and illegal selling of alcohol. In the course of the World War II, the Corleone family is participating in supplying black-market OPA food stamps, gasoline stamps, and travel priorities, even in the garment industry. In post-war era, the narcotics are on the increase. Even though Don Corleone disapproves of this kind of business, at last he must make a compromise in order to regulate this market to some extent. It follows that where the opportunity of making money is, there are also talons of the Mafia.

6 Conclusion

This bachelor's thesis discussed the issue of the Mafia practices as they are depicted in Mario Puzo's novel *The Godfather*, with the main aim to prove or disprove whether the practices can be compared to the "business world". All findings were grounded in specific examples from the novel.

The Godfather, a family saga of two generations of the Corleone family and of gangster theme published in 1969, still ranks among world's bestsellers. About thirty million copies were sold. Moreover, the film adaptation is considered to be one of the world's best films ever made and Mario Puzo himself cooperated with Francis Ford Coppola on the screenplay.

The analysis shows that the hypotheses were right and the principle of how the Mafia works can be really considered as a certain kind of the family business which functioning and influence even reach to the state level. The biggest advantages of the family business are undoubtedly fixed rules and roles which arise from the family relations. Moreover, the main objective of the family business is to establish such a base that will remain in existence and provide for future generations, which makes the entrepreneurship even more effective.

The chapter, which dealt with the Italian immigration, was included into this thesis for better understanding of Italian behaviour and to show the links between the Italians and the birth of the Mafia. Furthermore, it is possible to notice that the essence of the Italian culture is based on very strong family ties which are almost sacred for them. It also makes the core of the Mafia family more powerful. In fact, the betrayal of the blood-related family member is a mortal sin for the Italians. *The Godfather* is an illustrative example of the strength of this family bond, because all characters of traitors in the novel are not related by blood to the Corleone family.

With a little exaggeration, it is possible to conclude that *The Godfather* can be considered as a "handbook" for entrepreneurs leaving aside its criminal nature. Businessmen can learn how important it is to weigh words, to make plans and to be foresighted. Likewise, failure teaches success and diligence is the

mother of good fortune. Another prerequisite for fruitful entrepreneurship is to be able to convince, to be inventive, and to take a great position in a market.

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9 Résumé

This bachelor's thesis deals with literal analysis of the globally well-known and successful novel with the Mafia theme *The Godfather* written by the American writer of Italian origin Mario Puzo. The aim is to ascertain whether the practices as they are described in the novel can be compared to the "world of business". Moreover, this thesis also marginally concerns the issue of the Italian community in the United States in the first half of the 20th century. All the findings are exemplified by the concrete examples extracted from the novel. The descriptive method is applied when interpreting.

The bachelor's thesis is divided into theoretical and practical part. The theory consists of Mario Puzo's biography, further the aforementioned issues of the Italians as the national minority in the United States, and finally the brief summary of the plot.

The practical part is created by the literary-critical interpretation and subsequently by the analysis of the business allegory itself. Mario Puzo's biography was included in this thesis for the reason, that it is essential to know the circumstances which stand behind *The Godfather's* creation. As well as to getting acquainted with the sources from which Puzo drew, since some characters and events are inspired by the real ones.

The chapter concerned with the Italian immigration into the USA is included for better understanding of attitudes and behaviour of the Italians towards the American society, as their culture and origin also play the significant role in the novel.

The analysis of the business allegory itself is grounded in basic knowledge of the economics field and proves the veracity of the stated hypotheses.

10 Shrnutí

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá literární analýzou celosvětově známého a úspěšného románu s mafiánskou tematikou *Kmotr* amerického autora italského původu Maria Puza. Cílem je zjistit, zda se dají jednotlivé praktiky mafie popisované v románu přirovnat ke světě obchodu. Vyjma toho se také tato práce okrajově zabývá otázkou italské komunity ve Spojených státech amerických v první polovině 20. století. Všechny poznatky jsou doloženy konkrétními příklady z románu. Při interpretaci je využita deskriptivní metoda.

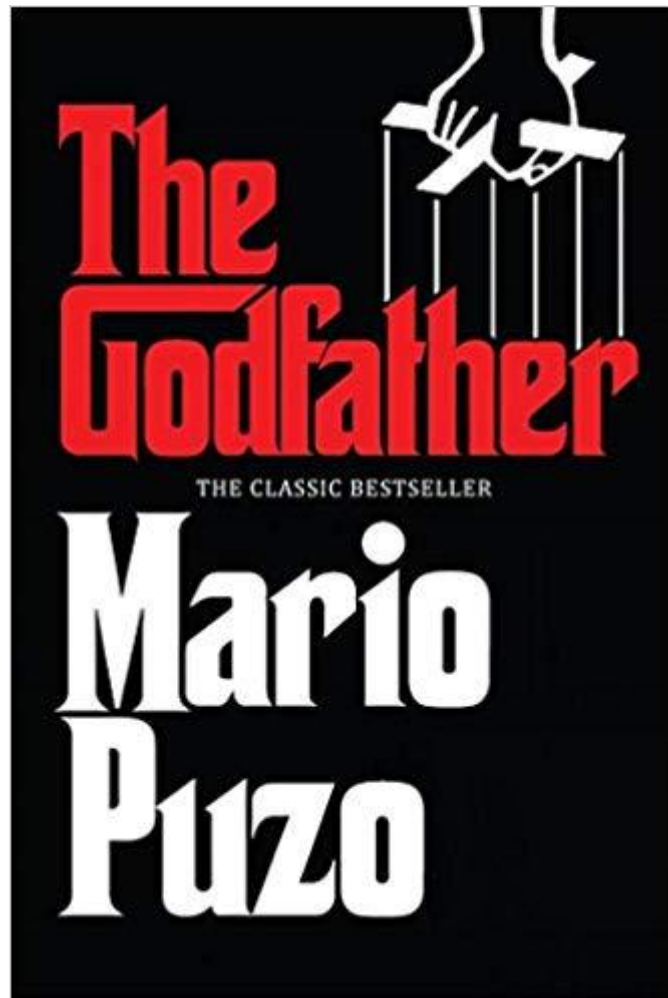
Bakalářská práce je rozdělena na teoretickou a praktickou část. Teorie zahrnuje životopis autora, dále výše zmíněnou problematiku Italů jako minority v USA a nakonec stručné shrnutí děje románu. Praktická část je tvořena literárně-kritickou interpretací díla a posléze samotnou analýzou alegorie na svět obchodu.

Biografie Maria Puza byla do této bakalářské práce zahrnuta z toho důvodu, že je podstatné znát okolnosti, které stály za vznikem *Kmotra*. Stejně tak je relevantní seznámit se se zdroji, ze kterých autor vycházel, neboť některé postavy a události v románu jsou inspirovány těmi skutečnými.

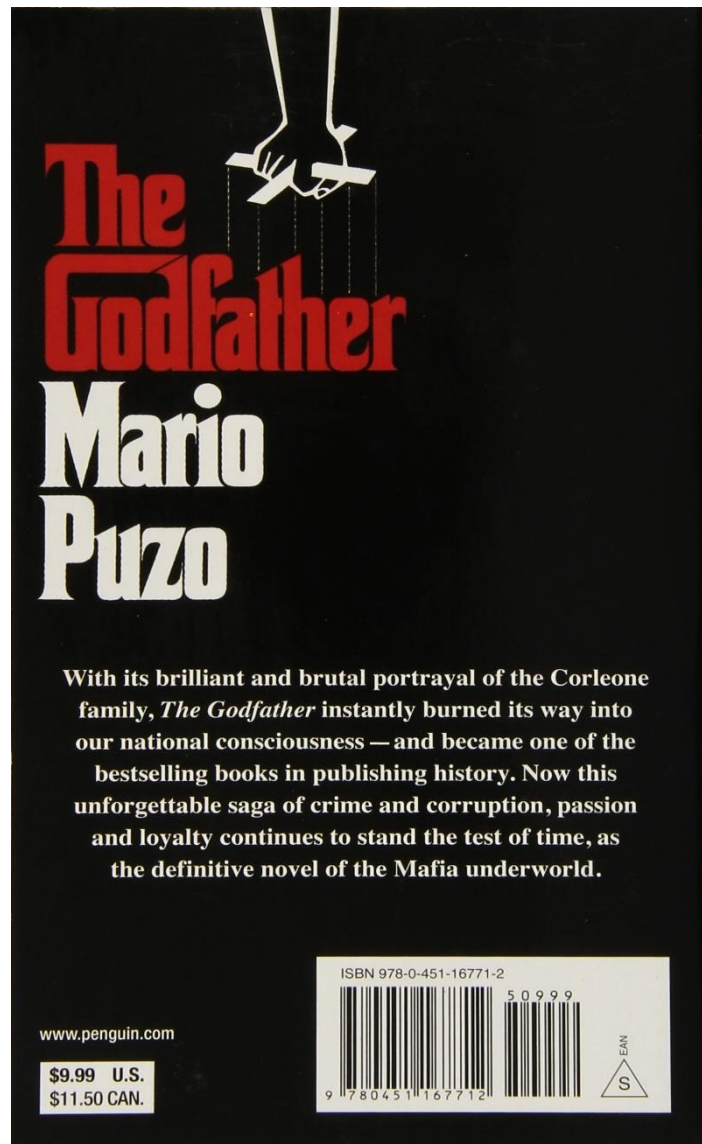
Kapitola zabývající se otázkami italské imigrace do Spojených států je v této práci obsažena pro lepší pochopení postojů a chování Italů vůči americké společnosti, jelikož jejich kultura a původ také hrají v *Kmotrovi* významnou roli.

Samotná analýza alegorie na svět obchodu se opírá o základní poznatky z oblasti ekonomie a dokazuje, že stanovené hypotézy byly pravdivé.

11 Appendix



1 The cover of the novel The Godfather tellingly depicting the principle of how the Mafia works – in fact, it controls people like a puppeteer [Online] Available from: <https://www.amazon.in/Godfather-Mario-Puzo/dp/0099429284>



2 The back side of the cover [Online] Available from: https://www.google.cz/search?q=the+godfather+pdf+novel&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi394iMhqjhAhUKbIAKHRCeA5oQ_AUIDigB&biw=1536&bih=715#imgrc=W7mxb-Bk1DPfgM:



3 A photo of Mario Puzo, author of *The Godfather*, from his archive. Photo: courtesy RR Auction. [Online] Available from: <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/mario-puzo-godfather-auction-auction-430625>