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The Figure of the Gangster in American Literature

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Závěrečná bakalářská práce se bude věnovat populárnímu žánru detektivky, specificky gangsterce a obrazu gangстера. Student nejprve s použitím relevantní sekundární literatury stručně uvede do historického a literárního kontextu. Nastíní tedy dobovou situaci související s prohibicí, rozmachem organizovaného zločinu, zmíní významné historické postavy daného období, ap. Dále bude definovat detektivní žánr (crime fiction) a v jeho rámci gangsterku (gangster fiction). Jádrem práce pak bude analýza vybraných děl z hlediska způsobu, jímž je postava gangстера zachycena (např. typy chladnokrevný zločinec, businessman, rodinný typ, psychopat, romantický antihrdina, apod.) a jaké jsou k tomu použité literární (případně filmové) prostředky a s jakými dalšími tématy se pojí (násilí, podsvětí, městské prostředí, přistěhovalectví, apod.). Své analýzy bude ilustrovat ukázkami z primárních děl (případně odkazy na filmový materiál) a opírat (či konfrontovat) s kritickými zdroji. Závěrem je přehledně shrne a vysloví obecnější závěr o obrazu postavy gangстера ve zvolených dílech.

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Annotation

This thesis focuses on the depiction of the figure of the gangster in American literature, more specifically in American crime fiction. The first part of the thesis deals with the history and development of the genre and its sub-genres, the historical background, and Al Capone, one of the most prominent mob bosses of the Prohibition era. The second part of the thesis consists of analyses of the figure of the gangster in two books: *The Godfather* by Mario Puzo and *Scarface* by Armitage Trail. The work focuses on two depictions of the gangster: the gangster as a family type and the gangster as an anti-hero.

Keywords

The Godfather, Mario Puzo, Scarface, Armitage Trail, Maurice Coons, gangster, family type, anti-hero, Prohibition, Al Capone, crime fiction, detective fiction, family

Anotace

Tato práce se zabývá zobrazením postavy gangstera v americké literatuře, přesněji americké kriminální fikce. První část popisuje historii a vývoj žánru a jeho podžánrů, historické pozadí a Al Caponeho, jednoho z nejvýznamnějších zločineckého vůdce éry Prohibice. Druhá část práce se skládá z analýzy postavy gangstera ve dvou knihách, *Kmotr* od Maria Puza a *Scarface* od Armitage Traila. Teze se zaměřuje na dvě vyobrazení gangstera, gangster jako rodinný typ a gangster jako antihrdina.

Klíčová slova

Kmotr, Mario Puzo, Scarface, Armitage Trail, Maurice Coons, gangster, rodinný typ, antihrdina, Prohibice, Al Capone, kriminální fikce, detektivní fikce, rodina

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Introduction

The crime fiction genre is rich with authors writing works of a huge number of various sub-genres depicting not only crimes themselves, but also both their culprits and upholders of law alike. More often than not, these crimes are committed by an organized group of criminals. One form of such organization is the Mafia,¹ a feared institution specializing in violence and threats. It is of no wonder that such themes were frequently used in fiction, as readers found them exciting.

The Godfather, a gangster novel that became an overnight best-seller, is said to have redefined the gangster story. Rich in character, full of action, it is a detailed and a graphic description of the inner workings of a huge Mafia family. Although Mario Puzo does not approve of his work as much as most critics do², as will be discussed further, he left a permanent mark on not only the crime fiction genre, but also on the world of film. One could propose that *The Godfather* managed to romanticize the world of organized crime.

Scarface, on the other hand, is a much less known work, written by Armitage Trail. It is a rather short book loosely based on Al Capone, one of the most prominent mobsters of the 20th century in The United States of America. The book is filled with action, blood, and money, similarly to *The Godfather*. Although it was also made into a movie, which was later remade, it never saw the success that *The Godfather* has. The book shows the brutality of organized crime and makes no attempt at glamorizing it.

This thesis will focus on the character of the gangster as depicted in the two works mentioned. In the first part, the crime fiction genre will be chronicled, together with important authors and sub-genres. Furthermore, the phenomenon of Mafia will be explained and described. Next, the thesis will talk about Al Capone, a major mob leader who *Scarface* is based on. The practical part will focus on the two works, *The Godfather* and *Scarface* and analyse the depiction of the character of the gangster in those books. Finally, the conclusion will summarize the depictions.

¹ Sources differ so as to the correct spelling. I have decided to use “the Mafia,” as this is widely used in dictionaries, such as MacMillan Dictionary, and authors like Nigel Cawthorne and Jane and Peter Schneider.

² Puzo, “*The Godfather Papers and Other Confessions*” (Greenwich: Fawcett Publ., 1972), 24.

1. Crime Fiction as a Genre

Crime fiction is not clearly defined. One can say that it is fiction which is centered around a crime and its consequences to the characters.³ However, there are many sub-genres which differ in certain concepts, as will be shown in this chapter.

The roots of crime fiction reach far into the history of literature, as claimed by John Scaggs who, through Dorothy L. Sayers, considers four ancient stories to be the first crime stories, those being the story of Susanna and the Elders, the story of Daniel and the Priests of Bell, both of which are Biblical stories, a narrative from Herodotus, and a narrative found in the Hercules myths. Both authors regard these stories as ancestors of the crime fiction genre, showing certain aspects of elements still used today.⁴

It is important to note that crime fiction and detective fiction are very closely related, as supported by Scaggs.⁵ He further supports this claim by suggesting how linked the detective sub-genre of crime fiction is to its forebear; there cannot be an investigation without a crime and an investigation cannot take place if there had not been a crime. Therefore, one needs to consider both genres.

They are, however, disputed by Julian Symons who argues that these elements are not the main focus of the text and therefore not elements of true crime fiction genre. Instead, he claims that these stories only contain puzzles in which logic is used, and the role of detective elements is small.⁶

Nevertheless, Scaggs points out that in the first story of Susanna and the Elders the emphasis is put on the investigation, which truly makes it a proto-crime story.⁷ It is a tale of two elders who started lusting after a young woman, Susanna. They waited for her to send her servants away so that she can bathe. The elders then attempt to make her lie with them or they would testify against her that she had had a lover in the garden and therefore had sinned. Susanna refuses and is then put on trial. She is found guilty; however, she prays to God to clean her name and God, answering her prayers, incites the will of the people for evidence through

³ Scaggs, John. Introduction to *Crime Fiction* (London: Routledge, 2005), 1-2.

⁴ Scaggs, John. *Crime Fiction* (London: Routledge, 2005), 7-8.

⁵ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 4.

⁶ Symons, Julian. *Blood Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel* (New York: Warner Books, 1993), 19.

⁷ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 9.

Daniel, a young boy in the audience. By having the elders questioned separately, he is able to find discrepancies in their testimonies, proving their own guilt and having them executed, saving innocent Susanna.⁸

Symons claims: “those who search for fragments of detection in the Bible and Herodotus are looking only for puzzles.”⁹ The story of Susanna and the Elders includes the use of common sense initiated by God, not the use of professional detective methods which we would expect from crime novels today.¹⁰ Daniel uses a simple question to prove Susanna’s innocence; hardly something a reader would be astonished by today’s standards. However, it shares an element frequently seen in crime fiction; the community is quick to judge Susanna based only on the rank and reputation of the elders, instead of at least asking for her side of the story.¹¹

The biblical story of Daniel and the Priests of Bel describes how Daniel, a king’s companion, attempts to uncover a crime committed by the priests of a temple devoted to the god Bel. Daniel claims that the food and wine offerings given to the statue of their god are not consumed by Bel at all. The king wants him to prove his claim; otherwise, he is to be executed. Daniel uses ash to prove the priests’ guilt, which they admit afterwards. The king has them executed, including their families.¹² As Steve Powell remarks, this story is also regarded as one of the first “locked room mystery” stories, in that it takes place mostly in one locked place where the crime takes place.¹³

These biblical stories, as many other stories before Edgar A. Poe, share a common focus, as mentioned by Scaggs; the right conduct. They are not meant to entertain but rather to guide Christians throughout their lives without sin and, therefore, the need for punishment.¹⁴

Said punishment can also be seen in The Book of Genesis, where, according to the Christian faith, the first crime is recorded. Cain, one of Eve’s sons, murders his brother Abel because

⁸ Dan. 13:1-62.

⁹ Symons, *Bloody Murder*, 19.

¹⁰ Symons, *Bloody Murder*, 20.

¹¹ Stuart Lasine, “Solomon, Daniel, and the Detective Story: The Social Functions of a Literary Genre,” *Hebrew Annual Review* 11, (1987): 257.

¹² Dan. 14: 1-22.

¹³ Steve Powell, “The Bible, the Book of Daniel and Crime Fiction Narratives,” *The Venetian Vase*, June 6, 2011.

¹⁴ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 9.

God prefers his brother over him. God sees through Cain's lies and punishes him by marking him so that everyone he meets knows of his sins.¹⁵

The next notable ancestor of crime fiction can be found in the tragedy *Oedipus the King*, as pointed out by Scaggs.¹⁶ As explained by Encyclopaedia Britannica, the play tells the narrative of Oedipus, the ruler of the city of Thebes. His city becomes stricken with plague and the only possible manner of ridding the city of it is to find and punish the killer of Queen Jocasta's first husband, King Laius. The investigation reveals a shocking truth; King Laius was Oedipus' father and Oedipus also married his own mother. After finding out, Jocasta takes her own life and Oedipus blinds himself.¹⁷

Unlike other Greek stories, in *Oedipus the King* James C. Hogan claims Sophocles aimed to make the plot more personal and even more problematic.¹⁸ He goes on to draw a parallel between Oedipus and Shakespeare's King Lear in that Oedipus, in contrast to Lear, does not manage to come to terms with his actions and further alienates himself from others.¹⁹ This seems to be a noticeable shift of focus from the Bible and its emphasis on an example for others.

Nevertheless, some authors, for instance Barry Forshaw, claim that the crime novel first started getting traction in the 19th century, mainly with the works of Victor Hugo, Bram Stoker, and, most importantly, Edgar Allan Poe, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Agatha Christie.²⁰

In his *The History of a Crime* Victor Hugo himself claims the coup by Napoleon III was a crime and Hugo treats the whole story as an investigation of the crime. He also points out that his companions supposedly came to him to bring him evidence of said crime.²¹ Arthur F. Davidson confirms that the book was hidden from the world for over twenty-five years. He goes on to explain that the reason may be to make the literary attack on Napoleon Bonaparte

¹⁵ Gen. 4:1-26.

¹⁶ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 10.

¹⁷ "Oedipus Rex," Article, Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed February 22, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Oedipus-Rex-play-by-Sophocles>

¹⁸ James C. Hogan, *A Commentary on the Plays of Sophocles*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 21.

¹⁹ Hogan, *A Commentary on the Plays of Sophocles*, 21.

²⁰ Barry Forshaw, *The Rough Guide to Crime Fiction* (London: LegoPrint S.p.A.), 1-6.

²¹ Hugo, Victor. *The History of a Crime*. (New York: Harper, 1878), 9.

more effective or to avoid misunderstanding due to the mixing of romantic writing with history in his writings.²²

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* can be perceived as an ancestor of the detective genre due to its use of investigation methods carried out by its protagonists in order to find Count Dracula.²³ Olivia Rutigliano confirms that Mina Murray, one of the characters, uses a variety of tools and methods to track down the vampire and his motives. Rutigliano also points out that the book is written as a series of diary entries, letter, audio transcripts and other pieces of evidence, which Mina later uses to extract information from.²⁴

Nevertheless, Martin Priestman holds the opinion that Edgar Allan Poe was the author who invented the detective story. Priestman further supports this by stating that *Murders in the Rue Morgue* was the first story which was surrounded around a charismatic detective.²⁵ On the other hand, Martin A. Kayman questions the extent to which Poe's stories are about crime and detection, highlighting the fact that *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* does not revolve around an actual crime but rather a mistake the police had made.²⁶

Furthermore, Edgar Allan Poe is held as the creator of the detective story by Tony Magistrale as well. He regards Poe's C. Auguste Dupin as "the first literary sleuth," whose use of logic and analysis inspired the development of another subgenre of crime fiction, the police procedural story.²⁷ However, Dupin would not be as accessible to the public if it were not for his companion, who, oddly, remains nameless. Peter Thoms shares Magistrale's opinion but also claims that, in a way, Poe undermines the results of his effect on the reader as well. While he gives them the answers so as to how the crimes happen, he also sets a new mystery: the character of Dupin himself. After every successful investigation Dupin is even more powerful

²² Davidson, Arthur F. *Victor Hugo, His Life and Work* (London: Nash, 1912), 214.

²³ "Dracula," Article, Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed January 29, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Dracula-novel>

²⁴ Olivia Rutigliano, "The Real Dracula Is a Detective Story—And an Incredibly Complex, Fascinating Mystery," *CrimeReads*, October 31, 2019.

²⁵ Priestman, Martin, "Introduction: Crime Fiction and Detective Fiction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Martin Priestman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3.

²⁶ Martin A. Kayman, "The Short Story from Poe to Chesterton," in *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Martin Priestman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 44.

²⁷ Magistrale, Tony, *Student Companion to Edgar Allan Poe*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), 21.

and mysterious than before. However, he concludes his essay by claiming that readers do desire such mysteries as unrest, making these first works of detective fiction ever so enjoyable.²⁸

Sherlock Holmes is also a powerful character, yet with less mystery around him. As Barry Shaws describes, Holmes became so powerful that the author himself, Arthur Conan Doyle, attempted to kill the detective off.²⁹ Furthermore, Forshaw explains why Doyle was not able to end the detective's reign over his works; the public simply would not allow it and so Doyle went on to publish even more stories starring the infamous detective.

But Doyle's legendary detective could not exist without his companion, Dr. Watson. As noted by Scaggs, Dr. Watson serves the same three functions as Dupin's companion. Those functions being a contrast to the abilities of the detective, a recorder of all the information necessary, and a representative of the time period.³⁰ He is, however, given a name and a character, emphasizing his impact on the stories. Holmes together with Watson seem to make up an unstoppable duo of crime solvers.

Agatha Christie, on the other hand, is said by Julian Symons to be the catalyst of the detective story. He claims that her style of writing was not exactly unique; however, she managed to break the emotional bond between the reader and the characters. The investigation then became a rather complicated puzzle instead of an emotional story of the characters. The crime was the main focus and the reader had to base their judgement of the character on the evidence presented. This approach was what started a whole new era of crime fiction where such fiction started to be taken seriously.³¹

Therefore, the so-called Golden Age of crime fiction, and mainly detective fiction, is said to be led by Agatha Christie, as also claimed by Earl F. Bargainnier. The Golden Age does not concern only Agatha Christie, even though she was the most important part of it. The vast majority of authors and their works share elements and principles, for example the vast and variable use of analogy or intense use of puzzles, some of which were used too much.³² Going back to Agatha Christie, John Scaggs suggests that the Golden Age started specifically with her

²⁸ Thoms, Peter, "Poe's Dupin and the Power of Detection," in *The Cambridge Companion to Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. Keven J. Hayes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 133-134.

²⁹ Forshaw, *The Rough Guide to Crime Fiction*, 10.

³⁰ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 12.

³¹ Symons, *Bloody Murder*, 102.

³² Bargainnier, Earl F., *The Gentle Art of Murder: The Detective Fiction of Agatha Christie*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1992), 25.

book *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*. He claims that she created a pattern in writing crime fiction that other authors after her followed, at least to some extent.³³

To further introduce the Golden Age of crime fiction, one can consult Stephen Knight and find that it mainly considers the time between the two world wars and the works published in said time, although there were some texts produced before and after this time period. As Knight deduces, murder became essential to crime fiction and the lower class of society were mainly involved. To solve the crime, a detective uses logical, rational, unemotional detection. Such detective is either an amateur, or a former police officer. However, the detective usually has a contact or contacts in the police forces, whom they help identify the culprit. There are also many suspects, all of whom are plausible offenders, at least to the reader. After successfully identifying the real culprit, the story usually ends.³⁴

“The Queen of Crime,” as Agatha Christie is often called, was not the only female writer of her time period. Scaggs mentions Dorothy L. Sayers, the creator of the detective Lord Peter Wimsey, who became one of the most imitated detectives during the Golden Age.³⁵ Barry Forshaw even proclaims Sayers’ writing to be superior to Christie’s.³⁶ According to him, Wimsey’s character profited from his aristocratic roots while also showing their true colours. There is also the character of Harriet Vane, whom Victoria Janssen describes to be Wimsey’s love interest and faithful companion in solving mysteries and an equal to the detective, owing to her refusal of his marriage proposal as well as to her position somewhat outside the social norms.³⁷

From what has been said, one can see the contrast between American and British crime fiction, more closely examined and specified by Stephen Knight in his book *Crime Fiction, 1800-2000: Detection, Death, Diversity*.³⁸ More specifically, he draws parallels between certain authors and their style of crime fiction writing, namely Agatha Christie and her, as he calls it,

³³ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 15-16.

³⁴ Knight, Stephen, “The Golden Age,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. Martin Priestman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 77-79.

³⁵ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 16.

³⁶ Forshaw, *The Rough Guide to Crime Fiction*, 30.

³⁷ “Dynamic Duos: Dorothy Sayer’s Lord Peter Wimsey and Harriet Vane,” Article, Criminal Element, Accessed 15 May 2020, <https://www.criminalelement.com/dynamic-duos-dorothy-sayers-lord-peter-wimsey-and-harriet-vane/>

³⁸ Knight, Stephen, Preface to “*Crime Fiction, 1800-2000: Detection, Death, Diversity*,” (New York: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2004), 8-9.

“clue-puzzle” style, and Raymond Chandler and his “private-eye” style. From his description it is clear that while these approaches were not strictly bound to their country of origin, they were favoured by those countries’ authors.

Christie’s “clue-puzzle,” as Knight explains, is his term for most of the crime fiction written around the Golden Age. He uses the term so as to make a clear division between the styles with as little overlapping as possible. In general, Knight sees the clue-puzzle as literature revolving around the crime itself, the detective being a means to solving it, while the private-eye pattern is more concerned with the character of the story, often involving more crimes and investigations than the clue-puzzle pattern.³⁹

Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett are recognized by Knight as the pioneers of the new sub-genre of crime fiction, often called “hard-boiled” as well, which began flourishing in the United States. Jasmine Yong Hall shares that opinion and goes into detail explaining it was Hammett’s work which established this new style of writing.⁴⁰ She believes his style was not only very American, but also based on actual experience in contrast to the clue-puzzle pattern, especially his own. She also points out that Hammett’s operative, in essence only a functionary of a detective agency, regards investigations more as business while still upholding a personal code of honour.

What Hammett started, Chandler seem to have continued and developed even more. Leroy Lad Panek offers an intriguing insight into their careers. Writing at around the same time, they both saw opportunity in *Black Mask*, a pulp magazine which published short detective stories. Unlike Hammett, who eventually transitioned his writing to novels, Chandler kept writing short stories to be published in *Black Mask*.⁴¹ He is held by Panek as the founder of the essentials of the sub-genre; his use of figurative language, description of various smells in the scenes, or the confusing atmosphere of his plots, to name a few.

A thick atmosphere is a natural part of hard-boiled crime fiction. Nevertheless, some authors, for instance William Marling, recognize another sub-genre; roman noir. He finds James

³⁹ Knight, Stephen, Preface to “*Crime Fiction, 1800-2000: Detection, Death, Diversity*,” (New York: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2004), 8-9.

⁴⁰ Jasmine Yong Hall, “*Dashiell Hammett (1894-1961)*” in “*A Companion to Crime Fiction*,” ed. Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 450-456.

⁴¹ Leroy Lad Panek, “*Raymond Chandler (1888-1959)*” in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*,” ed. Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 403-407.

M. Cain to be the author who changed American detective fiction completely.⁴² Marling points out Cain's graphic description of violence, sexual tensions, and mainly the plots full of complications and grim mood. He finds such atmosphere to be typical for the roman noir.

American crime fiction reflected the rise of organized crime and introduced the character of the gangster, setting it more apart from its British counterpart. Knight comments on this by saying that the character of the gangster played a vital role in the works of Chandler and Hammett.⁴³

Catherine Ross Nickerson views Ross MacDonald as "one of the main heirs of the hard-boiled style of Chandler and Dashiell Hammett."⁴⁴ Robert A. Baker explains why that might be the case. He believes that Ross MacDonald was the last and possibly the best of the trio. He also claims that MacDonald further refined the genre previously defined by Hammett by adding education and polish to the characters, achieving maturity.⁴⁵ MacDonald's private investigator, Lew Archer, is speculated to have been based on Chandler's Philip Marlowe, and he is portrayed as devoted, eager, and unspoiled. He drinks only lightly, which was quite unusual, and spends long hours working on each case, hurting his personal relationships. MacDonald is believed by Nickerson to be using the character of Archer to probe the psychology of both the victims and the villains, trying to understand them as human beings rather than only monsters.⁴⁶

Meanwhile, pulp magazines gained a massive amount of popularity during these times, as explained by Lee Server. This literature gained its name from the pulpwood paper, which was the cheapest kind of paper available. This, along with numerous technological advances as well as the boom of literacy, allowed for very cheap magazines and books to be available to the masses. The authors of those magazines supposedly aimed purely for profit and as such, they included stories filled with adventures, thrills, crime, sex, and so on. The concept was a massive success and soon pulp fiction made its transition to books, which were sold in the same places

⁴² William Marling, "James M. Cain (1892-1977)" in "A Companion to Crime Fiction," ed. Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 427-437.

⁴³ Knight, *Crime Fiction 1800-2000*, 112.

⁴⁴ Catherine Ross Nickerson. "The Detective Story" in "A Companion to The American Short Story," ed. Alfred Bendixen and James Nagel (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 425.

⁴⁵ Robert A. Baker, Introduction to "Private Eyes: One Hundred and One Knights: A Survey of American Detective Fiction." (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1985), 1.

⁴⁶ Robert A. Baker, *Private Eyes*, 56-57.

as the magazines. The books soon overshadowed the pulp magazines and became a hit among readers.⁴⁷

A curious case is that of *Scarface* by Armitage Trail, a book this thesis is also concerned with. It seems to be somewhat overlooked in terms of importance to the crime fiction genre as it is mostly considered a pulp fiction book and not a real crime fiction novel. Nevertheless, it has many features of a proper crime fiction novel, as hinted by Lee Server.⁴⁸ Server is one of the very few authors who talk about the author and his books. Trail's *Scarface*, along with W.H. Burnett's *Little Caesar*, was interested in a real-world model of the gangster, Al Capone. If one is to rate its success in portraying the mobster by the movies it helped create, it could be said that *Scarface* did a very good job. It seems to have been a predecessor to the gangster story, which became popular later.

The gangster became a very frequent character in much of the crime fiction literature in the after-war period. Lee Server regards W. R. Burnett as the pioneer of the gangster story. According to him, he set many of the parameters and clichés of the gangster story, both in fiction and in film. His *Little Caesar* he prepared the ground for future mob tales. Burnett was not afraid to explore the underworld of America, mainly the dark sides gambling and politics.⁴⁹ While the character of the gangster was fairly common in fiction, it was Mario Puzo who gave the Mafia as a criminal organization its resounding fame, as claimed by Barry Forshaw.⁵⁰ He also praises the level of detail of violence, corruption, code of honour, tactics, and everyday life of an Italian Mafian family in New York. Scaggs claims Puzo set the model for Mafia movies that is still observed today, for example in *The Sopranos*.⁵¹ He contrasts *The Godfather* with early gangster stories, such as *Little Caesar*, and one could possibly also include *Scarface*, and sees the difference in the development of the mob's power, rather than its destruction. The mob seems to be depicted more as business than a chaotic criminal activity.

Interestingly, it was also Mario Puzo himself who classified *The Godfather* among Puzo's worse books.⁵² Nevertheless, the book became a best-seller and made Puzo known.

⁴⁷ Server, Introduction to "Encyclopedia of Pulp Fiction Writers." (New York: Facts on File, 2002), 6-16.

⁴⁸ Server, *Encyclopedia of Pulp Fiction Writers*, 258.

⁴⁹ Server, *Encyclopedia of Pulp Fiction Writers*, 43-44.

⁵⁰ Forshaw, *The Rough Guide to Crime Fiction*, 209.

⁵¹ Scaggs, *Crime Fiction*, 68.

⁵² Puzo, *The Godfather Papers*, 24.

Christian K. Messenger suggests that by writing *The Godfather*, Puzo abandons his journey to become an elite writer and instead vents his anger about his rather unsuccessful career.⁵³

In the contemporary world of literature, crime fiction and its many sub-genres have an important place that is here to stay. There is a plethora of authors, as Barry Forshaw mentions, for example Thomas Harris, Frederick Forsyth, or Robert Ludlum. Forshaw also lists some of the genres, which now include spy fiction, serial killer, politics, and similar.⁵⁴ Many of these authors and sub-genres still work with principles set by authors many years ago and add something of their own. It is now on the readers themselves to pick their flavour of crime fiction.

⁵³ Messenger, *The Godfather and American Culture*, 176.

⁵⁴ Forshaw, *The Rough Guide to Crime Fiction*, 112, 175, 250.

2. Historical context of the Mafia

Sicily, a small island near Italy on which the Mafia came to be, challenged the idea of lone banditry. Local gangsters organized not only according to their intentions, but also according to which families they came from. What separates the Mafia from other forms of organized crime is its strict moral code and dependency on family, trust, and honour.⁵⁵

Letizia Paoli claims that the first recorded references to the Mafia date back to 1838.⁵⁶ According to her, the Mafia was defined in 1864 as:

A sect, which makes new affiliates every day of the brightest young people coming from the rural class, of the guardians of the fields in the Palermitan countryside, and of the large number of smugglers; a sect which gives and receives protection to and from certain men who make a living on traffic and internal commerce. It is a sect with little or no fear of public bodies, because its members believe that they can easily elude these.⁵⁷

However, Giuseppe Pitrè disagreed with such definition, claiming that the Mafia is not strictly organized or evil, but rather beneficial to one's being:

The mafia is neither a sect, nor an association, it has no regulations nor statutes. The mafioso is not a thief, nor a bandit; . . . the mafioso is simply a courageous and skilful man, who cannot bear a fly being on his nose; and in this sense, being a mafioso is necessary, indeed, indispensable. The mafia is the awareness of one's own being, an exaggerated concept of individual strength, "the one and only arbiter of any clash in interests and ideas"; from which it derives that he is intolerant of others' superiority, or even worse, *prepotenza* [arrogance].⁵⁸

Today, the Mafia is defined by Collins Dictionary as "a criminal organization that makes money illegally, especially by threatening people and dealing in drugs"⁵⁹ or as "a secret criminal organization involved in illegal activities in Italy and the US"⁶⁰ by MacMillan Dictionary. From these definition, one can easily see that the main defining features are

⁵⁵ Cawthorne, Nigel, *Mafia: The History of the Mob* (New York: Arcturus, 2015), 6-10.

⁵⁶ Letizia Paoli, *Mafia Brotherhoods: Organized Crime, Italian Style*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 33.

⁵⁷ Paoli, *Mafia Brotherhoods*, 33.

⁵⁸ Paoli, *Mafia Brotherhoods*, 25.

⁵⁹ "Mafia Definition and Meaning," Dictionary, Collins Dictionary, Accessed 6 June 2020. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/mafia>

⁶⁰ "Mafia (noun) Definition and Synonyms," Definitions and Synonyms, MacMillan Dictionary, Accessed 6 June 2020. <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/mafia>

“organized” and “criminal,” which differs from the previous definition that saw the Mafia as not inherently criminal but rather justified.

Nigel Cawthorne describes the role of the mob. The island of Sicily was, in essence, ruled by the Mafia, which took on roles which usually belong to governments. From tax collection to even law enforcement, the Mafia became a symbol of order. Unlike the police, for example, the Mafia did not hesitate to go to extreme measures to protect their sovereignty and the laws they put in place. Owing to this, they were respected and feared even by the government. There were cases where the Mafia was immune to prosecution. It simply was not worth the risk trying to execute justice on a system that did not fear anything or anyone. When the Mafia began to join forces with the Church their positions increased in strength even more. The Mafia even helped to defend the nation from foreign attackers, such as the French, who dominated the island in the 13th century.⁶¹

Therefore, the Mafia had its prominent place in the Italian society and culture. Luciano Lorizzo describes an important difference between the American Mafia and the Sicilian Mafia. In general, Sicilians did not perceive the Mafia as criminal, that was the label it was given in the USA. But in Sicily, the Mafia somewhat served the common people, doing better job at governing them than their own government. However, this was not so in America. There, the Mafia became a synonym to organized crime loosely built on the Sicilian principles. Lorizzo indicates that this was mostly caused by the portrayal of the Mafia in the American media and he also claims that this stigma still exists in today’s society, albeit less than before.⁶²

A special code of honour was also put in place, the omèrta, which guaranteed non-cooperation with the authorities. Doing so would result in a brutal revenge by the Mafia, mostly punished by death. This savage code helped mask the existence of the Mafia from the public and keep its members from talking to the authorities.⁶³

Around the beginning of the 20th century many Mafiosi arrived in America, mostly illegally. They, of course, brought the concept of the Mafia with them. It did not take long for it to plant its roots into the American society. Due to the drug trafficking and alcohol trafficking, during the Prohibition era, the Mafia quickly became part of the United States of

⁶¹ Cawthorne, Nigel. *Mafia*, 16-35

⁶² Lorizzo, Luciano. *Al Capone: A Biography*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2003), 1-4.

⁶³ Cawthorne, *Mafia*, 23-24.

America. Their strict codes of behaviour and the willingness for brutality gave them a strong reputation.⁶⁴

Cawthorne claims that in the beginning of the Italian American Mafia, most Mafiosi only preyed on other Italian Americans. However, due to the Prohibition era, many more Americans became customers of the Mafia; up to 75 percent of population of the United States of America. However, he also claims that only roughly 25 percent of the bootleggers were Italian while about 50 percent were Jewish. Even though the Police fought back as hard as possible, they could not stop the amounts of illegal alcohol flooding the country.⁶⁵

The Mafia in the United States evolved slightly differently out of its Italian roots. Paoli describes these similarities and differences between the Italian Mafia and the American iteration of it. Firstly, she states that the hierarchy of the Mafia groups stayed mostly the same, including the positions and the names. There was a family in charge with the man leader sometimes called the Don who delegated various responsibilities and jobs to people he knew and trusted. Secondly, the culture of the mob also did not change much, the various ceremonies of initiations paid homage to the Italian Mafia, just like the levels of violence and secrecy, including the savage Omertà. This punishment is the most gruesome act of vengeance; should a member of the Mafia reveals anything about other mobsters to the police, the Mafia would make sure he is killed not only brutally, but sometimes also visibly to the public. The mob dealt swiftly and firmly with any disobedience or threat.⁶⁶

On the other hand, Paoli also sees a certain number of differences. The biggest difference of all is, according to her, in the size of the organization. She specifies that the Sicilian Cosa Nostra had around a hundred families while the American Cosa Nostra had roughly twenty-four families. Next, the activities in which the Mafia took part in also varied, mainly the participation in prostitution, alcohol, and drugs. The Italian iterations did not permit those; however, the American organizations frequently violated such bans.⁶⁷

Almost all attempts at controlling or destroying Mafia activity were met with a disaster. The Mafia seems to be ever growing and ever changing. Rather than being in the public eye, they

⁶⁴ Cawthorne, *Mafia*, 54.

⁶⁵ Cawthorne, *Mafia*, 109-110.

⁶⁶ Paoli, *Mafia Brotherhoods*, 4-5.

⁶⁷ Paoli, *Mafia Brotherhoods*, 5-6.

hide and operate from shadows, sometimes making alliances with other gangs, even non-Italian ones.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Cawthorne, *Mafia: The History of the Mob*, 54-63.

3. Al Capone

Luciano Lorrizzo describes probably the best known and most prominent mobster in America, and more specifically, Chicago – Al Capone. He does not hide the generally accepted fact that he was a criminal and a mobster. However, he also portrays Al Capone as a sort of a family man, claiming he valued his family highly. Al Capone would depict himself as a businessman, a friend of the common man. This attitude won him much of the public, mainly those who sought the then illegal alcohol beverages. Lorrizzo also claims a clear link between the mobster and the Mafia, citing this connection as a source for a number of books, TV shows, articles, etc., like, for example, *Scarface*, the book by Armitage Trail this thesis is also concerned with.⁶⁹

Nate Hendley explains that at first, Capone was only a small-time gangster, as he was young and looked up to Torrio, one of the two main Italian bootleggers at the time, who was also a respectable and well-known man in his surroundings. Even though he worked for Torrio, Capone still had a stable job and worked to support his family. He found a wife, Gabriele Capone, who gave him his son Albert Francis Capone. However, Albert was born with congenital syphilis caused by his father's syphilis infection. Al Capone continued a legitimate career in a bookkeeping firm until Gabrielle died in 1920. Following her death, he returned to Torrio, and slowly began his descend into the criminal world.⁷⁰

Al Capone's entry to the organized crime was very chaotic and full of blood. He started with killing when his barber father was being extorted by Sicilians. Capone shot both gangsters responsible. Later, he picked a fight with a powerful gangster who, after a short wrestle, gave him one of the scars on Capone's face, and thus giving him the nickname Scarface. Capone started getting involved in the Mafia business more and more, handling much of their business and errands. He steadily climbed the ladder, until he found himself to be second-in-command to Torrio. However, Torrio was later heavily injured and decided to retire to Italy after his recovery. That left Al Capone in complete charge of the business, which he promptly used to unite the Italian and the Sicilian factions in order to take control of the South and West sides of Chicago.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Luciano Lorrizzo, Preface to "*Al Capone: A Biography*," 13-16.

⁷⁰ Nate Hendley. *American Gangsters, Then And Now: An Encyclopedia*. (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 2010), 25-28.

⁷¹ Nigel Cawthorne, *Mafia: The History of the Mob* (New York: Arcturus, 2015), 109-123.

Following this assumption of power, Capone began including his family, mainly his brothers, in the business. He employed his brothers Frank, who acted as a front man in dealing with government officials, and Ralph, to whom he gave the authority over brothels. While most civilians did not mind the shift in leadership to mobsters, there were some problems with the police and other gangs, especially with the municipal elections of the town of Cicero, which lay on the suburbs of Chicago and offered the ideal hideaway. The police had to intervene and during doing so, they shot and killed Frank. Furthermore, Hendley makes the claim that this incident only led to Capone using more violence and he began kidnapping even more officials and rigging the elections further.⁷²

Moreover, Capone began to be more involved in fights with the police and sometimes even other gangs. As he was not the kind of gangster who would enjoy pointless suffering, he fought against brothels which were destroying young women's lives. Capone also murdered a journalist who refused to cave before him and in doing so caused a massive uproar against himself, which made him more of a target in the eyes of the public and the police. Even so, he stayed in charge of everything and continued running all the brothels, nightclubs, gaming joints, breweries, and speakeasies, which were illegal establishments for drinking banned alcoholic beverages, for years to come.⁷³

Al Capone was not only interested in bootlegging and fighting his enemies with bullets. As Cawthorne describes, he also paid a lot of attention to politics. He took over the political influence from his previous bosses and enemies and continued supporting and lobbying. Capone used his political connections to benefit him in various ways, including releasing felons from prisons and money-laundering; a process, in which illegal money can be legalized. He also was not afraid to heavily bribe police officers and influence witnesses.⁷⁴

Throughout his criminal career, Al Capone was arrested and charged many times, as observed by Lorizzo. The charges included gambling, carrying a concealed weapon, violation of prohibition, operating a brothel, voting fraud, and even murder. However, in most cases the charges were dropped, and he mostly managed to evade the law very successfully.⁷⁵

⁷² Hendley, *American Gangsters*. 29-31.

⁷³ Hendley, *American Gangsters*, 32-35.

⁷⁴ Cawthorne, *Mafia: The History of the Mob*, 124-127.

⁷⁵ Lorizzo, Introduction to "Al Capone: A Biography," 13-15.

Towards the end of his criminal career, the police did their best to put him behind bars, which was actually successful. However, this did not stop Capone's mob, as it continued to function almost as if he never left. There are claims, as Lorizzo suggests, that maybe Capone was not the actual leader of the organization and so jailing him was ineffective. Another possible reason was that the mob was simply so big and well organized, it was able to continue to function on its own. Capone was put into jail in Atlanta on May 4, 1932.⁷⁶

He was released on May 3, 1942; however, because of his syphilis diagnosis his health did not allow him to work again. Although his condition was not new, as he had syphilis for many years, the disease went into remission and Capone had not sought treatment. Nevertheless, he remained optimistic and underwent a treatment, even though the disease took its toll. He spent his last eight years at home with his family, where he died on January 25, 1947.⁷⁷

Hendley estimates that at its peak, his criminal empire had over a thousand men working for Capone, and that the income was as high as a hundred million dollars.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Lorizzo, *Al Capone: A Biography*, 89-91.

⁷⁷ Lorizzo, *Al Capone: A Biography*, 100-101.

⁷⁸ Hendley, *American Gangsters*. 33.

4. The Prohibition in the USA

The Columbia Encyclopaedia introduces the Prohibition in the United States of America as a consequence of Protestant, political, and social movements against the alcohol consumption, which rose dramatically in the 19th century. The result was at first laws limiting the consumption and manufacturing of alcohol and from 1920 a total prohibition of manufacture, transportation, and sale of alcoholic beverages. However, the enforcement of the law was not only difficult, but it also gave rise to bootlegging or, in other words, smuggling and illegal production of alcohol as well as organized crime. The Prohibition was in effect until 1933, when it was repealed by the Twenty-first amendment.⁷⁹

The Prohibition gave rise to many illegal activities and businesses. As Cawthorne reports, out of the roughly 16,000 saloons that had existed before the Prohibition, about 32,000 speakeasies emerged. He goes on to claim that in 1925 there were around 173,000 illegal stills impounded and the rest of the alcoholic beverages that were imported had to go through borders, for example the Canada-United States border. The import of alcohol into Canada rose six times during the Prohibition era. However, what might be even worse than smuggling alcohol, was the fact, that this era gave big opportunities for the Mafia to rise and it certainly made heavy use of it.⁸⁰

Nuala McGann Drescher summarizes the effects the Prohibition. In essence, the existence of the Eighteenth amendment heavily impacted the whole nation, however, in a very different way than the anti-alcohol movement wanted. As the consumption of alcohol was so embedded in the American society, especially among the working class, the ban only caused a heavy opposition to the Prohibition and subsequent defying of it through illegal smuggling, manufacturing, and selling. She also regards the effects on various industries as negative, frequently inciting strikes, for example.⁸¹

⁷⁹ "Prohibition." Article, Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed June 7, 2020.
<https://www.britannica.com/event/Prohibition-United-States-history-1920-1933>

⁸⁰ Cawthorne, Nigel. *Mafia: The History of The Mob*, 109-110.

⁸¹ Nuala McGann Drescher. "Labor and Prohibition: The Unappreciated Impact of The Eighteenth Amendment" in "Law, Alcohol, and Order: Perspectives on National Prohibition," ed. David E. Kyvig, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985) 35-48.

5. Introduction to the books and the writers

5.1. Introduction to Mario Puzo

Puzo himself does not hide his roots or what his intention were with *The Godfather*; he states he wrote it specifically to make money. In *The Godfather Papers and Other Confessions* he also talks about his family and his upbringing, especially his missing father and mother who was partly his enemy. Puzo was from a very young age exposed to the world of crime; he and his friends stole many small things and mainly food to make ends meet. His father was a strange and mysterious figure to him; he left his family when Puzo was 12 and he does not recollect the years before the abandonment much, indicating his father was no different than the other Italian men around him.⁸²

In the book he also talks about the poverty his surroundings were in and how shocking the acceptance of the situation was to him. At first Puzo could not understand why people were so content with so little and, likewise, other people were not able to understand his dreams and intentions of becoming a great artist, especially his mother. However, as time went on, Puzo started to see the bravery and courage of the common worker, coming to a foreign country, not even knowing their language let alone having a plan or a dream, and making their living. She was very strong and respectable, yet illiterate and not well educated, which Puzo pitied.⁸³

Women in Puzo's life played an odd role. Although he respected his mother, he never stopped opposing her. Similarly, he was able to form relationships with girls, but he was unable to connect to them on a higher level stating, when he was drafted for the war, that he was "delivered from my mother, my family, the girl I was loving passionately but did not love."⁸⁴ Puzo enjoyed the war for he was finally given a chance to travel and meet new people, mainly women, and not only that, he also found a wife and material for his first book.⁸⁵

Before he wrote *The Godfather*, he also wrote *The Dark Arena* and *The Fortunate Pilgrim*. Puzo considers both books to be much better than *The Godfather*, even though they never made as much money. The two novels were very well received by the critics and brought him fame, yet they were not economic successes. Puzo, being in a bad financial situation,

⁸² Puzo, "The Godfather Papers, 1-14.

⁸³ Puzo, *The Godfather Papers*, 1-17.

⁸⁴ Puzo, *The Godfather Papers*, 6-15.

⁸⁵ Puzo, *The Godfather Papers*, 16.

desperately needed a profitable venture, and so he decided to write the next book solely for money.⁸⁶

After finding a publisher willing to give him a payment in advance, he began working on what was to become his bestselling novel. Puzo finished writing *The Godfather* in July 1968, and almost immediately sold the paperback rights for \$410,000. The book, as he recalls, became an instant best-seller in the USA and stayed on the top for sixty-seven weeks, finally bringing him the success he worked for.⁸⁷

Because of a previous agreement, which Puzo had made with Paramount, a movie was next on the list. Initially, Puzo did not want to step into the production of the film, however, watching certain decisions made him interested about the picture so as to prevent any major failures, of which he saw many. After many dealings with the studio, various producers, directors, actors, etc., Puzo, and subsequently, Francis Coppola, the final director of choice, finally had a picture they were happy with. Al Pacino had been chosen as Michael and, according to Puzo, he was everything the writer wanted him to be. Although it was difficult for Puzo to accept that the movie was not wholly his, he was overall satisfied with how it turned out.⁸⁸ In the end, the movie was a huge success, netting about \$26 million US dollars in its first month and 11 nominations for Oscars, out of which three were won, as reported by CheatSheet.com.⁸⁹

Paramount decided on making two more movies. The second instalment in the Godfather saga was another huge success, bringing six more Oscars. However, the third movie was not accepted as warmly, possibly due to its heavy atmosphere and the actors' performances and was not awarded any Oscars.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Puzo, *The Godfather Papers*, 2-28.

⁸⁷ Puzo, *The Godfather Papers*, 27-28.

⁸⁸ Puzo, *The Godfather Papers*, 34-59.

⁸⁹ "How Many Oscars Did The Godfather Films Win?" Entertainment. CheatSheet, last modified February 23, 2019. <https://www.cheatsheet.com/entertainment/how-many-oscars-did-the-godfather-films-win.html/>

⁹⁰ Bufritt, John. "How 'The Godfather' changed cinema forever," Movies. SBS, last modified March 19, 2020. <https://www.sbs.com.au/movies/article/2018/12/19/how-godfather-changed-cinema-forever>

5.2. Introduction to Armitage Trail

Unlike Puzo, Armitage Trail had a much easier start in life. His real name was Maurice Coons and he was born to a successful family. His father was a renowned businessman, who ran his own furniture manufacturing factories, and later started working in the home-building business. Therefore, Trail did not have the first-hand experience with poverty and crime as Puzo did. Instead, he became obsessed with gangsters and the Mafia and wrote about them. To be able to dedicate as much as time as possible, he dropped out of school when he was 16.⁹¹

Server continues to explain how Trail managed to get close to gangsters in Chicago. He did so through an Italian American lawyer, who introduced him to various criminals around the city and Trail spent most of his time, especially at night, in these ganglands and collected all the possible experience and knowledge. He focused mainly on Al Capone, the biggest mobster, and aimed to write a book inspired by his character and actions.⁹²

However, Server points out that *Scarface* was not the first book which was based on Capone; W. R. Burnett's *Little Caesar* was. Nevertheless, Trail remained optimistic, claiming his book was better because of the experiences and facts he gathered himself. The author managed to catch Howard Hughes' eye, a young producer, who bought *Scarface* for \$25,000 and intended to transform it into a big movie. Interestingly, Server names W. R. Burnett as one of the editors of the screenplay. As much of a success this was for Trail, it was also his downfall. Blinded by the money he quickly became an alcoholic and started living recklessly.⁹³ As Ken Tucker remarks, Trail died in front of a Paramount Hollywood theatre due to suffering a heart attack being only twenty-eight years old.

Other than *Scarface*, he wrote only *The Thirteenth Guest*, which was also filmed. He is, however, rumoured to have written hundreds of short stories under unknown pseudonyms, making these extremely difficult to track.⁹⁴

The movie was after many disagreements between Hawks and the studio called *Scarface: The Shame of The Nation*. There were two versions, one being more vindicated than Hawk's intended grisly and realistic depiction. Most cinemas opted for the Hawk's version. Tucker goes

⁹¹ Server, *Encyclopedia of Pulp Fiction Writers*. (New York: Facts on File, 2002), 258-259.

⁹² Server, *Encyclopedia of Pulp Fiction Writers*, 258-259.

⁹³ Server, *Encyclopedia of Pulp Fiction Writers*, 259.

⁹⁴ Kevin Tucker, *Scarface Nation: The Ultimate Gangster Movie and How It Changed America*. (New York: St. Martin Griffin's, 2008), 152.

on to point out the symbolism in the movie, at that time uncommon for Hawk, for example the usage of X in scenes in which somebody dies, usually by gunfire. This sets the atmosphere of the movie; the audience is encouraged to notice details that then help them see the bigger picture.⁹⁵ The movie stars Paul Muni as Tony Camonte who gave him the appearance of a tough, emotionless tough guy. The picture was completed in 1932 and became an instant classic.

In 1983, a remake of *Scarface: The Shame of the Nation* was shot. It was based more loosely on the book than the first movie. However, Ellen Barbara further describes it as more brutal and bloodier than the original movie, with a strong cast starring Al Pacino as Tony Montana, a Cuban hustler on his way to the top of the criminal world. The movie is very graphic and action packed; there is no shortage of blood. Director De Palma succeeded in creating another classic that helped define the gangster movie.⁹⁶ Al Pacino did a great job at showing the relentless and brutal nature of his character. He makes it clear that Tony Montana stops before nothing and nobody, and with De Palma's help, his coming to power is clearly the main focus of the picture. The end of the movie pays a tribute to the 1932 version by showing the statue with the phrase "The World Is Yours."

⁹⁵ Tucker, *Scarface Nation*, 150-151.

⁹⁶ Barbara Ellen, "TV Movie of the Week: Scarface (1983): [1DD Edition]." *The Times*, Published Feb 08, 2001.

6. Introduction to the books

This thesis is concerned with the books *The Godfather* by Mario Puzo and *Scarface* by Armitage Trail, whose real name was Maurice Coons.

6.1. *The Godfather* by Mario Puzo

The Godfather by Mario Puzo is a grim story of a Mafia family, the Corleones, mainly its leader, Don Vito Corleone, and his son, Michael. Vito Corleone also has two older sons, Santino, called Sonny by everyone except his father, and Fredo. There is also Don's daughter, Connie, and informally adopted Tom Hagen. The family is, officially, an olive oil import business, however, beneath this cover it is a criminal organization not only dealing illegally, but also waging war with its enemies, namely the with the Five Families of the New York Mafia. Don Corleone is an old man and calls himself The Godfather because he bases his influence and power on his tight connection. When he helps people, usually in a brutal or illegal manner, he asks the other party for their friendship and loyalty, meaning they owe The Godfather a service. Most people attempt to stay away from such friendship, as it means being knowingly involved with criminal activities and being entangled with the Mafia.

Michael, however, does not approve of the family business. While he does deeply care, respect, and love his family and his father in particular, he tries his best to stay away from their illegitimacy. Nevertheless, as the conflict with the opposing families grows and becomes more tense, he is slowly dragged into the family business, up until a point where an attempted assassination on Michael's father forces him to make a crucial decision. He retaliates by murdering Sollozzo, the head of the family which tried to kill Don Corleone and the police chief McCluskey, who aided Sollozzo. This sets in motion a chain reaction of Mafia killings. Michael is then forced to hide in Sicily until his father recovers and manages to bring him back to the United States.

After his return, Michael is no longer the same person he was before the Mafia war. He assumes his new role and takes charge of the family business, becoming even more brutal and cunning than his father. After he wins the war with the opposing families by assassinating their leaders, he sells his family's business and moves to Las Vegas in order to become legitimate.

6.2. *Scarface* by Armitage Trail

Scarface by Armitage Trail, on the other hand is more focused on a single person, Tony Guarino. His family is a fairly poor one and of no special importance to the outer world, apart from Tony's brother, Ben, a high-ranking police officer. Tony despises the fate which seems to be set for him and wants a better life for himself and also partially for his family, although he separates himself from them completely. The novel describes his journey to becoming one of the most feared mob leaders. His family is of little concern, as Tony mostly works for his own good. He becomes obsessed with a woman named Vyvyan, a partner of a major mobster, whom he murders in order to obtain her.

Doing so sets in motion events, during which Tony traps himself in a circle of crime. He eventually enlists to the army to fight in the war to escape. Upon his arrival, he finds out Vyvyan had found another man, and murders them both. He finds out that he was reported as being killed in action, and decides to maintain this cover, even to his family, because of his enemies. Tony decides to once again enter the underworld and joins a gang, where he works his way through the ranks to the top threatening, beating, and killing everyone he is tasked to, until he eventually becomes the leader, running his business gruesomely and effectively. Tony meets another woman, Jane, who initially helps him with the murder. However, Jane betrays him, leads him into a police ambush during which both Tony's gang and the police exchange excessive fire. Many mobsters and policemen are killed, and Tony's chauffeur tries to drive away, but they are followed by a police car. Shortly after the chauffeur crashes, Tony gets shot and killed by his own brother, Ben.

7. Portrayal of Gangster as Family Type in *The Godfather* and *Scarface*

The figure of gangster in both books is portrayed differently. However, there are ways in which they intertwine, and that is the role of a family in a gangster's life. *The Godfather* puts an enormous emphasis on the family as a whole and is, therefore, a fine example of the importance of family for gangsters. *The Godfather* mainly follow Michael Corleone and his path to become a Mafia leader. However, the novel is also interested in Don Corleone not only running his business, but also raising his family and preparing it for taking his seat while managing their careers and lives to a certain degree, trying to prepare them as much as he can for all the obstacles they may face. As Cawelti claims, the development of Mafia power is linked to the family of the Mafioso.⁹⁷ In other words, if the family flourishes, so does the business.

Scarface, on the other hand, does not spend nearly as much time discussing family. The main protagonist, Tony Guarino, is much more separated from his family. At a certain point he even hides the fact that he had survived the war. Nevertheless, there is still something to be revealed even from this lack of description. Armitage Trail spends more time discussing the development of Tony's business which is, though, organized as a large family.

The family, as described by Mario Puzo in *The Godfather*, is along with trust and respect, the most important thing a gangster can have. Gangsters are always seeking new opportunities in improving their family's life, their safety and comfort. Not rarely do they go to extreme lengths to fulfil this task. This stems from the centuries-old problem which emerged in feudal Italy and Sicily, as described by Fred L. Gardaphe: the peasants of Sicily and northern Italy could not control their own destiny; instead, they controlled what they could: their families.⁹⁸

Mario Puzo uses the term "family" to address not only a family in the traditional sense of the nuclear family, but also to address one's clan. This goes to prove the tight connections in the mob. The members of it are treated as family members, although with much more control and strictness. However, should a member of the Mafia family misbehave in a serious way, for

⁹⁷ John G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, And Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), quoted in Richard Bradford. *Crime Fiction: A Very Short Introduction*. Very Short Introductions. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 114.

⁹⁸ Fred L. Gardaphe, "Mafia stories and the American gangster," in *The Cambridge Companion to American Crime Fiction*, ed. Catherine R. Nickerson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 112

example taking money from the mob, that member will have to face the consequences, often not mild at all. The fact that one is a member of the Mafia family might not even save them from the Omertà, one of the most gruesome acts, as punishment for the worst of treachery. Betraying a gangster's family, either one, is the lowest one can go.

In the very opening of *The Godfather*, Amerigo Bonasera sits in front of a court which is set to decide the fate of young thugs who disgraced his daughter after their failed rape attempt. Bonasera is shaking with rage and has strong faith in the justice system of the United States of America. However, due to the thugs' families' connection, they walk away free men. Amerigo is therefore forced to seek justice from Don Corleone, the famous mob leader. There is great stress put on the fact that even though Amerigo Bonasera holds the law in very high regard, his family means much more to him and Don Corleone understands that very well. Bonasera makes a crucial decision; he will not tolerate the injustice that was done upon his family, even if it means making a debt to Don Corleone:

All his years in America, Amerigo Bonasera had trusted in law and order. And he had prospered thereby. Now, though his brain smoked with hatred, though wild visions of buying a gun and killing the two young men jangled the very bones of his skull, Bonasera turned to his still uncomprehending wife and explained to her, "They have made fools of us." He paused and then made his decision, no longer fearing the cost. "For justice we must go on our knees to Don Corleone."⁹⁹

Neither Bonasera or Don Corleone are willing to settle for cruelty bestowed upon Amerigo's daughter and so Don Corleone's men punish the perpetrators in a gruesome but, in their eyes, fair way; by a violent beating.

In *Scarface*, though, family is introduced as something much less honourable. Straight away the main protagonist, Tony Guarino, is introduced as an unmarried young man always lusting after women, searching for the perfect one to possess. His family is not a good example of a well-functioning one. Nevertheless, he still cares about them in his own way. This is illustrated when his brother, Ben, questions him about certain business Tony had been tending to: "Don't ever get in no serious trouble, Tony; it would ruin me at headquarters." "I won't. Don't worry about me. You got enough to do to watch on your own step."¹⁰⁰ This shows Tony's compassion with Ben, although Tony might also mean it in a slightly mocking way. Tony is

⁹⁹ Mario Puzo, *The Godfather* (London: Arrow Books, 2009), 5.

¹⁰⁰ Armitage Trail, *Scarface* (Floyd: Black Curtain Press, 2013), 11.

completely honest with his brother, something quite rare, even though Ben is a police officer who could have him arrested. This goes to prove Tony values family at least in some regard, though not as high as in *The Godfather*.

Mario Puzo makes put a substantial amount of effort into explaining that a man needs to be a firm leader of the family, be it a Mafian family of a traditional one. While Armitage Trail does not actually state this fact, he indicates that a certain code of honour and responsibility in a gangster's mob is important, as illustrated when Tony provides his family with income through a lawyer in order to secure their well-being. He is proud of this act and when, later on, he sees the results of his good will, he is thrilled, although for the whole time, he hides this fact. He also hides from his family as it gives him a strategical edge over his enemies, one of which is also his brother. It is also possible that when Tony changes his surname from Guarino to Camonte, he does so in order to prevent his family from being tainted by his criminal deeds, most importantly his brother, a rather high-ranking police officer, as supported by Kevin Tucker.¹⁰¹

The characters of *The Godfather*, on the other hand, never hide their affinity to their family. They spend time together, discuss all matters if need be, bear each other's burden. Children were sacred, especially to men. As Don Corleone said: "A man who is not a father to his children can never be a real man."¹⁰² As such, fatherhood in particular is stressed many times throughout the novel.

In *Scarface*, on the other hand, Tony's family is hardly even introduced. The reader only learns that the father and the mother work hard in their little shop and seem to be good citizens. Furthermore, only Tony's mother is given a name, Carlotta, and some character. She is described to be ugly and barbaric looking but also intelligent and honest. Tony's father seems not be present and is not given almost any focus in the novel, indicating that the only dominant parent is Tony's mother. The attitude among the family members is very cold and there are numerous fights, as described by Trail:

That was the way it always went, reproaches, recriminations, cautions. She and his father could think of more things he shouldn't do. It never occurred to him that they were endeavoring to implant in him their own code of ethics and honesty. Their crudeness of expression kept him from realizing that. Even if he had realized it, he wouldn't have accepted it. Because, while he loved his parents with the fierce, clan-love of the Latin, he did not respect their ideas. There were

¹⁰¹ Tucker, *Scarface Nation*, 155.

¹⁰² Puzo, *The Godfather*, 40.

many logical reasons for that - their inability to learn English well, their inability to keep step with the times and country, their bewilderment - even after twenty years - at the great nation they had chosen for their new home, the fact that even with his father working every day and his mother tending the little store they had been able to make only a bare living for the large family.¹⁰³

From this description one can also sense the possible problems Tony has with his family and likely other Italian Americans as well; even though they chose America as their new home, they still cling on their old values, which Tony sees as outdated. He regards the American way as the only possible path. He also seems to somewhat mock their lack of English as he refuses to speak Italian while he is having an argument with his mother; he considers English to be his mother-tongue. The family appears to comply with the stereotype of hot-headed Italian relationships, even though there is a lack of domestic violence, which we can see in *The Godfather*. Armitage Trail asks several questions:

So why should he accept their ideas on ethics? Where had those ideas gotten them? Tony didn't intend to live in squalor like this all his life; he meant to be a big shot. Thus another decent home spawned another gangster, as inevitably as an oyster creates a pearl."

While his parents are trying their best to raise Tony to be a good citizen, something they managed to accomplish to a certain degree with his brother, Ben, Tony is simply too rebellious. He admires mobsters for their power and money, something his family's way of life is clearly lacking.

Furthermore, as noted by Christian K. Messenger, *The Godfather* has a strong theme of subjugation of women; all throughout the book patriarchy is promoted and emphasized and the passing of power from father to son is ever present.¹⁰⁴ Michael, one of Don's sons and thought to be the heir of Don's criminal empire by everyone, expresses a certain form of disagreement about his family's business:

As they walked toward the hospital entrance, Don Corleone put his hand on Michael's arm so that the others forged ahead. "When you get through with college, come and talk to me," the Don said. "I have some plans you will like."

Michael didn't say anything. Don Corleone grunted in exasperation. "I know how you are. I won't ask you to do anything you don't approve of. This is

¹⁰³ Trail, *Scarface*, 16.

¹⁰⁴ Messenger, *The Godfather and American Culture*, 292.

something special. Go your own way now, you're a man after all. But come to me as a son should when you have finished with your schooling."¹⁰⁵

Michael keeps his distance from the family business and is much more of an American than the rest of his family. He even enlists and fights in the second world war, something Don tried his best to avoid. Michael tries not to be another Italian American, not to continue in his father's steps.

However, this attitude changes throughout the book, as noted by Jarret Ruminski.¹⁰⁶ At first, he hides the true nature of the family and its fame but later, as he joins the family and starts working for his father, he starts lying to her and avoiding her. When Don is shot and put in hospital, Michael starts getting more involved as he does not want his father to die. Because of his quick thinking, he stops a second attempt at his father's life but gets injured in the process by the captain of the police, McCluskey. When the family is discussing the future course of action, one can see Michael make a crucial decision. He decides not only that Sollozzo, called the Turk as well, and McCluskey, who helped Sollozzo with wounding Don, are to be killed. Michael also decides that he will be the one to carry out the ordeal. The following exchange captures the change in character:

Sonny: You, the high-class college kid, you never wanted to get mixed up in the Family business. Now you wanta kill a police captain and the Turk just because you got your face smashed by McCluskey.

Michael stood up. "You'd better stop laughing," he said. The change in him was so extraordinary that the smiles vanished from the faces of Clemenza and Tessio. Michael was not tall or heavily built but his presence seemed to radiate danger. In that moment he was a reincarnation of Don Corleone himself. His eyes had gone a pale tan and his face was bleached of color. He seemed at any moment about to fling himself on his older and stronger brother. There was no doubt that if he had had a weapon in his hands Sonny would have been in danger.¹⁰⁷

After the assassination he flees to Sicily to escape the law, without telling Kay anything, which Ruminski sees, together with the assassination, as the turning point of Michael's character. Michael, while in Sicily, meets another woman, Apollonia, and becomes obsessed with her. He pursues her heavily and marries her. The Apollonia is portrayed as a rather simple girl, and more of a prize than a partner to Michael. After Apollonia gets killed by Michael's

¹⁰⁵ Puzo, *The Godfather*, 49.

¹⁰⁶ Jarret Ruminski, "The Godfather Themes: Masculinity and Patriarchy," *LitCharts*, September 30, 2019.

¹⁰⁷ Puzo, *The Godfather*, 171-172.

enemies, he returns back to America and also to Kay. Even though Kay seems to be somewhat intelligent and educated, she is not smart enough to realize what is really going on around her. She continues to refuse to believe that Michael could be the monster the media portray him to be up until it is too late to change the course of their lives.

Michael still regards Kay as important to him, he still wants her in his life as a wife and the mother of his children, even though he does not see her as an equal partner:

I won't be telling you what happened at the office every day. I won't be telling you anything about my business. You'll be my wife but you won't be my partner in life, as I think they say. Not an equal partner. That can't be.¹⁰⁸

Another notable woman is Don's wife referred to as Mama Corleone. She is an old-school Italian woman who dwells on traditional values, one of which is the importance of obedience to one's husband. When the Don is asked by his daughter as to whether he hits his wife like her husband hits her, Don answers: "She never gave me a reason to beat her."¹⁰⁹ The fact that his wife smiles and nods in agreement shows how deep the internalized misogyny is rooted in the family and possibly in their culture. Conny, Don's daughter, cannot believe what she is hearing, however, she submits and returns to her husband obediently. Yet, Mama Corleone is held in high regards among the mob. Only rarely does a member of the organization address her in any way, one exception being the death of one of her sons, Sonny.

In *Scarface*, on the other hand, the main protagonist's women change much more. Right at the beginning of the novel, he steals his opponent's love interest, in the book commonly referred to as a "moll," meaning "a female companion of a gangster."¹¹⁰ Carmela Coccimiglio believes that such a companion is also intimate,¹¹¹ which is also indicated in the novel:

He and Jane were the best of friends, often going places together and seeing a great deal of each other. Yet he felt that he was actually no closer to her than he had been the first time they met the night they had disposed of Jerry Hoffman. But the lure of her was growing upon him more and more, if such a thing were possible.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Puzo, *The Godfather*, 483.

¹⁰⁹ Puzo, *The Godfather*, 318.

¹¹⁰ "MOLL || Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary," Dictionary, Cambridge Dictionary, accessed February 12, 2020, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/moll>.

¹¹¹ Carmela Coccimiglio, "Absent Presence: Women in American Gangster Narrative", 58.

¹¹² Trail, *Scarface*, 61.

Nevertheless, before Jane comes into the picture, Tony meets Vyvyan. He becomes so obsessed with her that he kills her partner, Spingola, a powerful mobster. Vyvyan becomes the reason Tony kills a man and joins a gang so that he can obtain the woman he desires.

However, the romance is short lived. When Tony leaves for war to escape his enemies, she returns the favour by quickly finding another man after he is supposedly killed in the war. After returning from the war and finding out, Tony, feeling only anger and no longer any affection towards her, murders her.

He almost immediately changes his focus on another woman, another prize in his eyes, a gun girl named Jane Conley. Armitage Trail goes on to explain the purpose of a gun girl; she is supposed to be an assistant to a gangster, who is about to carry out an assassination. To assist him, she carries his gun until it is time for him to strike, and after the act she takes it from him, so that the police cannot find the murder weapon on the gangster. This time, however, he feels more affectionate towards her and even starts living with her.

Tony feels more than a need to possess Jane and make her his own. He also feels a strong affection to her, which is apparent when they seek an apartment in which they will live together after Tony's proposition about being together. Jane agrees to live with Tony for a month and if she is happy, she will stay with him. Jane's agreement makes Tony not only happy, but also proud and he promises to himself to take such good care of her that the deal will be more permanent:

Tony went away from the house that night, almost choking with triumph. At last he had won; that glorious creature was about to become his - even if only for a month. But he meant to make things so pleasant that the arrangement would last much longer.¹¹³

This change of character may have more than one reason. Most importantly, Tony feels as if this gun girl, called "The Gun Girl," is unreachable for him, unlike Vyvyan was. Before he felt that he could get any girl he wanted, but not with Jane Conley. This time the woman has the edge over him, she is more experienced in the Mafia business and she also shows a certain amount dominance and stubbornness, something fairly unknown to Tony when it comes to women. It is obvious that these traits raise Tony's respect and trust towards Jane as he is clueless about her betrayal at the end of the book.

¹¹³ Trail, *Scarface*, 62.

The Godfather does not show such character progression, quite the opposite. As Jarret Ruminski points out, Michael's relationship to his partner, Kay, actually changes for the worse; where he once saw her as an equal partner, towards the end of the book he starts perceiving her as only a formal one¹¹⁴. His changed attitude towards women and relationships is also obvious from the fact that he marries another woman while he is in Sicily during his hiding from the law. On the other hand, Tony in *Scarface* does not respect women much at the beginning but once he meets a woman that seems to be as respectful as he is, he treats her with much more respect and trust, up until a point where she betrays him, which is something he would have seen coming before.

¹¹⁴ Jarret Ruminski, "The Godfather Themes: Masculinity and Patriarchy," *LitCharts*, September 30, 2019.

8. Portrayal of Gangster as Anti-hero in *The Godfather* and *Scarface*

Oxford's Learning Dictionaries defines the term "anti-hero" in the following way: "the main character in a story, but one who does not have the qualities of a typical hero, and is either more like an ordinary person or morally bad."¹¹⁵ From this definition we can see that an antihero is not the direct opposite of a hero. Instead, he seems to be the main character who lacks some good qualities or morals, but who still has at least some good features that may cause one not to perceive the character as evil. In fact, some might even disagree if a certain character is anti-hero at all; the readers could perceive the character as a hero, at least to them.

Michael Corleone, the main protagonist of *The Godfather*, seems to fit into the anti-hero profile. However, his character changes dramatically as the novel goes on. At first, he disagrees with his family's way of life, especially in business, and so he goes to college and even joins the military to fight in the war. He attempts his best to separate himself from the family, but at the same time he does not wish to dishonour them by excluding them completely from his life. This is symbolically indicated when during the wedding at the beginning of the book, he and his girlfriend sit far apart from Michael's family so as to physically set himself aside. Although he is at the wedding and does see his father, he mostly keeps to himself and tries to keep Kay separated from his family as well.

The third son, Michael Corleone, did not stand with his father and his two brothers but sat at a table in the most secluded corner of the garden. But even there he could not escape the attentions of the family friends.

Now this youngest son sat at a table in the extreme corner of the garden to proclaim his chosen alienation from father and family.¹¹⁶

Nevertheless, he still deeply cares about his family. It is this approach which eventually leads him to abandon his morals and principles and to join his family's business. The rival mob's attempt on Michael's father's life, which is done in cooperation with the police, seems to be too personal to him to simply glance over.

Tony Guarino seems to show a different trend when it comes to his features. Unlike Michael Corleone, he is from the beginning portrayed as a liar and a criminal willing to do

¹¹⁵ "Definition of anti-hero noun from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary," Dictionaries: English. Oxford Learner's Dictionaries. Accessed 19 June, 2020.

<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/anti-hero?q=antihero>

¹¹⁶ Puzo, *The Godfather*, 12.

virtually anything, should it help him get what he wants. He is said to be good at taking care of himself and making enough money, however, how he makes the money is not clear:

In the meantime, though he had no job that anybody knew of and although he refused to fall in with the criminal ways of his neighbors, he dressed better than they and seemed to have all the money he needed. Many of the boys wondered about that, but inasmuch as he chose to volunteer nothing, it was likely to remain a mystery for, in that neighborhood, one did not inquire into the source of income of even an intimate friend. And Tony had no intimate friends.¹¹⁷

In fact, one of the first things one learns about him is that the first he committed a serious crime was when he was just eighteen years old, which is then described later in the novel. Trail states in the novel that Tony would never fall into the trap of doing only small-time crimes to earn a couple of dollars. It is, therefore, likely, that Tony earned his money legally and fairly.

Furthermore, Tony Guarino seems to aim high from the very beginning: “He wanted to be a „big shot,“ a leader, perhaps a politician. He had a hunger for command, for power, for wealth. And he meant to have it all.”¹¹⁸ In contrast, Michael Corleone only seems to seek an honest, modest life with his girlfriend Kay and is not very keen on anything illegal. Tony, on the other hand, is prepared to leave his mark on the world as one of the biggest mob bosses of his time.

One can see a parallel between how Tony Guarino and Don Corleone perceive their own justice and way of life. When Tony captures a member of an enemy gang, he first promises the prisoner money for sharing information about the inner workings of his mob. He refuses and is subsequently taken into the cellar to be tortured. After a few short threats, the prisoner gives in and tell Tony everything he wants to know. One of Tony’s mobsters, Steve, demands that Tony does not pay the enemy thug and that he rather kills him and save the money. Tony angrily replies: “I keep my word, Steve, whether to friend or enemy, and no matter what I’ve promised, either good or bad.”¹¹⁹ Tony, even though his intentions are to take over the opponent’s business by force, still honours the deal he had made with the prisoner, even if the money seems to be wasted as the prisoner could very well be killed by his mob.

¹¹⁷ Trail, *Scarface*, 8.

¹¹⁸ Trail, *Scarface*, 8.

¹¹⁹ Trail, *Scarface*, 89.

There exists a similarity in *The Godfather*. The novel talks about Don Corleone's beginnings after arriving in the United States. When he was not yet a Don, Vito Corleone led a humble life with his wife and their son, Sonny. There was a man named Fanucci in the family's neighbourhood, who extorted money from local business under the threat of violence. He was feared and wealthy. Fanucci made his money mainly on old or weak people, as others were usually able to defend themselves. Meanwhile, Vito Corleone took on some questionable work that finally allowed him to earn enough money for his family. Fanucci found out and demanded a share of the profits. Vito convinced his friends, who were his colleagues, to let him take care of Fanucci. Vito decided to kill Fanucci as he saw no value in letting him live. After the act, Vito became respectable and known in the local community.

One day after the murder of Fanucci, a woman named Signora Colombo came to Vito to ask him for a favour. Her landlord had had her evicted because she had had a loud dog. He had also threatened to call the Police on her. Signora was desperate and the threat of having the Police evict her forcefully had frightened her. Vito promised that she would not need to worry about the eviction any longer. The next day, he spoke to the landlord. After Vito was turned down, he simply said: "Do me this service, eh? I won't forget it. Ask your friends in the neighborhood about me, they'll tell you I'm a man who believes in showing his gratitude."¹²⁰ Once the man asked around and understood that he was talking to Vito Corleone, a respected and feared man, he let the woman keep the apartment at the same price as it had been before. The landlord was glad that he escaped Vito's vengeance, even though it was very close. Vito Corleone was thought to be a member of the Mafia.

Both characters, Tony Guarino and Vito Corleone, seem to care very much about the value of words they use and especially their promises. While Tony's intentions are not as good, he acts in a way he believes to be fair and honest, even though his morals are shifted from those of a regular person. He earns and gives respect where it is due and forms his own set of morals and rulers that he believes are fair. His surroundings do matter to him, but much less than to the characters of *The Godfather* and the people around him fear him as much as they respect him.

Vito Corleone, on the other hand, is much more warm-hearted. He cares more about the people in his vicinity and about justice, as crooked as it might seem at times. Vito, though not afraid to resort to extreme measures, wants to make his world better for everyone, but very

¹²⁰ Puzo, *The Godfather*, 277.

carefully chooses the members of said world. Still, the neighbourhood sees him mostly as a fair, fellow man, who is to be feared only if he is done wrong. It seems that Vito Corleone knows his morals and goals in life.

However, the same cannot be said about Michael. At the end of the novel, when he assumes control of his family's business, one can clearly see his transition to what he perceives his father to be. A strong, decisive man prepared to use any means necessary to further provide for his family. It seems that Michael becomes the anti-hero his father was and not only that; he aims to become even more powerful and also legitimate.

Tony Guarino seems to have much simpler goals in life. He comes across as more of an enemy of the public, even though he does have a code he lives by and values honour highly. His anti-hero features are clear when he secretly helps his family lead better, more secure lives, free of his bad influence and mainly the atmosphere that surrounds him. There is also a situation, that demonstrates Tony's merciful side; one of his subordinates seems to have betrayed him. Tony appears to be sure of it, even though he has no direct proof. If Tony were a true villain, he would have killed him on the spot. Instead, he fires him and forbids him from coming anywhere near Tony's turf: "From today on you don't get a dime out of here and if I hear of you hangin' around here, it's liable to be curtains. You're all through, see? You can either go out like you are or in a hearse, I don't care which."¹²¹ To his gangsters, Tony is a powerful leader, who leads them to great successes and prosperity. The anti-hero characteristics in Tony's case are much more intricate and individual than what can be seen in *The Godfather*. However, one could say that they are, at their core, the same, differentiating only in that *Scarface* is much more open and direct.

¹²¹ Trail, *Scarface*, 100.

Conclusion

It is clear that both books took different approaches to the depiction of their main characters. While in *The Godfather* there is a big emphasis on the family connections and relationships, *Scarface* is more concerned with the well-being of an individual and their own set of morals. Mario Puzo created a detailed and a grisly story which characters' stories frequently intertwine and affect one another. Armitage Trail, on the other hand, tells the story of a single gangster advancing throughout his criminal career.

The Godfather also pays much more attention to details, as can be seen when the novel narrates Don Corleone's origins in great detail, trying to show Don's attitude towards innocent people who are preyed upon by their more powerful foes. The novel does not hide the fact that Don is still motivated by money and power; nonetheless, he is also shown to be of good heart and strong morals, however crooked they might appear to the outside world. Therefore, Vito Corleone can be labelled as an anti-hero, acting in the best of his abilities to improve the lives of, most importantly, his family, and his fellow people.

Michael Corleone is, however, more complex, as evidenced by his character change. At the beginning of *The Godfather*, he was much more of a hero than a bad guy. As the story progresses, he slowly becomes more evil and intricate, up until a point where his close ones, especially Kay, almost fail to recognize him. He is corrupted, even though he acts in the name of his family. His morals shift heavily, and he becomes to see the world through his father's eyes. It could be said that Michael, after years of struggling, found his role in life; providing for his family even more than his father Vito Corleone was able to.

Tony Guarino seems to be the simplest case of the three. He lives by his strict set of rules, trying to usurp as much money and power as he can, not only because he is able to, but mainly because he sees such life as fairer than the alternatives. Admittedly, he appears to be much more of an individual figure, but even in his case there are people he depends on and who depend on him, and those people might see him as their own versions of a hero. Despite this, his family, should they recognize him at all, would probably disapprove of his doings and would more appreciate if he took a different, legitimate path in life.

Resumé

Tato práce se zabývá vyobrazením postavy gangstera v knihách *Kmotr* od Maria Puza a *Scarface* od Armitage Traila. V první ze zmíněných knih se autor výrazně zaměřil na dvě postavy, Dona Vito Corleone a jeho syna, Michaela Corleone. V druhé knize je důraz kladen primárně jen na Tony Guarina.

První část práce se zabývá historií žánru, jeho některými podžánry a důležitými autory dané literatury. Také byl nastíněn vývoj organizovaného zločinu v podobě mafie, jež do značné míry ovládala svět podsvětí v tehdejších Spojených Státech Amerických. Práce se dále zaměřila na historické pozadí, hlavně postavu Al Caponeho, proslulého kriminálního podnikajícího s nelegálním alkoholem, a právě dobu Prohibice, která způsobila nebyvalou vlnu kriminality.

Mario Puzo se významně soustředí na důležitost rodiny, mezilidských vztahů a osobní zodpovědnosti. Postava gangstera je zde znázorněna jako ochránce a vykonavatel spravedlnosti, ač je tato spravedlnost většinou poskvrněna nekalými a nelegálními úmysly. Gangster, jako hlava rodiny, má za úkol se o svoji rodinu starat co nejlépe dokáže, a to ať se jedná o rodinu biologickou, či zločineckou. Organizovaný zločin v podání rodiny Corleone má striktní hierarchii odpovídající rodinným vztahům. Hlavou gangu je Don Corleone, který svým podřízeným, většinou rodinným příslušníkům a blízkým přátelům, deleguje úkoly. Jde o člověka se silnými zásadami a jasnými cíli, a nejen svým okolím, ale i sebou samotným je považován za čestného a spravedlivého člověka. Vito Corleone dbá na staré italské zvyky, tradice, a důležitost cti a slibů. Od americké společnosti se spíše distancuje a nedůvěřuje jí. I proto ho lze kategorizovat jako typického antihrdinu, neboť Vito Corleone bojuje za svou vlastní spravedlnost, kterou by ale běžný člověk nejspíše neuznával.

Michael Corleone, jeho syn, je od mladého věku spíše rebelem ve své rodině. Od své rodiny si drží odstup, ačkoliv jí stále projevuje úctu a lásku. Více než v italských tradicích se zhlédl v těch amerických. Jak kniha postupuje, Michael je čím dál více vtažen do své kriminální rodiny, a to do té míry, kdy k dojde k zásadnímu rozhodnutí převzít žezlo po svém otci a stát se hlavou jeho zločinecké organizace. S tím, jak se Michael mění, se také zásadně proměňují jeho charakteristiky. Z člověka, který uznával zákon, poctivost a lásku se stává chladnokrevný taktik, který se uzavírá do sebe a vnímá pouze své povinnosti vůči své rodině. Taktéž se mění jeho postoj ke své přítelkyni Kay, ke které již necítí to, co dříve. Dokonce se oženil s jinou ženou, Apollonií, když musel uprchnout na Sicílii před nepřáteli své rodiny. Ke Kay se vrátil

až poté, co byla Apollonia zavražděna. Kay již nadále nevidí jako rovnocennou partnerku, ale pouze matku svých budoucích dětí. Nedůvěřuje jí a spíše jí lže.

Hlavní hrdina knihy *Scarface* spisovatele Armitage Traila, Tony Guarino, je popisován výrazně jednodušeji, ač je založen na Al Caponem, proslulém kriminálníkovi. Jeho úmysly jsou více individuální, sobečtější. Od útlého věku, na rozdíl od Michaela, plánuje svou nezákonnou kariéru, které je naprosto oddán. Více než na svou rodinu se soustředí na své vlastní dobro, a až s postupem času je ochoten si k sobě připustit jiné lidi. Nelze ale říci, že mu na jeho rodině vůbec nezáleží. Tony se rozhodne narukovat do armády a odjede bojovat do druhé světové války, aby utekl před svými nepřáteli z řad mafie. Po návratu zjistí, že je oficiálně veden jako mrtvý. Toho se rozhodne využít a změní si své jméno tak, aby ho nemohli vystopovat jak jeho nepřátelé, tak i jeho rodina. Čtenář by si mohl myslet, že jde o sobecké gesto; je ale možné, že tak učinil proto, aby své blízké tím chránil před mafii a jeho vlastní pověstí. Důkazem budiž fakt, že své rodině před právníka posílá značnou sumu peněz a také to, že když jednoho dne potká svou sestru s jedním ze svých zkažených přátel, zavraždí ho, aby jí uchránil.

Je tak zřejmé, že se obě díla zabývají velice podobnými motivy rodiny, cti, individuálnosti. Je ale nutné poukázat na rozdíly, a to hlavně ty, že všechny tři postavy se vyvíjejí jinými směry. Zatímco Vito Corleone si své zásady již našel a drží se jich, protože měl mnohem více času a příležitostí ve svém životě, jeho syn Michael ty své opouští a získává nové s tím, jak se mění život jeho a jeho rodiny kolem něj. Lze u něj říct, že Michaelův vývoj je spíše opačný, záporný, neboť upustí od svých pozitivních hodnot a přejme ty špatné od své rodiny, a to hlavně od svého otce. U Tonyho se ale naopak zdá, že se spíše vyvíjí opačným směrem. Začíná jako zločinec malého rozměru, který bojuje pouze sám za sebe a nepřipustí si nikoho k tělu. Časem postupuje svým gangem vzhůru, až se dostane do jeho čela poté, co v jeho jménu spáchá nejrůznější zločiny, včetně vražd. Při tom potkává dvě ženy, jednu z nich zavraždí poté, co zjistí, že si našla jiného muže. S druhou ženou se dokonce dostává do vážnějšího vztahu. Ta ho ale zradí kvůli vidině lepších kontaktů a mocnějšího muže a Tony, který by nikdy dříve nevěřil nikomu tak, jako jí, za to zaplatí životem.

Ženy mají v obou knihách podstatnou roli, ač zdaleka ne takovou, jako muži, a místy je na ně spíše shlíženo shora. Něžné pohlaví je v obou případech považováno za slabší, nedůvěryhodné, podřízené. Některé postavy, jako například dcera Vita Corleona, Connie, se tomuto trendu snaží vzepřít. Tomu ale zabrání sám její otec. V *Kmotrovi* je velice běžné bití manželek, které je zde ve některých případech dokonce bráno jako běžné a žádoucí. To se může zdát jako ironické, neboť tato kniha je tak zaměřená na rodinu a vztahy v ní. Je zřejmé, že

podoba rodiny v této knize je úplně jiná, než by se mohlo zdát běžné. *Scarface* se k ženám chová ohleduplněji a přiřazuje jim více respektu, většinou ale zmiňované ženy nepřekročí stín svých mužských protějšků.

Z provedené analýzy je zřejmé, že postava gangstera se ve vybraných dílech střetává s individuálními názory a pohledy na svět, a hlavně na rodinu, která zde sehrává zásadní roli. Gangster je považován za hrdinu, který bojuje proti bezpráví, i když s velice pochybnými prostředky, někdy až zabíjením. Právě rodina má pro gangstera nezastupitelnou roli, v případě *Kmotra* rodina udává směr a význam svým postavám, zatímco v knize *Scarface* je kladen důraz na rodinu, kterou si daná postava vybere a vytvoří podle svých představ. Ač jsou knihy samy o sobě velice rozdílné, při pozorném čtení si je možné všimnout množství podobností, a to primárně v přístupu hlavních hrdinů ke kriminalitě, lidem, kterými se obklopují, a ke svým cestám životem.

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