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Bakalářská práce

A Comparison of Mario Puzo's The  
Godfather with the Film Adaptations/  
Porovnání knihy Kmotr od Maria Puza s  
jejími filmovými adaptacemi

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## ANOTACE

Student provedl analýzu rozmanitých aspektů spojených s románem *Kmotr* týkajících se děje, prezentovaných postav a dialogů, stejně jako aspektů příběhu méně vhodných pro přímou prezentaci ve filmové produkci. Dále student porovnal tři filmové adaptace s Puzovým textem, mimo jiné také způsob, jakým byly změny přizpůsobeny problémům týkajících se filmového publika a dále rozvíjeny renomovaným režisérem a herci. Dle mínění většiny jsou *Kmotr I* a *Kmotr II*, oba oceněné cenami akademie, výrazně lepší než *Kmotr III*. Bude zajímavé znovu toto vnímání vyhodnotit na základě tohoto porovnání.

## ABSTRACT

The student undertook an analysis of the varied aspects linked with *The Godfather* regarding plot, character presentation and dialogue, as well as aspects of the narrative less conducive to direct representation in the film productions. Then the student compared the three film adaptations with Puzo's text, comparing and contrasting the original novel with the three adaptations, referring to, among other aspects, how changes were adapted to issues pertaining to a cinematic audience and further developed by the renowned director and actors. The general consensus is that *The Godfather I* and *The Godfather II*, both winning academy awards, were vastly superior to *The Godfather III*. This comparison re-evaluates that perception.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Only a handful of films based on a story of a book are considered by critics as masterpieces and *The Godfather* trilogy is one of them. Following Mario Puzo's successful novel of the same name, Francis Ford Coppola managed to bring the plot on screen and directed a nearly three-hour movie in 1972, which was awarded with ten Academy Awards. Two years later a sequel for the first movie, following events of the plot in the novel, was made and some critics judged it an even a better film than the first part. At the start of the 1990s, the third part concluded the Corleone family saga. The last part is not considered nearly as good as the first two, and it is the reason why I will mainly focus on the first two parts.

The story of the novel is inspired by the real rise of the mafia in the United States in the 1920s. The mobs used the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment of the US Constitution prohibiting alcohol to make a big amount of money illegally. Some characters of the novel are based on real people, such as Johnny Fontaine, who represents Frank Sinatra, one of the most famous singers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is known that the mafia helped him to make his successful career.

I came across the novel roughly four years ago and I quickly began to admire Mario Puzo for his writing ability. His story is coherent, characters are intriguing, and the plot is catchy. I also like the depth of the Godfather's world. The readers can follow the fates and properties of not only the main characters but also of those who have no major impact on the main storyline. This aspect makes the novel more realistic and believable. The plot of *The Godfather* unusually works with micro-retrospective aspects. It shows the reader the outcome of the scene first and then the events leading to it, which I have never experienced before. It kept me fully focused on the plot and moved the novel to a higher level.

In my opinion, it is challenging to appreciate the adaptations only after the first viewing of the film. Before watching the first part, one usually imagines the whole environment and the appearance of the characters differently. I was influenced by my own imagination and the fact I did not live in the time of the late 1940s and early 1950s when the story took place.

The second adaptation disappointed me because I hoped The Corleone family will finally become legal and Michael will be beloved and respected by all just as his father had been. Nothing was further from the truth. Yet the more I see it, the more I realize how brilliant the films are when I pay close attention to the details.

According to Todd Berliner, *The Godfather Part II* also disappointed the critics after it came out. They criticized its length and the plot itself. Yet as time has passed, they began to admire it. Coppola was trying to follow the novel, but it was not possible to do it without changes, because the film would have been even longer, and some parts of the novel were not possible to record.

The third part is regarded to be the worst one, but Phoebe Poon suggests seeing the adaptation as a post-Godfather film and reminds Coppola originally called the film *The Death of Michael Corleone*.

In this thesis, I will try to analyze in some detail the differences between the novel and its adaptations. I will compare my thoughts with published critics and scholars who also decided to undertake a study of the book and films. I comment on their standpoints and provide the reader with my own observations and points of view.

## 2 BRIEF REVIEWS OF THE FILMS

### 2.1 THE GODFATHER (1972)

The first adaptation focuses on the main storyline of the book. It starts with Connie's wedding and quickly explains how The Don's world as a mafia leader really works. The plot complicates after the meeting with Sollozo and Vito is shot five times but survives. After a few days, Michael decides to kill Sollozo and McCluskey, the police captain, even if Tom does not agree. After Mike does it, he needs to escape to Sicily for a while and a new mafia war begins in New York. More than a year later, Sonny runs to a trap and is killed. Meanwhile, Michael meets Apollonia, a beautiful Sicilian girl and marries her. Michael returns to America after Apollonia is killed by Fabrizio, one of his companions in Sicily, in a car bombing and returns to Kay, his former girlfriend. In that time, Vito had already recovered and hosts a huge meeting with all Dons across the USA, where he ends the war. When Vito dies of a heart attack in his garden, Michael becomes a new Don and takes vengeance by killing all his enemies.

### 2.2 THE GODFATHER II (1974)

The film narrates two storylines – events after the story in the book and Vito Corleone's story from his childhood in Sicily to his rise to power in the 1920s. In the first one, we can compare the new Don, Michael, to the old one, Vito. Michael still tries to legalize all of the family business in legalized gambling and fights his new business enemies, primarily Hyman Roth from Florida. His relationships with his wife Kay and brother Fredo are getting worse and later they break completely. In the end, Michael manages to kill Roth and Fredo, both of whom betrayed him.

### 2.3 THE GODFATHER III (1990)

The third part focuses on the Corleone family in the late 1970s. Michael is now an elderly man who regrets his criminal past and tries to legalize his business, which turns out to be impossible. He teaches Sonny's son Vincent and wants him to become the new leader of the family. When the enemies try to murder Michael, they instead shot dead his daughter Mary.



### 3 REVIEW OF THE NOVEL

The novel is divided into nine books. The first one covers one-third of the novel. It begins with Connie, the Don's daughter, and Carlo Rizzi's wedding, where the Don receives a few undertakers in his mansion and the reader learns how the Godfather's world works. A few days after the wedding, the Vito Corleone meets Virgil Sollozzo's request for protection of his drug business, but Vito refuses. Sonny, the oldest of Don's sons, makes a mistake when he publicly shows that he would be interested in the deal. Therefore, Sollozzo decides to assassinate the Godfather to be able to make the deal with Sonny. The assassination, however, is unsuccessful, though the Don is badly wounded. When Sollozzo tries to kill Vito again, the family decides to murder him along with his protector, the mobbed-up police captain McCluskey, which subsequently starts a mafia war in New York in 1946.

The second book follows Johnny Fontaine, a famous singer and actor inspired by Frank Sinatra. The third part of the novel follows Vito's rise to power in the 1920s and describes how he earns respect and builds his crime empire during his young age. The fourth one describes how the war continues including Sonny's murder. In the fifth book, the Don makes peace with the other families.

It was Michael, the Don's youngest son and the one who did not want to be involved in the family business, who Sollozzo and McCluskey and must hide in Sicily, where he meets his first wife Apollonia. He did not really manage to escape the enemies, though, and Apollonia is killed in a car bombing, which was originally meant to kill Michael. These events are described in the sixth book. When he returns in the seventh book, after enemies kill Sonny, Michael becomes the head of the family and decides to move the business to Las Vegas. In the eighth book, after Vito passes away, Michael kills leaders of his enemies, leads the family to a bloody victory, and becomes a new Don. The last part describes events a year after those murders and how the *consigliori* Tom Hagen convinces Michael's second wife Kay to return to him after she left him because of the business he leads.

## 4 COMPARISON OF THE NOVEL AND ITS FILM ADAPTATIONS

### 4.1 WITH THE GODFATHER

The novel and the film start with the same character, but in a different time and place. While the story in the novel begins with Amerigo Bonasera in court, the adaptation shows us this character in the corner office of the Godfather's Long Island mansion on the wedding day of Connie Corleone. Why did Coppola omit those first scenes of the novel? In my opinion, he considered them irrelevant to the whole story and wanted to immediately introduce us to the culture and dynamics of The Don's world with an important scene.

In the opening scenes, the Godfather receives a few of the undertakers' requests for help. First of the undertakers is the aforementioned Bonasera, who begs The Don for justice. A black screen and his words open the movie and bring us to New York of the middle 40s. After the first sentence, the black screen changes to Bonasera's face. As he keeps speaking, the camera starts to move away from him. The move, according to William G. Little, highlights the anxiety of American Dreams.

*A young woman on the move. Moving vehicles. Moving pictures. "An animal" on the move, as simile, in the undertaker's moving story. A camera on the move, pulling back slowly and cutting. An animal on the move in the Godfather's lap. What is all this moving about? Like many American gangster films, Francis Ford Coppola's The Godfather dramatizes anxieties experienced by hyphenated Americans in relation to the materialist version of the American Dream.<sup>1</sup>*

The animal in the Godfather's lap is a cat. Why did Coppola include it, even if the novel does not mention one? What is its main purpose? From my point of view, the cat emphasizes Bonasera's disrespect to The Don. It helps the spectator recognize what the novel gives the reader through the written words - Vito did not embrace this visitor or shake his hands. The cat is a more loyal friend than Bonasera.

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<sup>1</sup> Little, William G., "Like an Animal': Figures on the Move in The Godfather", p. 85

After the Don accepts all the undertakers, another guest arrives. It is Johnny Fontaine, a popular singer from California who happens to be Vito Corleone's godson. After a while, he comes to the office and tells The Godfather all about problems with his family and career in a way that makes the Don angry.

*Don Corleone's face had become cold without a hint of sympathy. He said contemptuously, "You can start by acting like a man." Suddenly anger contorted his face. He shouted. "LIKE A MAN!" He reached over the desk and grabbed Johnny Fontaine by the hair of his head in a gesture that was savagely affectionate. "By Christ in heaven, is it possible that you spent so much time in my presence and turned out no better than this? A Hollywood finocchio who weeps and begs for pity? Who cries out like a woman – 'What shall I do? Oh, what shall I do?'" ... "At the end of the month you can go back to Hollywood and this Pezzonovante, this .90 caliber will give you the job you want. Done?" Johnny Fontaine could not altogether believe that the Don had such power. But his Godfather had never said such and such a thing could be done without having it done. "This guy is a personal friend of J. Edgar Hoover," Johnny said. "You can't even raise your voice to him." "He's a businessman," the Don said blandly. "I'll make him an offer he can't refuse."<sup>2</sup>*

These parts of the book were included in the adaptation and the rest was, for an understandable reason, shortened. Two of these omitted details, however, might well have been included.

The first one is the way that women are treated throughout the whole plot. They always play minor, rather insignificant roles and the act of beating them (Johnny's second wife and later his daughter Connie) leaves the Don rather cold, which Kay highlights at the end of the story:

*What the hell does that mean? Come on, Tom, speak out straight once in your life. I know Michael can't, but you're not Sicilian, you can tell a woman the truth, you can treat her like an equal, a fellow human being.<sup>3</sup>*

The second one is Hagen's background, including the most important one – the great importance of *Consigliori*. Tom does not like Johnny Fontaine, because he only arrives when he is in trouble and needs help. Unfortunately, it is Tom Hagen who has to travel to Los Angeles and convince Mr. Woltz to give Johnny a role in his new movie. The novel provides us more information about Tom during his

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<sup>2</sup> Puzo, Mario, "The Godfather", p. 39, 42, 43

<sup>3</sup> Puzo, Mario, "The Godfather", p. 592, 593

journey to California. The adaptation omits them. Only the readers of the novel learn how important the *Consigliori* is for his Don and Tom is the first non-Italian to become that significant member of the family business, which also foreshadows the upcoming changes especially in the second adaptation. In the film, we only learn Hagen travels to California thanks to the scenes of a plane landing and panorama of LA. Coppola needed us to pay attention to the most important thing – the negotiation with Woltz. Therefore, film spectators do not learn Don’s advice to Hagen, which highlights the *Consigliori*’s importance:

*He had heard Don Corleone say once, “A lawyer with his briefcase can steal more than a hundred men with guns.”*<sup>4</sup>

This part of the book is pictured in the adaptation only in a nutshell but contains all the key dialogues and scenes which keep spectators focused on the plot. Woltz fatally underrates Tom’s message from Don Corleone and feels untouchable. The morning after Tom leaves his mansion, he finds the head of his beloved horse Khartoum in his bed and he finally gets the message. Johnny Fontaine gets the role, which spectators at first need to deduce, do we learn Corleone’s power reaches far beyond New York.

We can notice the first signs of Carlo’s bad character at the wedding. In the film, after Johnny finishes his song and goes to the office, Connie tries to catch his attention, but he does not give her any sight.

*The wedding day of Connie Corleone ended well for her. Carlo Rizzi performed his duties as a bridegroom with skill and vigor, spurred on by the contents of the bride’s gift purse which totaled up to over twenty thousand dollars. The bride, however, gave up her virginity with a great deal more willingness than she gave up her purse. For the latter, he had to blacken one of her eyes.*<sup>5</sup>

In the novel, Carlo even beats her, but Puzo describes it as if beating a wife was a natural situation like breathing. Carlo’s hostile acts of aggression will have significant consequences in later parts of the novel.

A lot of guests attend the wedding, including Don’s youngest son Michael, who feels ashamed of his family and shows it.

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<sup>4</sup> Puzo, Mario, “The Godfather”, p. 60

<sup>5</sup> Puzo, Mario, “The Godfather”, p. 54

*Michael does not strike the viewer as a character who would typically get involved in the dirty businesses of his family, which involve extreme violence and crime, things not necessarily compiling with the moral code of the society. He signals this himself during the wedding scene of his sister in the early stages of the film, being a fresh college graduate and also a war veteran, sitting under the shade with his Anglo-American girlfriend, away from all the other traditional Italian members of his family, which implies that he is the least likely son to take over the kind of shady business that his family is running.<sup>6</sup>*

It appears the same way in the novel. However, as the story continues, this character starts to change from that well-behaved and honored American citizen, who served in the marines during WWII, into a cold-blooded killer whose influence and power equals that of The Godfather.

The first evidence of this progress appears in the film and the novel when Michael comes to the hospital late in the evening to visit his wounded father, which also constitutes the first of key scenes of the story.

*For the first time since it had all started he felt a furious anger rising in him, a cold hatred for his father's enemies. ... He decided to use his own judgment and disregard Sonny's orders.<sup>7</sup>*

From my perspective, Michael's anger is not really evident in the film, and Michael seems rather thoughtful as if he carefully considered what to do. Finally, he decided not to follow Sonny's orders but assumed independent control of the situation - to move his father to another hospital room. When he manages to do that, the movie, in contrast to the book, starts to excel.

In the movie, a sudden noise of the opening door and footsteps slashed the air like a saber when Michael and the nurse working in the hospital were moving the bed. Who has just come? Is it a Sollozo's man who is supposed to finish off the Godfather? As the steps keep echoing, tension increases. A few seconds later, a man in a black coat and a fedora holding a bouquet reached the right floor. He seemed to be looking for the right door. As Michael found out, it was Enzo, a baker's helper of Natorine who came to pay his respect to The Don. In the book, the situation is not as tense as in the adaptation, because Michael meets Enzo in front of the building.

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<sup>6</sup> Akkan, Goksu Gigi, „The Godfather and the American Dream“, p. 27

<sup>7</sup> Puzo, Mario, “The Godfather”, p. 157

When Vito Corleone wakes up, the book and the film express the tight relationship between Michael and his father, though in different ways. In the written form, they talk to each other, but Coppola decided not to include any dialogue because, as the saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words. Instead of words, a weak but grateful smile indicating The Don's gratitude curved across his lips.

From this point in the plot, Michael's character begins to change rapidly, as Akkan highlights in his analysis:

*Hence, with the shooting of his father Don Corleone, Michael starts to get more involved in the family business, taking baby steps at the beginning, who transforms into a true street-smart, gun-savvy criminal after taking revenge for his unrighteous battering by the police in an Italian restaurant. This scene is crucial for Michael's characterization since it is the first time he is being truly violent on his own terms, he actually wants to take revenge, unlike the cool college boy he was first depicted as.*<sup>8</sup>

The very next day after Michael gets punched by Captain McCluskey, Clemenza and Hagen drive him back home. In the car, they explain to him everything important. The adaptation omits this scene, which can be surprising, considering its significance, but it is a justifiable and logical decision. Coppola did not want to lengthen the already long film and included all the information into the next scene in the mall except one.

*“Now with one of the Tattaglia sons dead he knows we mean business. He really took an awful gamble bucking the Don. By the way, we got the confirmation on Luca. They killed him the night before they shot your father. In Bruno's nightclub. Imagine that?”*<sup>9</sup>

At this point, the reader and the spectator already know where Tattaglias murdered Luca. It is seen and read about right before the shooting of Don Corleone. The murder in the book and the film differ in some details, but I believe they do not change anything. By omitting these sentences at all, Coppola does not make it harder to understand the situation, and it is an understandable decision.

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<sup>8</sup> Akkan, Goksu Gigi, „The Godfather and the American dream“, p. 28

<sup>9</sup> Puzo, Mario, “The Godfather”, p. 166

I consider the scene in the mall a landmark and turning point of the plot. Therefore, it deserves serious attention. In one moment during the discussion about what to do, Michael astonished everybody.

*“Even Sollozzo won’t figure that we’ll dare to gun the captain. They’ll frisk me when I meet them so I’ll have to be clean then, but figure out a way you can get a weapon to me while I’m meeting them. Then I’ll take both of them.” All four heads turned and stared at him. Clemenza and Tessio were gravely astonished.<sup>10</sup>*

These four sentences change everything. The reader senses Michael’s growing respect and his accelerating transformation into a hard criminal and leading personality of the mighty Corleone family. It is Michael who will start the all-out war Tom Hagen was warning them about. Coppola also realized the importance of Michael’s monologue, especially the last sentence – *Then I’ll take both of them* – and knew he must move the spectator by this particular one, no matter that it could be sensed from the previous words. Before them, there is a long tense silence, and everybody waits for it. After a few seconds, Michael nods his head, indicating he is fully determined to do it, and that gesture really strikes the audience.

This moment does not leave us as shocked in the novel as it does in the adaptation, but it highlights Michael’s change elsewhere. After Michael’s words, Sonny and the others (except Hagen) start to laugh and tell him that he was taking it very personally. This behavior makes Mike’s blood boil and the next moment is astonishing in the novel.

*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.<sup>11</sup>*

This part is absent in the film, but it is expressed in Michael’s whole speech analyzed on the previous page. He speaks very slowly, separates every sentence because they are important, the family and spectators need to fully understand every single word. As he keeps speaking, the camera moves towards him to express the omitted part. He did not need to get angry, because the movement shows it instead.

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<sup>10</sup> Puzo, Mario, “The Godfather”, p. 171

<sup>11</sup> Puzo, Mario, “The Godfather”, p. 172

Tom Hagen's point of view also plays a noteworthy role in this scene, because it contrasts with Michael's one. The aforementioned fact that he is the first non-Italian *consigliori* ever results in the other families calling them *the Irish gang*. He keeps saying that the attack on The Don is nothing personal, only business, which contrasts with Italians' beliefs for whom their family is the most important and take those attacks personally.

Both the novel and the adaptation provide the same result of the conversation – Michael's decision to kill Sollozzo and Captain McCluskey – but pictures it slightly differently. In both text and film adaptation, when Michael, Clemenza, and Tom arrive at the mall, Sonny welcomes them cheerfully. When they start to discuss what to do, an argument breaks out between Santino and Tom in the film, which stresses that Tom is not a real member of the family and thus not a Corleone. He wants to negotiate, but short-tempered Sonny is only interested in killing Sollozzo. He refuses any of the *consigliori's* advice, who keeps saying that attempt to kill Vito was only business, with which Sonny does not agree. In the novel, they do not shout at each other and the business-personal issue does not play that considerate role. As the conversation between these two most important acting personalities continues, there is an inconspicuous difference.

“Nobody has ever gunned down a New York police captain and gotten away with it.”<sup>12</sup>

In the novel, Tom tells somebody had killed a police captain and the consequences were terrible. The film one claims nobody has ever tried to shoot him and emphasizes it, which finally calms Sonny and he is willing to wait. When Michael joins the conversation and makes his strong statement, Sonny suddenly turns to Tom's side and blames him for taking the whole situation too personally, because *he got slapped* by the police captain. It was maybe Sonny's standpoint here that encouraged Mike to personally shoot the enemies and start the war.

On the way to the restaurant, Michael wears a hat. He never wears hats and the reason for it is simple.

*“Now put this hat on and let's see how you look.” He clapped a gray fedora on Michael's head. Michael, who never wore a hat, grimaced.*

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<sup>12</sup> Puzo, Mario, “The Godfather”, p. 169



*Clemenza reassured him. "It helps against identification, just in case. Mostly it gives witnesses an excuse to change their identification when we make them see the light."*<sup>13</sup>

This is not explicitly said in the movie, but the reason is clear. A weird thing is that Michael wears it only in the car, not in the restaurant, which makes it unnecessary. After Mike and Clemenza return, Tom and Sonny try to find out the meeting point. At first, they are not successful, but after a while, they realized they have a man in NYPD, detective Phillips and he found out - an Italian restaurant called Luna Azure (Louis' Restaurant in the film – to highlight that it is an Italian one) was chosen for the big conference between enemies.

*Another important motif here is that the killing of the police officers are co-planned by the other members of the family, who also choose the Italian restaurant setting for the killing, which ironically merges the moral sphere of the family, which is supposed to be good-willing, clean and noble because it is of the Italian heritage, with the material sphere, since this killing is motivated by retrieving back the respect which was damaged by the unrighteous beating of Michael.*<sup>14</sup>

It is important to mention that the family members did not choose the restaurant. It was chosen by Sollozzo, and the Corleones only tried to find out which one. However, I agree with the rest of the text. This desire to bring back respect is also evident in the novel when Michael disagrees with Tom, who keeps saying *it was business, nothing business*.

As the story continues, the increasing tension is evident, at first, while waiting to find out the location of the meeting. After McCluskey frisked Michael in the car, they did not drive to the Bronx but were heading to New Jersey.

*Then to Michael's dismay it took the exit for the George Washington Bridge, they were going over to New Jersey. Whoever had given Sonny the info on where the meeting was to be held had given him the wrong dope. The car threaded through the bridge approaches and then was on it, leaving the blazing city behind. Michael kept his face impassive. Were they going to dump him into the swamps or was it just a last-minute change in meeting place by the wily Sollozzo?*<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Puzo, Mario, "The Godfather", p. 183

<sup>14</sup> Akkan, Goksu Gigi, „The Godfather and the American dream“, p. 28

<sup>15</sup> Puzo, Mario, "The Godfather", p. 192

These words keep readers in uncertainty, maybe even in nervousness. In the film, Coppola portrayed it in a slightly different way. He shows the sign *To New Jersey* and Michael asks “*Going to Jersey?*” and after a few seconds, Sollozzo replies “*Maybe*” in a calm voice. The director keeps us in this state for another few moments and then, it becomes clear it was only Sollozzo’s strategy to get rid of potential cars following them so the secret intelligence Sonny had received was indeed correct. Nevertheless, the extreme tension is still there.

During the conference in the novel, Sollozzo explains why he wants to talk Italian to Mike. In the film, however, he does not explain anything but just informs McCluskey. After a while, Michael asks Sollozzo to let him use the bathroom, but he does not like it and becomes suspicious. At this moment, McCluskey helps Mike by saying “*I frisked him. I’ve frisked thousands of young punks. He’s clean.*” Sollozzo needed a man of his sitting at another table, who confirmed nobody is hiding in the bathroom. The adaptation is changed a little bit as Sollozzo frisks Michael himself.

The best part of the whole movie takes place when Mike returns. He does not take in any of Sollozzo’s words. He focuses only on shooting the man who tried to kill his father, which the moving camera indicates. When the camera stops and the sound of a train comes, the tension hits the summit.

After Michael kills Sollozzo, a second passes before shooting McCluskey. In this little amount of time, the police captain freezes, as everybody does. He is astonished by the unexpected situation. Then Michael fires two bullets and also shoots him. In the novel, he immediately drops the gun on the floor (after he insures the Sollozzo’s man will not do anything), but in the movie, he keeps it briefly as he starts to leave the restaurant. It takes him a lot of time to drop it and right after the audience thinks it is over, Coppola brings another tense moment. When Michael finally leaves the room, the war starts, and the Five Families War of 1946 begins.

Spectators of the film follow Michael’s stay in Sicily in three short scenes while the novel pays substantially more attention to details. Michael, whose real identity is kept secret, arrives in Sicily as a guest of Don Tommasino, a friend of Don Corleone.

*One morning Michael decided to take a long hike to the mountains beyond Corleone. He was, naturally, accompanied by the two shepherd bodyguards. This was not really a protection against enemies of the Corleone Family. It was simply too dangerous for anyone not a native to go wandering about by himself. It was dangerous enough for a native.<sup>16</sup>*

The morning of Michael's decision to take the hike has consequences for a long time. Up to this day, Michael has been undercover, even the shepherds with *luparas* Calo and Fabrizio had no idea of his true identity, and there had been no reason to be afraid of the enemies from America.

When they reach a road near a village stretching along some fields, they meet a group of young women, and Michael gets hit by the thunderbolt after he sees one of them. When the beautiful girl escapes to the village in the adaptation, Calo says *'In Sicily women are more dangerous than shotguns'* as if he would like to warn him something bad may happen if he follows her. Michael desire disagrees and they accordingly go to the village to find out more about her.

In a café, it becomes clear the café owner is father of that beautiful girl and it seems it may cause some serious problems. At this point, Michael reminds everyone he is more like his father that he presented himself on Connie's wedding.

*"I understand I've offended you by talking about your daughter. I offer you my apologies, I'm a stranger in this country, I don't know the customs that well. Let me say this. I meant no disrespect to you or her. I am an American hiding in Sicily, from the police of my country. My name is Michael. You can inform the police and make your fortune but then your daughter would lose a father rather than gain a husband. In any case I want to meet your daughter. With your permission and under the supervision of your family. With all decorum."<sup>17</sup>*

In the film, Michael tells the café owner his full name, which actually reveals his identity. In the novel, it does not take much more time, specifically a month when the wedding with the girl called Apollonia happens, whereby people in Sicily find out the truth.

*But this was the first time in his life such a thing had happened to him. It was nothing like his adolescent crushes, it was nothing like the*

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<sup>16</sup> Puzo, Mario, "The Godfather", p. 439

<sup>17</sup> Puzo, Mario, "The Godfather", p. 447

*love he'd had for Kay, a love based as much on her sweetness, her intelligence and the polarity of the fair and dark.*<sup>18</sup>

Coppola needed to emphasize the difference between his unspoken feelings to Kay and Apollonia. After the wedding, which is the only important religious celebration during which no murder is undertaken, we return to America and see Kay arriving at the mall and asking Tom Hagen to send Michael, who has pushed her out of his head since he had met Apollonia, a letter for him.

Tom refuses to say it could cause problems to him and leads Kay into the house. At this point, the scene in the adaptation ends, but in the novel, it continues. In the house, Kay meets Mama Corleone, and this is the only time women oppose men.

*Kay said timidly, "I came to ask about Mike, I haven't heard from him. Mr. Hagen said nobody knows where he is, that he'll turn up in a little while." Hagen spoke quickly, "That's all we can tell her now, Ma." Mrs. Corleone gave him a look of withering contempt. "Now you gonna tell me what to do? My husband don't tell me what to do, God have mercy on him." She crossed herself. ... Then she led Kay to the door. There she kissed her on the cheek very quickly and said, "You forget about Mikey, he no the man for you anymore." ... She was trying to get used to the fact that the young man she had loved was a coldblooded murderer. And that she had been told by the most unimpeachable source: his mother.*<sup>19</sup>

This is a turning point for Kay. She finds out the truth, even if Tom had tried to hide it, and her life with Michael begins to get more and more unfortunate.

The weeks after the wedding in Sicily, while Michael enjoys a good time with his wife, Don Tommasino becomes busy, because it seems the young mafia bosses from Palermo would like to catch him off guard and kill him. Later, it becomes clear, this guess is bad, they did not want to kill Don Tommasino, but Michael.

When Michael is ready to return to America with his wife, after he learned Sonny had been shot dead, Fabrizio prepares his car but runs away and the audience can sense something bad is going to happen. The reader also has a little bit more time to realize that, because Michael is still in the house, while in the film, he is ready to go in front of it when Fabrizio runs away. In both, *everything came together in his mind*<sup>20</sup> too late. He just shouted 'No, no!' when Apollonia was starting the car and

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<sup>18</sup> Puzo, Mario, "The Godfather", p. 444

<sup>19</sup> Puzo, Mario, "The Godfather", p. 312, 313

<sup>20</sup> Puzo, Mario, "The Godfather", p. 469

then the bomb inside the Alfa Romeo exploded and Calo and Apollonia were killed, which was originally intended to assassinate Michael.

Connie and Carlo have a huge fight after she finds out that he is cheating on her. He beats her like an animal with his double belt. Moreover, he humiliates her, which appears only in the novel. Later, she calls home, but her mother does not understand her whisper and she gives the phone to Sonny. The audience does not have to hear what Connie says. Instead, Sonny's face full of uncontrolled anger reveals everything. As he runs from the house, Tom follows him in the film. He senses the danger and sends two bodyguards to follow Sonny's car.

*They too had analyzed the situation and had come to the conclusion that the only way to stave off complete defeat was to kill Sonny Corleone. ... They had come to hate Sonny for his bloodthirstiness, which they considered barbaric.<sup>21</sup>*

When Sonny gets to the Buick, a billboard for a short moment appears saying ironically "Don't worry, mom." Coppola follows the book strictly in the scene of Sonny's murder. He does not omit any moment including the kick to Sonny's face after he is shot dead, which highlights the extreme hatred.

Even if The Don did not want to take revenge on the man who betrayed Sonny, after his father passed away, Michael takes it.

*"Don't be so frightened. Do you think I'd make my sister a widow? Do you think I'd make my nephews fatherless?" ... At that moment, Clemenza, as cunningly and daintily as a little girl slipping a ribbon over the head of a kitten, threw his garrot around Carlo Rizzis neck.<sup>22</sup>*

Clemenza, that always good-hearted man, surprised the readers and audience by the way he can murder someone. With Carlo's murder, Michael evened the score as well by the murders of Don Barzini, Don Tattaglia, and Tessio, which meant victory for the Corleone family.

When Connie found out about Carlo's death, she became hysterical and screamed at Mike that he was "a lousy bastard". Michael's wife was shocked and after Connie was taken to the doctor to calm down, she asked him if it was true.

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<sup>21</sup> Puzo, Mario, "The Godfather", p. 347

<sup>22</sup> Puzo, Mario, "The Godfather", p. 581

*Kay looked into his eyes. "Michael, it's not true, please say it's not true." Michael shook his head wearily. "Of course it's not."*<sup>23</sup>

At this moment, Michael's change was utterly complete. He became the new Don and decided to move all the family business to Las Vegas. In the movie, he did not answer Kay's question immediately. At first, he did not want to answer it. As Kay kept urging, Mike got angry for the first time in the film. Yet after a few seconds, he managed to gain control of his emotions and answered her.

She believes him and hugs him in relief, but when she goes to pour drinks for them, Clemenza and his companions come to the office, the *caporegime* kisses Michael's hand, says *Don Corleone* and one of his companions closes the door to the office. As the door is closing, Kay is seen in a sudden act of recognizing the truth and the film comes to the end.

*Kay could see how Michael stood to receive their homage. He reminded her of statues in Rome, statues of those Roman emperors of antiquity, who, by divine right, held the power of life and death over their fellow men. One hand was on his hip, the profile of his face showed a cold proud power, his body was carelessly, arrogantly at ease, weight resting on one foot slightly behind the other. The caporegimes stood before him. In that moment Kay knew that everything Connie had accused Michael of was true. She went back into the kitchen and wept.*<sup>24</sup>

It might seem this ends of the novel, but readers got an extra chapter describing events 12 months after the last scene of the adaptation. These last pages would be very important in *The Godfather Part II*.

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<sup>23</sup> Puzo, Mario, "The Godfather", p. 584

<sup>24</sup> Puzo, Mario, "The Godfather", p. 584

## 4.2 WITH THE GODFATHER II

In the year of 1958, Don Michael Corleone hosts a big party to celebrate his son's first communion, which we can compare to Connie's wedding from the first movie. Michael, as well as his father, receives guests, but there is a very different feeling. Vito Corleone was treated with great respect, everybody begged him for a favor and friendship. Michael's guests, and this term must be used on purpose instead of *undertakers*, never treat him with such respect, which strikes spectators the most. The new Don has some different traits in comparison with the previous one. He is tougher, more distant, and fiercer, although not as much as Sonny was.

Todd Berliner also points out the atmosphere and people of the party:

*Sonny is dead and no one in this movie has his fire and charm. Frankie Pentangeli is a spirited character, but antiquated, and he often seems to represent the attitudes and personality of a virtually obsolete world. When Fredo runs into Pentangeli at the celebration of Anthony's first communion, for example, he says "Seeing you reminds me of New York, the old days." ... However, Anthony's celebration has none of the familial feeling or ethnic flavor or Connie's wedding. Only respectful Italians visited Vito in his study. ... Frankie Pentangeli remarks that "out of 30 professional musicians, there isn't one Italian in the group" and none can play a tarantella. The festivity looks eerily lifeless and businesslike, designed to look respectable. No Johnny Fontanes appear. No family members sing "Che La Luna".<sup>25</sup>*

This decrease in familial feeling is strengthened by Michael's guests. They are not Italians, no personal friends. Michael receives the Protestant and very American-fashioned Nevada Senator Geary, who deals with him in a very disrespectful way, additionally Frankie Pentangeli (a new character who did not appear in the novel, but spectators can deduce he is Clemenza's successor in New York), is Italian, but also lacks the charm and humility which Bonasera or Nazorine had. It is maybe a price for Michael's effort to legalize all the gambling business, maybe a result of the government's vigilant attempts to pursuit the mafia.

The second storyline follows young Vito Corleone. It starts with Vito's father's funeral, who was killed by Don Ciccio (a new fictional character who did not appear in the book). The first scenes of this storyline - the funeral, Vito's escape to America, and his registration on Long Island – vastly extended the book, in contrast

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<sup>25</sup> Berliner, Todd: "The pleasure of disappointment: Sequels and The Godfather, Part II", p. 113, 114

to the first adaptation, which tends to shorten most of the details. In Sicily, via the provided text, we learn necessary facts to understand what is happening, although, there is a modification in the biography. It claims Vito was nine years old when his father was shot dead, but the novel tells a different age:

*The father refused to knuckle under and in a public quarrel killed the local Mafia chief. A week later he himself was found dead, his body torn apart by lupara blasts. A month after the funeral Mafia gunmen came inquiring after the young boy, Vito. They had decided that he was too close to manhood, that he might try, to avenge the death of his father in the years to come. The twelve-year-old Vito was hidden by relatives and shipped to America.<sup>26</sup>*

The other scenes provide spectators with some extra information. They learn his mother was shot during her attempt to kill Don Ciccio, which readers do not know about, and how Vito got his surname after he arrived in America. In the movie, the immigration officer makes a mistake and takes the name of the village where Vito was born, and it becomes his surname. The novel rather indicates that it was his own desire to change the name:

*And in the new land he changed his name to Corleone to preserve some tie with his native village.<sup>27</sup>*

The second flashback also shows the audience some extra scenes readers cannot find in the novel – the theatre play, where we first meet Fanucci, one of the local “Black Hand”. The play itself sets the atmosphere of the Italian part of the city, which is already established by using the Sicilian accent, which appears a lot in this storyline.

Readers acquire more details about Fanucci and know how he got his scar under his jaw stretching from ear to ear, while the film does not explain it. Viewers can only sense something bad happened to him. The adaptation presents other details.

*Don Corleone was about to get in on the sidewalk side of the car when he hesitated and then turned back to the long open fruit stand near the corner. This had been his habit lately, he loved the big out-of-season fruits, yellow peaches and oranges, that glowed in their green boxes.<sup>28</sup>*

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<sup>26</sup> Puzo, Mario, “The Godfather”, p. 255

<sup>27</sup> Puzo, Mario, “The Godfather”, p. 255

<sup>28</sup> Puzo, Mario, “The Godfather”, p. 98



The novel describes it as a habit Vito Corleone adopted a short time ago, however, in the film he brings home one of these fruits as a young man, which contradicts what the novel claims.

Spectators and readers also get to know young Clemenza and how he becomes friends with Vito. Clemenza needs to hide some guns and Vito helps him. Later, Clemenza and Vito go to Clemenza's friend's apartment house to take away an expensive rug as an expression of his gratitude. While readers of the novel need to recognize it, the film explicitly tells the reader through their conversation at a cafe.

Roberto De Niro as Vito demonstrates his talent in the cafe scene. His sober movement and calm speech remind the audience of Brando's acting in the first film, which results in the second-film Vito character being more believable and authentic.

*Clemenza led Vito to an apartment house with two marble pillars and a white marble stoop. He used a key to open the door and they were inside a plush apartment.*<sup>29</sup>

In the novel, Clemenza had a key from the apartment house, but in the adaptation, he uses a special tool to open the door, because *that fool is not home and didn't leave the key*, which reveals more about Clemenza's traits.

The third flashback starts with sick Fredo, which signals he has been weak and retarded since his early childhood. The main purpose of this scene, though, is to show how Vito became a highly respected man in the community, the Don. Readers of the novel already know he wants to kill Fanucci and get his money back, however, in the adaptation, it is indicated differently, as is typical for *The Godfather* series. Every significant murder is pictured with the background of an important religious celebration as if it purified the blood from the murderers' hands, and Fanucci's one is no exception.

In the novel, Vito shot Fanucci in the hallway right after he entered the building. The film deals with it in a more tense way, similar to a scene from the first movie. Vito waits on the upper floor opposite Fanucci's apartment hidden in the shadow. The camera focuses on Fanucci's steps on the staircase as well as Enzo's in the hospital in the first adaptation. In Part II, unlike in the first, we know what is going

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<sup>29</sup> Puzo, Mario, "The Godfather", p. 259

to happen, but we do not know how and when. Eventually, it turns out Vito had decided to show Fanucci, who has a mere second to realize who killed him.

This moment offers another comparison with the first movie. Before Michael kills Captain McCluskey, he also waits a second to give him some time to realize it. He does not try to hide his gun (just like Vito, when he kills Funucci).

*Vito stepped back, shoulders pressed against the inner door that led to the stairs. He held his gun out to fire. ... The opened door let some of the sound escape into the street, the rest of the gun's explosion shook the building.<sup>30</sup>*

Vito in the adaptation, however, wrapped the gun into a cloth. What was the reason? The different place of the murder, analyzed in the previous paragraphs, brings the answer. Vito used the cloth to reduce the noise of the fire because he killed Fanucci at the door of his apartment. After the murder, Vito earns respect, which is a similar feeling Michael earns in *The Godfather* but becomes so unfamiliar for him in *Part II*.

In the fourth flashback, Vito brings the audience, not the readers, to a street market, where he buys some fruit. When Vito wants to pay for it, the seller refuses the money saying it is a gift for him, whereupon Vito offers his friendship. This behavior is as typical for him as a short temper is for Sonny. The audience experiences it from the very start of the trilogy. This is the way Vito built his empire, by making favors and friendships.

The Don reminds the audience of his manners from the first movie – never show anger, always reason, with respect to others – when poor Signora Colombo asks him to convince Signor Roberto, the owner of the property she lives in, to let her stay in her apartment. The adaptation follows the novel in this scene – Vito meets Mr. Roberto, explains the situation and gives him money to cover the first six months of raised rent.

*“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.” ... But of course Mr. Roberto had already begun to understand. That evening he made inquiries about Vito Corleone. He did not wait until the next morning. He knocked on the Corleone door that very night. ... He assured Vito Corleone that it had*

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<sup>30</sup> Puzo, Mario, “The Godfather”, p. 270

*all been a dreadful misunderstanding, that of course Signora Colombo could remain in the flat, of course she could keep her dog. ... At the finish he threw the thirty dollars Vito Corleone had given him on the table and said in the most sincere fashion, "Your good heart in helping this poor widow has shamed me and I wish to show that I, too, have some Christian charity. Her rent will remain what it was." <sup>31</sup>*

Coppola went even further in this scene and made it comedic. He changed the place to the Olive Oil Company's office, where Vito worked with his future consiglieri Genco Abbandando. When the previous scene was ending, the audience could see Mr. Roberto's disrespectful face, but it quickly changes when he comes to the office the very next day. Funny music starts to play suggesting humorous moments are on the horizon.

When Mr. Roberto comes, he has problems to open the door, which highlights his nervousness. Now, his face is full of respect and fear. He assures Vito Signora Colombo can stay in the flat and gives him the money back. This was not enough for Coppola, though. Mr. Roberto sits at first, but he stands up and asks for Vito's permission to sit down. At first, he promises not to raise the rent, but Vito, with an impassive face, looks to Genco, who smiles, and Signor Roberto reduces the rent about 10 dollars. He is so freaked out he refuses Vito's invitation to a cup of coffee.

The last flashback to Vito's young age does not follow the novel. In the film, the Don brutally takes vengeance on the man of power who had killed his father and had also tried to kill him – Don Ciccio – while the novel tells the story in the United States and narrates the Corleone Family crime history.

Vito arrives in Sicily with his family – his wife, already curly Sonny, Fredo, Michael, and a toddler Connie – to the town of Corleone to visit Don Tommasino, who is already known from the first movie. At the family dinner, the audience can notice Sonny's tendency to violence when he maliciously hits one of his uncles to his arm. At first, it seems Vito wants to show his family the land he was born in, but there is a more personal reason.

He and Don Tommasino arrive at Don Ciccio's mansion. Tommasino comes to the very old and almost deaf man sitting on a chair in front of the house and asks him for his permission to deliver olive oil for Genco's company. Then, he

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<sup>31</sup> Puzo, Mario, "The Godfather", p. 277, 278

introduces Vito. He approached him and asked him for a blessing. Don Ciccio was amused when he realized Vito's surname the same as of the town and asked him what his father's name was. Vito tells him the name and cuts his belly open with a knife.

Two familiar things happen. After Vito tells him the name, he waits a second and gives the Don the time to realize the truth as he had done with Fanucci and as Michael with McCluskey. Right after the murder and escape, during which Don Tommasino is wounded by *lupara*, the audience views another religious ceremony, which almost always brings a murder in the adaptations.

*Everything sentimental or romantic in the movie occurs in flashback. ... Vito's world is brutal, but it has a romantic feel - an atmosphere accented by the scenes' warm visual tones - and we always know the difference between the good guys and the bad. ... to show that the young Vito Corleone is building this thing out of America, his son is presiding over its destruction. ... all the romance, charm, and family feeling we associate with the first Godfather exist in flashbacks only, and these scenes contrast sharply with the modern ones.<sup>32</sup>*

The film presents the new generation of the Corleones, Michael and Kay, as parenting a son and a daughter, but according to the novel, they are the parents of two sons.

*Her two boys were also, naturally, being brought up in that church, as was required.<sup>33</sup>*

The end of the novel also indicates that Kay had left Michael as Tom Hagen must convince her to return to him. The film portrays it more dramatically. After Michael returns from Cuba, Tom tells him Kay lost their unborn baby. Later, Kay tells Michael the brutal truth. She had an abortion because she did not want to give birth to another boy for his illicit business, Michael then beats her and throws her out of his life for good.

Michael's weakening of the family ties emphasizes that he is not like his father who was beloved by all his family members. Instead of Kay, it is now his brother Fredo who starts to feel unappreciated. He feels neglected and wants to earn some respect. Therefore, he makes a deal with a Jewish gangster Hyman Roth behind

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<sup>32</sup> Berliner, Todd: "The pleasure of disappointment: Sequels and The Godfather, Part II", p. 118

<sup>33</sup> Puzo, Mario, "The Godfather", p. 588

Michael's back, which leads to an assassination attempt on Michael. It is unsuccessful as it was in Vito's case in the novel, but unlike his father, Michael was not injured. He knows it was Roth's men who tried to kill him. Roth would like to kill Michael as revenge for the murder of his Jewish friend Moe Greene, who did not want to sell his share in Vegas hotels in the latter part of the novel. Michael also knows someone unknown close to him who helped them, which means Michael must leave his Nevada mansion and try to not only eliminate Roth but also find out the identity of the traitor.

Michael knows he needs Frankie's help to kill Roth and travels to New York. Frankie has problems with the Rosato Brothers, who are supported by Roth himself, but Michael needs him to settle the trouble with them because Roth must absolutely trust him. Frankie meets the brothers, but they have a different plan. They try to kill him in a similar way that Sollozzo murdered Luca Brasi in the novel – to choke him in a closed bar.

*...a man stepped out of the shadows behind him and threw a thin silken cord around his neck. The cord pulled tight, choking off Lucas breath.*<sup>34</sup>

Like in Michael's case, this attempt fails, which later causes new problems for Michael. When the man starts to choke Frankie, he says *Michael Corleone says hello*, which is only their strategy to make him think it was done on Michael's order. Frankie later makes a deal with FBI so the Senate in Washington investigates Michael's criminal past and present, which is Roth's way to destroy Michael.

Roth has his man in the senate, but so does Michael, who managed to 'convince' senator Geary to work for him in a similar way that his father persuaded Mr. Woltz to give Johnny Fontain his dreamt role. In this case, the victim is a girl, with whom Geary had a good time in one of Corleone's properties in Vegas. He wakes up and finds a bed full of blood and a dead corpse of the girl, which shows him that he wants to cooperate with Don Corleone.

There are three aspects which help Michael in the process. Besides Geary, it is his own past. The readers of the novel quickly learn why he, at first, did not want

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<sup>34</sup> Puzo, Mario, "The Godfather", p. 141

to be involved in the family business. When he was young, he served in the US Army, which now helps him.

*He enlisted and fought over the Pacific Ocean. He became a Captain and won medals.*<sup>35</sup>

He uses this fact in his speech in front of the U.S. Senate, which allows him to persuasively to ask the senators to clear the Corleone's name. There was also another aspect of why the Senate wanted to find Michael guilty. The American government hated Italian immigrants, which Howard Zinn cites in a history book regarding the United States President Teddy Roosevelt:

*Roosevelt was contemptuous of races and nations he considered inferior. When a mob in New Orleans lynched a number of Italian immigrants, Roosevelt thought the United States should offer the Italian government some remuneration, but privately he wrote his sister that he thought the lynching was "rather a good thing" and told her he had said as much at a dinner with "various dago diplomats... all wrought up by the lynching."*<sup>36</sup>

It was not typical for Italian immigrants connected to the mafia to serve in the US Army. They often chose their own destiny, as the novel shows several times. For the first time, it does so on Connie's wedding day, when the undertaker Amerigo Bonasera asks The Don for justice.

*"I raised my daughter in the American fashion. I believe in America. America has made my fortune ... I went to the police like a good American." ... "Why did you go to the police? Why didn't you come to me at the beginning of this affair?"*<sup>37</sup>

This important scene shows how the Godfather follows his own rules, independent of the national laws of the U.S. government. Michael started to fully appreciate his father's decision when he was in Sicily after he murdered the enemies in the restaurant:

*After five months of exile in Sicily, Michael Corleone came finally to understand his father's character and his destiny. He came to understand men like Luca Brasi, the ruthless caporegime Clemenza, his mother's resignation and acceptance of her role. For in Sicily he saw what they would have been if they had chosen not to struggle against*

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<sup>35</sup> Puzo, Mario, "The Godfather", p. 13

<sup>36</sup> Zinn, Howard, "A People's History of the United States", p. 239

<sup>37</sup> Puzo, Mario, "The Godfather", p. 29, 30

*their fate. He understood why the Don always said, "A man has only one destiny." He came to understand the contempt for authority and legal government, the hatred for any man who broke omerta, the law of silence.*<sup>38</sup>

I believe after this experience Michael would have never served in the army again. Luckily for him, he decided to join it when he was younger and before the war of five families, which actually helped him in the violent process.

The third aspect, which finally stops the investigation, is the arrival of Frankie's brother from Sicily. The arrival convinces Frankie to contradict and completely reverse his previous incriminating statements.

Meanwhile, Michael finally finds out who had betrayed him. He instructs *caporegime* Al Neri to protect Fredo as long as their mother lives yet he does not want to see him anymore. After Mama Corleone passes away, Connie convinces Michael to forgive his older brother. He hugs him, but he looked at Neri saying without words, Fredo is now a dead man.

The final of *Part II* is similar to the novel and the first part – it is a sequence of murders of Michael's enemies.

*Roth's feeble walk and the deadpan speech he gives to the press; the subtle rise and fall of the lake on which Fredo fishes, his body perfectly still; a bloodied Pentangeli motionless in a bathtub. The sequence, moreover, has little if the dramatic tension of the montage in the first movie. Except for Moe Green, each victim in The Godfather recognizes his imminent death and vainly fights against it, whereas the victims in the sequels never resist: Roth merely slumps into the arms of the police, and Neri shoots Fredo from behind. Pentangeli isn't murdered...*<sup>39</sup>

Fredo's murder replicates the killing of the character Lennie in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice And Men*. Both are rather mentally weak and retarded and do not sense the danger at all. Both are shot from behind. The comparison to the Steinbeck's novel has a deeper meaning. Both murders symbolize the definitive destruction of the main characters' dreams. After the Fredo's murder, Michael becomes lonely, which shows the last scene in the whole movie as he sits all by himself in the mansion's garden. He remembers the old times when he announced to his family that he joined

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<sup>38</sup> Puzo, Mario, "The Godfather", p. 431

<sup>39</sup> Berliner, Todd: "The pleasure of disappointment: Sequels and The Godfather, Part II", p. 115

the army right before his father's birthday party. However, he was left alone sitting at the table. Later, he gained the family back, but attempting to legalize the whole business, he lost his family again and forever. He starts to regret it, which foreshadows the main theme of *Part III*.



### 4.3 WITH THE GODFATHER III

Just as in the first two parts, the third one starts with a religious ceremony followed by a celebration, where the Godfather, in this case a much older Michael, receives his guests in his office. This celebration brings back some aspects Michael seemed to lack in the second part – familiar feelings and the respect of his enemies. The people sing traditional Italian songs, Johnny Fontaine returns and what is more, Sonny Corleone and Luci Mancini's son Vincent comes and brings his father's charm and ability to flirt with women.

Vincent's character brings back much more memories of Sonny than it seems at first. When Joey Zasa, a new Don in New York, comes to Michael's office and complains about Vincent, Michael brings him to the office. When Sonny's son sees Zasa, he immediately gets mad, bites Zasa's ear and Michael recalls his oldest sibling by saying *Same temper as his father*, which even more brings back the spirit from the first film and start of the novel.

As Michael decides to teach Vincent and prepare him to become a new Don, one of his lessons is the same his own father gave to Sonny.

*"Santino, never let anyone outside the family know what you are thinking."*<sup>40</sup>

The enemies later try to kill Vincent, but he manages to turn the advantage to his side, unlike his father, and he kills both Zasa's men. The scene shows the decline of the Italian mafia in comparison with Vito's era. These men were amateurs missing all the important properties for confident murderers as Luca Brasi or Clemenza had.

Not only the Italian mafia bosses had changed. The roles of women also had been modified. Kay convinces her son Anthony to go his own way and not to get involved in the dangerous family business. It is Connie, who gives Vincent the green light to kill Zasa after Michael is hospitalized because of his diabetes. The murder of Zasa itself reminds the audience of the scene from *Part II* when Vito decided to kill Funucci.

*The scene when Vincent Mancini kills Joey Zasa combines elements from both the murder of Don Barzini by Al Neri (dressed as a*

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<sup>40</sup> Puzo, Mario, "The Godfather", p. 91

*policeman) during the famous baptism sequence in Part I, and the shooting of Don Fanucci by Vito Corleone during the Italian festa in Part II.*<sup>41</sup>

The similarity with the religious celebration and the whole atmosphere of the scene is not accidental, but there are a few differences.

Zasa is not respected as Fanucci was, which is a result of what Michael perceptively calls *times are changing*. The scene starts with Zasa telling American reporters how great Italians are, while in the 1920s, only Italian immigrants, who live in the same neighborhood, join the celebration. It is for this reason that Fanucci earns much more respect than Zasa. He is well-known in the community, and what is more, Zasa had shown he is not the smartest man, which is also quoted by Michael after the helicopter attack.

Don Corleone knows Zasa could not have pulled off the attack by himself and that someone must have helped him. He later realizes it was Don Altobello, whom he had considered his companion since he is Connie's godfather. This fact is another example of the decline of mafia in the late 1970s. Since Altobello is Connie's godfather, it must be her who kills him. Michael figures out a very smart plan. It is a new strategy to get rid of an enemy, completely without guns. Connie gives him a set of poisonous desserts to eat during the opera in Sicily and it works.

*The tragedy of Michael is that he is doomed to a fate of being forever tied to his past associations, which sums up dramatically in his own words. But worst still, in the attempt to free himself from the past, he also destroys his loved ones.*<sup>42</sup>

At first, it was Apollonia, now, it is Michael's daughter Mary, who is killed instead of him. Both symbolically die in Sicily and Marry is shot dead on stairs as Don Barzini in the first adaptation was. Mary's death completes Michael's tragedy and destroys all the remains of his dream to become legal and to make protection of his beloved ones.

Michael later dies, like his father a long time ago, in front of his house, but unlike Vito, he is alone, captured in his own memories of the past.

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<sup>41</sup> Poon, Phoebe, "The Tragedy of Michael Corleone in The Godfather: Part III", p. 64

<sup>42</sup> Poon, Phoebe, "The Tragedy of Michael Corleone in The Godfather: Part III", p. 68

## 5 CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I analyzed the differences and similarities between the novel and its three film adaptations. My original aim was to compare them in a detail, including the differences in the plot and characterization, as well as what parts were added in the film that were not evident in the novel and which parts of the novel were cut. I quickly started to understand it would take many pages to explain and point out every difference.

In this comparison, I also focused on the different ways characters were reaching their goals and I attempted to offer my own ideas regarding the reasons why the director Francis Ford Coppola decided to change or even omit some scenes. I also tried to explain the cultural and religious aspects, which significantly influenced the plot and added what might be called “local color” to both the musical aspects in the film and the descriptions in the original novel.

The thesis is divided into three chapters. The first two, relatively short, are reviews of the adaptations and the novel. The third one is the analysis itself separated into three subchapters, one for each adaptation.

The first subchapter is the longest one because it follows the plot in the novel. Therefore, there is much more to compare than in the other two parts. After explaining how the Godfather’s world works, I focused on Michael Corleone, the Don’s youngest son, and how this character was developing from a young man who did not want to be involved in the family business to eventually becoming the head of the most powerful criminal organization in New York. What the novel expressed in words, the movie did through brilliant slow speaking and moving camera.

I also covered Coppola’s work with producing great tension and how he masterly graduated it from the attempt of Vito’s assassination to the important enemies meeting, where Michael *made his bones*. At the end of each subchapter, I linked the adaptation with its sequel to keep the whole analysis transparent.

The second subchapter compares Vito’s rise to power in the 1920s, which is part of the novel, to Michael’s slow decline in his business and family ties. I pointed out the similar manner that Vito and Michael murdered their arch enemies. Michael also faces an investigation and I studied how he managed to clear his name with his

father's old strategy from the novel, which was also analyzed in the previous subchapter and using the fact he served in the army during WWII.

The third subchapter deals with return of the familiar feeling, which *Part II* lacked. Michael earned back his lost respect as well as his family. However, he is still not able to avoid his past and to escape the complete destruction of his dream, which is manifested by his daughter's death.

Through all the subchapters, I also deal with the development of women's role, which contrasts with Michael's development. At first, women are often oppressed and play insignificant roles. As time passes through, they start to oppose men and in *Part III*, they order murders and actually kill, which would have been something unacceptable in the beginning. I pointed out the importance of religion because almost every significant murder happens during an important religious celebration.

This thesis should serve as an inspiration for further research on this topic. It can help with a more poignant approach and also a nuanced point of view. Reading the novel and watching the adaptations at least twice is necessary before engaging in an analysis because there are too many details to catch them all on the first reading and watching.

If I should have said what is better, the novel or the film adaptations, I would choose the novel, because it provides more details and what is more, I personally like reading more than watching films.

## 6 RESUMÉ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Tato práce srovnává knihu *Kmotr* autora Maria Puza s jejími třemi filmovými adaptacemi a analyzuje drobné rozdíly mezi nimi s cílem odhalit detailní odchylky a důvody jejich vzniku. Kromě tohoto rozboru obsahuje okomentování částí několika vybraných odborných prací zabývajících se touto problematikou a přímo je porovnává s poznatky a postřehy autora této práce.

Jelikož jsou zmiňovaná literární a filmová díla velmi obsáhlá a detailní, analýza všech aspektů by vydala na několikanásobně obsáhlejší text. Z toho důvodu práce obsahuje, z autorova hlediska, pouze nejvýznamnější momenty, které měly přímý vliv na děj a nejdůležitější postavy příběhu.

Analýza je zaměřena především na práci režiséra Francise Forda Coppoly a jeho zkracování, přidávání či úplné opomenutí určitých scén z knižní předlohy a snaží se je odůvodnit.

Celá práce je rozdělena do tří hlavních kapitol. První dvě jsou relativně krátké a shrnují děj v knize a filmových adaptacích. Třetí obsahuje analýzu samotnou a je rozdělena na tři podkapitoly odpovídající chronologicky všem adaptacím, přičemž se na konci každé z nich snaží najít logické propojení s následující částí za účelem zachování kontinuity a komfortu při jejím čtení.

Analýza první adaptace je nejdelší, jelikož se drží hlavní dějové linky své knižní předlohy, tudíž nabízí nejvíce možností k porovnání. Kromě změn ve scénách se tato část práce zabývá též prací kamery s napjatou atmosférou nejdůležitější části příběhu. Druhá podkapitola se zabývá druhou adaptací, která obsahuje dvě dějové linky – podle knižní předlohy vypráví vzestup Vita Corleona k moci a ve druhé navazuje na děj románu a sleduje kroky Michaela Corleona, Vitoova syna, ve snaze legalizovat své obchody a podnikání. Třetí adaptace je již čistě smyšleným pokračováním druhého dílu. Přesto v ní lze najít určité podobnosti, jelikož se zde do středu zájmu dostává nová postava Vincent Mancini, syn Santina Corleona, který s sebou přináší všechny typické rysy svého otce, výrazné postavy první části románu.

Důležitou roli v celém příběhu hrají ženy, jejichž postavení vůči mužům se během něj mění z bezvýznamné na velmi důležitou. Dalším neopomenutelným

aspektem se stává náboženství. Většina vražd důležitých postav je vyobrazena na pozadí náboženského obřadu jako by očišťoval ruce vraha od krve nepřítele.

Ani v *Kmotrovi* nechybí základní motiv americké literatury, americký sen. Tento sen podobně jako v knize Johna Steinbacka *O myších a lidech* končí tragicky, k čemuž přihlédl i sám režisér. Především ve druhé a třetí adaptaci pracuje s tímto motivem velice často a lze tvrdit, že hlavní dějová linka v těchto filmech na ztroskotání amerického snu dokonce stojí.

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