

The Legacy of F. Marion Crawford: *Corleone and The Godfather*

(F・マリオン・クロフォードの遺産：
『コルレオーネ』と『ゴッドファーザー』)

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SUMMARY IN JAPANESE:19世紀末に、イタリアを舞台にした「国際」小説で莫大な人気を博したアメリカ作家、F. マリオン・クロフォードは、ローマ貴族の三代記 *Saracinesca* シリーズが代表作である。このシリーズには *Corleone: A Tale of Sicily* (1897) という続編がある。『コルレオーネ』は、舞台をシチリア島に移し、サラシネスカ家の青年公子が地元マフィアとの抗争に巻き込まれる物語だ。コルレオーネというネーミングやマフィアの題材から想起されるのは、コッポラ監督の映画で有名なマリオ・プーゾ原作の *The Godfather* (1969) である。実際『コルレオーネ』と『ゴッドファーザー』を読み比べると、興味深い共通点が浮上する。それは、物語構造、人物造型、シチリアという場、義賊としてのマフィアの表象である。二作品の相互テキスト性は、いかにクロフォードの忘れられた小説がマフィアを扱う現代ベストセラーのひな形になっていたかを示す。イタリア統一運動以後、得意の貴族ロマンスが時代遅れとなり、創作の新機軸を模索していたクロフォードは、読者が好むイタリアの「異国情緒」の負の側面に着目し、「マフィア」という鉱脈を発掘したと言えよう。その鉱脈は、やはり作家として経済的成功を狙うプーゾに引き継がれ、特にエスニシティの問題を含む現代アメリカ社会や大衆文化を考える上で重要なテキストを創出することにつながる。作品に見られる政治意識の有無

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が、結果的に二作の明暗を分けたと言えるが、「お上品な伝統」を破り、暴力や犯罪を全面に押し出し、従来の悪役を主演に据えた新手の物語を考案したクロフォードは、先見性をもってジャンルフィクションの基礎を築いたと言える。アメリカ大衆文化を考える上で、クロフォード作品の意義がもっと再考されてもよいのではないだろうか。現代によみがえったサラシネスカ・サーガが、『ゴッドファーザー』三部作といっても過言ではないだろう。

It is wonderful what a natural charm there is about murder and sudden death in a romantic country like this. Deeds that would be simply brutal and disgusting anywhere else become dramatic and mysterious because this is Italy. . . . (“For the Blood is the Life”)¹

Introduction

The American author F. Marion Crawford attained popularity on both sides of the Atlantic with his “international” fiction, particularly the works that are set in Italy in the late nineteenth century. After the unification of Italy, however, his high romance of Italian nobles became anachronistic, so that Crawford had to seek a new direction for his writing. One of the attempts he made with this objective in mind was *Corleone: A Tale of Sicily* (1897). In fact, the novel is a sequel to his famous *Saracinesca* trilogy, a saga about a noble Roman family. By shifting the setting to Sicily, *Corleone* shows how the young prince of the Saracinescas becomes involved in a conflict with the local “Mafia,” which is connected to the title character, Prince Corleone of Sicily. The naming of “Corleone” reminds one of the Francis Ford Coppola movie *The Godfather*, which was based on Mario Puzo’s bestseller of the same name (1969).

Puzo’s desire to seek commercial success rather than pursue aesthetic ideals enabled him to write *The Godfather*.² Following advice from an editor, Puzo developed an episode involving the Mafia in *The Fortunate Pilgrim* (1964), a novel about the life of early Italian immigrants in Hell’s Kitchen. The author admits that he never met a real gangster and he “wrote *The Godfather* entirely from research,”³ which does not clarify if Puzo had read Crawford’s *Corleone*. When one reads both works, however, many interesting commonalities stand out.

Although a Crawfordian critic, John C. Moran, refers to Puzo's possible borrowing from Crawford,⁴ he does not produce a textual analysis. Other critical works also do not include a comparative study of these novels.⁵ This essay, then, will examine the intertextuality between the two works and explore how Crawford's forgotten novel inspired the twentieth-century bestseller.

Although *Corleone* is a part of the *Saracinesca* series, it deviates considerably from Crawford's typical genteel high romance. This is because Crawford dares to explore the issues of "sex" and "violence"—a definite digression from his own conventions—in *Corleone*. An anonymous reviewer has criticized *The Godfather* as follows: "There is brutality in abundance. . . . Sex is abundant; it is not love, just animality, except in a few instances."⁶ In addition to these aspects, what these works have in common is the fact that they both deal with the Mafia. As John G. Cawelti suggests, because crime fiction attracts readers,⁷ the Mafia served as suitable material for these authors—both of whom were seriously seeking a commercial breakthrough.

It should also be noted that the existence of the Mafia is closely related to the image of Italy. For a long time, Italy has attracted many types of artists from all over the world. American artists/painters, sculptors, musicians, writers, and critics were no exception.⁸ Almost every aspect of the place, especially the unique atmosphere created by its history, art, nature, people, etc., fascinates visitors, who envision their own Italy in their minds. In other words, they helped to create diverse stereotypical images of an Italy that is full of beauty, art, and mystery. As the epigraph of this essay suggests, even the dark side of Italy is romanticized: one example is the Mafia, which remained shrouded in mystery for a long time because of *omerta*.⁹ The general enigmatic charm of Italy seems to explain why such a dreadful aspect of the country became the germ of popular fictions with the possibility of cinematic adaptations. Taking such an aspect into consideration, I would like to study how Crawford's novel serves as an archetype of an important Mafia story and begins the tradition.¹⁰ In the next section, I will give some background to the authors. In Section Two, I will analyze the intertextuality between the two works. Section Three will then involve a further analysis of the American/Italian characteristics of both the novels.

1. Background

It would be appropriate to provide a brief explanation of the background of these popular authors at this point. The profiles of the two authors strongly contrast with each other, owing not only to the different times they lived in but also their social backgrounds.

After serving in WWII and a government office, Mario Puzo (1920-1999) struggled to become “somebody” through his writing and to leave behind his working-class Italian immigrant background. Making one’s fortune through hard work seems to be the typical formula for realizing the American dream. Nevertheless, the thing that should be noted here is that the timing of Puzo’s success coincided with the social turmoil of the 1970s. Following the civil rights and feminist movements, various socio-cultural changes took place, including the anti-ageism movement, youth culture symbolized by hippies, and the so-called New Age movement with its focus on ecology, spiritualism, and health. The surge of multiculturalism is one of these major changes; multiculturalism deals with the how different cultural identities that are often based on “ethnicity, race, gender or religion” can be recognized as equals in a pluralistic society.¹¹ Caught in this historical current, ethnic minorities began to turn to their heritage and take pride in it. Italian and Jewish Americans were the first to raise their voices as ethnic whites. This historical context is closely related to the widespread popularity of *The Godfather*.¹²

Unlike Puzo, F. Marion Crawford (1854-1909) occupied a more privileged social position right from the beginning. The father of the novelist, Thomas Crawford, was an eminent sculptor in Rome, best known for his statue “Armed Liberty” which stands atop the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. Further, Crawford’s mother, Louisa, was from the distinguished Wards of New England. (Julia Ward Howe, famous for having written “The Battle Hymn of the Republic,” was the author’s aunt.) Crawford, who was born in Italy and spent his childhood there, was distanced from his “home” country despite his American citizenship. He decided to spend most of his life in Sorrento, Italy. During his career as a novelist, Crawford seemed more concerned with the loss of the Arcadian, artistic atmosphere in Italy after the Risorgimento. In *Don Orsino* (1892), the work that preceded *Corleone*, the author has his characters—even the villain—deplore the ugly cityscape of a rapidly changing Rome, which was witnessing a construction boom. In those days, America certainly underwent enormous changes,

such as rapid industrialization, the imperial expansionist policy, and the end of the Frontier. Nevertheless, Crawford set most of his novels in international locales, paying little attention to the “domestic” issues in America. Although the author attempted a trilogy about the high society of New York City¹³ (in the vein of Edith Wharton’s work), the series neither won much critical acclaim, nor was it continued until the third volume. Later, Crawford’s interest was again diverted beyond America, including forays into the supernatural world.

Thus, it is evident that the lives of the two authors moved in opposite directions. While Puzo struggled to gain acceptance in American society, Crawford opted to remain an expatriate and to even be buried in Sorrento. However, what these authors have in common is the fact that they achieved literary success through their own ingenuity and diligence. What, then, are the common features of their works? This will be the central question in the discussion that follows.

2. An Overview: Two Family Sagas

The similarities between *Corleone* and *The Godfather* are conspicuous; they appear in the entire narrative structure, characterization, the use of a Sicilian setting, and the representation of the Mafia as Robin Hood characters. This section will compare/contrast the two works in terms of structure and characterization. Before beginning the discussion, however, it is appropriate to provide a brief summary of *Corleone*. On the other hand, *The Godfather* needs little introduction.

Corleone is a Bildungsroman about a young prince named Orsino Saracinesca, who grows up in Rome at the end of the nineteenth century. The story depicts his adventures in Sicily and his forbidden love for a girl belonging to a villainous family, the Pagliuca d’Oranis. As a subplot, Crawford simultaneously describes the fall of the Pagliuca clan. Despite his nobility, Prince Corleone is notorious for his misdeeds such as fraud and his wicked, dishonest nephews are members of the Pagliucas. Orsino falls in love with Vittoria, the youngest of the Pagliucas. One can easily foresee how troubles and conflicts would arise from this relationship and the search for a solution to the above problems drives the narrative.

1) The Narrative Structure

Although the plots of the two family sagas differ, their narrative structures,

if observed from the standpoint of the incidents in each story, appear to be similar. Both works are roughly divided into four parts, with shifts in settings from each stronghold (i.e., Rome and New York) to Sicily, followed by a return to the original setting.

After the introduction, the second parts of *Corleone* and *The Godfather* show the heroes' initiation into the world of crime: using a gun to commit homicide. This incident changes the hero's position from that of an outsider to one who is associated with the Mafia. The third part depicts the tragedy in Sicily. In *Corleone*, the eldest son of the Pagliucas, Tebaldo, murders his second brother and falsely accuses the sole witness, who happens to be Orsino's younger brother, Ippolito (a priest), of the murder. On the other hand, *The Godfather* portrays the bombing of Michael Corleone's car, wherein his newly-wed wife is accidentally killed instead of him. Almost simultaneously, Puzo reports the news from America that the rival Mafia has killed Michael's elder brother; in fact, it is Michael's brother-in-law (Carlo Rizzi) who arranges this murder. As is evident, despite some changes, the common themes of family victimization and fratricide emerge from the two novels. Finally, in the last part, both authors deal with the cleanup of the Mafia. While the military destroys the Mafia in *Corleone*, Michael orders the assassination of betrayers and the heads of rival families in *The Godfather*. Both stories restore narrative order by extinguishing the "evil" Mafia. The above similarity suggests that Crawford created the structure of Mafia stories, which Puzo then seems to have imitated.

2) The Characters

A comparison of the characters in *Corleone* and *The Godfather* reveals more striking similarities between the two works. The Pagliucas and Corleones each have four children.¹⁴ All the children seem to have roles that are assigned to them according to the order of their birth. Both the authors have depicted the eldest son as violent and the second son as gentle but weak. On the other hand, despite having ideal human traits, the youngest son ends up joining a type of "chivalrous" Mafia. Furthermore, the youngest child, the only daughter, does not serve as a mere family pet; instead, she triggers the calamity that occurs in each family owing to her involvement with a stranger (i.e., Orsino and Carlo). Such parallelism demonstrates the intertextuality between the family sagas rather than the stereotypical roles of children in a family.

Here, the noteworthy point is that the family analyzed in Crawford's work

is the Pagliucas and not the Saracinescas. In other words, Crawford highlights the main family in his subplot. As the above families are of Sicilian descent, this comparison seems valid. Interestingly, although *Corleone* is the sequel to the *Saracinesca* trilogy, the subplot accounts for a major part of the story, as the title indicates. In fact, the latter half of *Corleone* focuses on the fate of the villain Tebaldo: his repeated crimes/sins, attempts to escape, and final destruction through illness. Accordingly, in Crawford's work, the original hero, Orsino, recedes into the background at this point.

Corleone has a happy ending that reveals the true identity of Vittoria, who turns out to be the kidnapped, long-lost princess of a noble family. She marries Orsino, the young Prince Saracinesca. This ending certainly modifies the former narrative shift wherein the subplot assumed importance over the main plot. The significance of the subplot, however, indicates that Crawford was experimenting with a new type of family saga, perhaps similar to the robber baron genre of stories. The Corleone children in *The Godfather* are reminiscent of the Pagliuca children; these members convince Puzo's readers that Michael Corleone is destined to be the "don" regardless of his intentions. What matters here, though, is that Crawford projects the conventional villains as the central characters, thereby making them the forerunners of the Corleones in *The Godfather*.

3) The Rise of the Antihero

It is not an exaggeration to consider *Corleone* as a novel that has two protagonists: Orsino and Tebaldo. While Tebaldo appears to be a thorough villain, he is nevertheless blue-blooded and entitled to be a prince. In this sense, he is a suitable adversary for Orsino. Being passionate and relentless, the ambitious Tebaldo overshadows the melancholy Orsino, who is said to "have not much more than the individuality of [his] class, and very little of [his] own."¹⁵ In *Corleone*, Tebaldo is more of an antihero than a mere villain. Crawford describes Tebaldo as follows: "above all tenacious, and he [is] endowed with much boldness and daring, of the kind which cast a romantic glamour over crimes of violence" (Crawford, *Corleone* vol. 1, 264-65). In fact, the fall of Michael Corleone closely resembles that of this antihero.

As in the case of a typical melodrama,¹⁶ Crawford clearly draws a line between the hero and the villain in *Corleone*. Even though Orsino murders a member of the Mafia, his actions are considered as righteous self-defense. In contrast, Tebaldo becomes more vile and corrupt as the plot develops—he com-

mits sins ranging from small-scale offenses such as deceiving two girlfriends to literal blasphemy (i.e., murder in church and abusing the confession system in order to trap Ippolito). Furthermore, Crawford portrays Tebaldo as a complete reprobate when he betrays the Mafia, who help him to destroy evidence of the murder he committed, by breaking the code of *omerta*. Here, the author attempts a surprisingly bold innovation by portraying human evil through the succession of misdeeds that Tebaldo commits. This technique surely paved the way for crime fiction.¹⁷

Puzo was an author who followed a similar path. The character of Michael Corleone repeats Tebaldo's above-mentioned infernal deeds. In *The Godfather*, Michael begins his career as a don by killing a cop and a rival "capo." He also betrays two women: his first wife in Sicily, Apolonia, and the woman who was initially betrothed to him and became his second wife, Kay Adams. Neither Apolonia nor Kay knows about the other's existence before marriage.¹⁸ Toward the climax of the story, Puzo underscores Michael's audaciousness by having him abuse the Catholic ritual of baptism. This is a symbolic scene where Michael becomes a literal/figurative godfather: he attends the ceremony while his men carry out his order of assassination. *The Godfather* closes with Michael lying to Kay again—denying the suspicion of having murdered Carlo, the father of his godson—thereby suggesting his dishonesty toward his wife as well as his disloyalty to the code of *omerta*. The correspondence between the nature of crime/sin committed by the heroes in the two novels is noteworthy: we can observe the twentieth-century version of Tebaldo in the person of Michael.

As Catholicism is important in both works, the unabashed profanity of Tebaldo and Michael stands out. What distinguishes the fate of the antiheroes, however, is whether they respect the Sicilian "code of honor." Tebaldo's lack of respect for *omerta* is so unpardonable that even the former girlfriend deserts the man as a "shame" to Sicilians. On the other hand, a different outcome awaits Michael when his crimes/sins are considered to be acts committed to protect the family and restore its honor. At the persuasion of the consigliere, Kay, who realizes her husband's lie and leaves home at one point, begins to understand the role of Don Michael. As a result, she converts to Catholicism and prays for her husband.

At this point, we can observe how the heroine of Northern European descent decides to become the cultural/social "other." Kay Adams obtains a new self by exchanging her original Protestant identity for a Catholic one—a sign of

religious otherness. In the name of “love,” the heroine elects to be a part of Sicilian culture—more precisely, the world of the Mafia; she becomes an accomplice of her “family.” In the homosocial world of the Mafia, the manner in which the heroine eventually attempts to save the don illustrates Catholic devotion to the Virgin Mary, as Thomas Ferraro suggests:¹⁹

[Kay] emptied her mind of all thought of herself, of her children, of all anger, of all rebellion, of all questions. Then with a profound and deeply willed desire to believe, to be heard, as she had done every day since the murder of Carlo Rizzi, she said the necessary prayers for the soul of Michael Corleone.²⁰

At the same time, Kay’s gesture demonstrates the thrust of a narrative, which even changes the subjectivity of the WASP heroine. Such a narrative allows the “reverse dynamism” that makes the evil good, and the culturally subordinate, the mainstream. In other words, Crawford’s experiment with the narrative shift emphasizing the secondary characters in *Corleone* is developed into a narrative with such reverse dynamism by Puzo. As seen, the story of the antihero emerges wholly in *The Godfather*.

3. America/Italy

The following section will focus on the use of a unique setting, Sicily, and the representation of the Mafia. It is the locale and the criminal organization that seem to characterize the “Italian-ness” of these works of American fiction. Do these Italian characteristics have any additional significance besides merely contributing to the atmosphere? If so, what is the significance? This will be the key point of my argument. In discussing the Mafia, I will pay attention to the narrative technique, which seems to be crucial in representing criminals.

1) Sicily: The Lost Eden

Both *Corleone* and *The Godfather* emphasize the fact that Sicily, particularly the Corleone area, is picturesque. Let us read some of the descriptions in the novels:

It is a small, well-kept station near the sea, surrounded by gardens of oranges and lemons, and orchards of fruit trees, and gay with vines and flowers, penetrated by the intense southern light. The sky was perfectly cloudless, the sea of a gem-like blue, the peach blossoms were out by thousands The trees had an air of belonging to pleasure gardens rather than to business-like orchards, and the whole colouring was almost artistically magnificent. It was late spring in the far south, and Orsino had never seen it. (Crawford, *Corleone* vol. 1, 156)

The land was filled with pink flowers, orange orchards, groves of almond and olive trees, all blooming. That had been one of the surprises. Michael had expected a barren land because of the legendary poverty of Sicilians. And yet he had found it a land of gushing plenty, carpeted with flowers scented by lemon blossoms. (Puzo, *The Godfather*, 316)

The above quotations evoke the verdant scenery that is full of flowers and fragrant fruits. Such a portrayal is reminiscent of Genesis and Puzo even uses the expression “Garden of Eden” (316).

This pastoral impression of Michael’s stay in Sicily is heightened when the hero finds the perfect romantic love. Upon encountering the beautiful Apolonia, Michael is jolted by love—an experience referred to as “the thunderbolt” (317). He starts wooing her after obtaining permission from her parents. The two then get married and the bride soon becomes pregnant. This episode appears to be markedly different from the bloody events in *The Godfather*. Michael’s old-fashioned courtship here serves as a vivid contrast to his uninhibited affair with Kay in New York.

In both the novels, however, the protagonists’ illusion about Sicily is shattered instantly. Intoxicated with the idyllic atmosphere, Orsino is awakened to the reality of Sicily when his band is raided by the local Mafia. Similarly, Michael’s peaceful honeymoon is brought to an abrupt end by his bodyguard/betrayer. The Edenic image is followed by the immediate denial of such a conception: Sicily is no land of grace.

The interpretation of the locale, nevertheless, differs in Crawford and Puzo. In the case of Crawford, Sicily appears to be a “romantic” Arcadia in contrast to Rome, the big city, and America, the civilized nation. At the same time, it remains feudal despite the modernization of Italy. Crawford describes Sicilians as “super-

stitious” and “vengeful,” providing an impression of them as premodern people.

The episode involving a rich American girl who is chaperoned by her aunt in *Corleone* highlights this impression. The American girl adores Tebaldo, who is allegedly connected to the Mafia, for being “romantic” and she even gets engaged to him. However, after hearing about the serial murders in Sicily, the Americans reject the Pagliucas. According to the aunt, murders only happen in the West; the two then hurry back from the unbelievably savage land to their “civilized modern life” in America (Crawford, *Corleone* vol. 2, 204). In this case, one can argue that Crawford satirizes his “innocent” compatriots who blindly idealize Italy. The comparison of Sicily to the American West, however, suggests Crawford’s opinion of the locale as a type of frontier, a place on the periphery of civilization. The author seems to consider Sicily to be inferior to Rome/America. This is evident from the ending, which has Vittoria return to Rome with Orsino after having completely severed her ties to the Pagliucas. For Crawford, Sicily remains a mere backdrop for adding a “romantic” Italian tint to his work. He does not seriously explore real history or social injustice in Italy in *Corleone*.

Unlike Crawford, Puzo avoids the simplistic binary opposition of Sicily/America as savage/civilized. He provides a somewhat more detailed historical account of Sicily and the Mafia, as is evident from the following passage:

Sicily was a land that had been more cruelly raped than any other in history. The Inquisition had tortured rich and poor alike. The landowning barons and the princes of the Catholic Church exercised absolute power over the shepherds and farmers. . . . They learned that society was their enemy and so when they sought redress for their wrongs they went to the rebel underground, the Mafia. (Puzo, *The Godfather*, 311)

Although Puzo does not explicitly demonstrate any ambivalence toward his ethnic background, in *The Godfather*, this second-generation Italian American writer seems to respect his own roots. Although his parents were originally from Naples,²¹ Puzo shows a far greater understanding of and sympathy toward the land and his compatriots than Crawford.

As a second-generation Italian American, however, Michael first finds Sicily to be a cultural other in which he hopes to enjoy domestic bliss for a brief period. However, the cruel murder of his wife along with their unborn child delivers him a severe jolt and awakens him to his ethnicity: Sicily can no longer be the other for

Michael. More importantly, he becomes conscious that his roots lie in the land his father had to flee, and he realizes that he cannot escape his ties to it; the locale allows Michael to attain a deeper understanding of his father and his family business. It is only natural for the hero to regenerate himself as a don in Sicily.

Before this experience, Michael intended to independently create a life for himself like the American Adam, by separating himself from his own family and its “family” business. For this purpose, he not only goes to Dartmouth but also renders distinguished services to the U.S. Navy during WWII. Nevertheless, it is his visit to Sicily that forces him to confront the past and his ethnic roots, to which he remained unconnected until then. Accordingly, Michael has to reconcile the present and America to something that he has shut himself away from.

In fact, Sicily has always been a socio-cultural/political other in Italy. As Puzo states in the above quotation, because of its strategic location in the Mediterranean, the land had been conquered repeatedly since ancient times. In order to reclaim autonomy, the Sicilians had to wait until 1860 for the advent of Garibaldi.²² Exposed to the socio-cultural/political periphery of Italy, Michael becomes doubly aware of his position as one who is deprived—as an American as well as a Sicilian. There, the hero probably realizes that the root of his personal suffering derives from a much broader historical context, which gave rise to the Mafia. After becoming aware that the past is inescapable, Michael succeeds in mentally decolonizing himself and begins internalizing Sicilian attributes such as respect for honor, *omerta*, the family, and machismo; the most Americanized member of the Corleones turns out to be the most Sicilian in spirit. Puzo thus has his protagonist search for his own identity through the bitter journey of his discovery of his roots. Sicily is the place where the needle of Michael’s compass reverses itself owing to its peculiar magnetism.

2) The Representation of the Mafia

It is the Mafia who demystify Sicily in *Corleone* and *The Godfather*. However, as mentioned earlier, this atrocious criminal organization is the product of the history of exploitation that took place in Sicily. The term “Mafia” first appeared in 1875, according to the OED, and is defined as “the spirit of hostility to the law and its ministers prevailing among a large portion of the population, and manifesting itself frequently in vindictive crimes” in Sicily. The definition continues as follows: “the body of those who share in this anti-legal spirit. In the U.S. and elsewhere, an organized secret society existing for criminal purposes.”²³

The conceptions of the Mafia by the two authors fit the definition, despite the differences in time and setting. While Crawford stresses the anti-authoritarianism of his late nineteenth-century Sicilian Mafia, Puzo emphasizes the organization of the post-WWII American Mafia:

The mafia is not a band, nor anything of that sort. It is the resistance which the whole Sicilian people opposes to all kinds of government and authority. It is . . . [a] sentiment, a feeling, a sort of wild love of our country, that is a secret, and will do anything. (Crawford, *Corleone* vol. 1, 127)

That the word ‘Mafia’ had originally meant place of refuge. Then it became the name for the secret organization that sprang up to fight against the rulers who had crushed the country and its people for centuries. (Puzo, *The Godfather*, 311)

It seems that both Crawford and Puzo attempt a realistic portrayal of the Mafia. Some details observed in the novels coincide with accounts in nonfiction and historical works on the Mafia. These details include the Mafia’s organization, their (il)legitimate business, rivalry among families, types of weapons, and the absoluteness of *omerta*.²⁴ The obvious difference between the two authors is the absence of explicit descriptions of murders by the Mafia in Crawford’s work. It was probably the pressure of the genteel tradition and his own beliefs that compelled Crawford to refrain from making the novels too realistic.²⁵

At the same time, the two authors romantically represent the Mafia as Robin Hood characters. Crawford describes Ferdinando, a Mafia leader who is killed by Orsino, as an honorable hero. Not only the Mafia but also the village people in Sicily deeply mourn his death. Crawford has a priest utter the following dialogue: “[T]hese, my parishioners, desire the body of Don Ferdinando Corleone, in order to bury it in holy ground, for he was beloved of many” (Crawford, *Corleone* vol. 1, 209). The true villain of the story is Tebaldo, not the Mafia. Although the destruction of the Mafia at the end of *Corleone* suggests Crawford’s stance, the author also has one member of the Mafia survive the cleanup operation so that he can accuse Tebaldo; we should not overlook the fact that Crawford lends a sense of balance to his portrayal of the Mafia by depicting it as a criminal organization that is “chivalrous”—one that serves the public and has its own code of honor.

The Godfather contains a similar dimension. Puzo depicts Vito Corleone,

the first don, as a man who is humane and faithful to his family and “friends.” Vito is a capable and respectable leader with an impressive personality. While Crawford only portrays one Mafia group, Puzo describes rival families in New York. Through the confrontation between these families, the author implies that the Mafia consist of the older good establishment and the new bad one. The members of the latter group are so greedy that they do not hesitate to make surprise attacks and enter into drug trade. Unlike such nefarious “realistic” new families, the Corleones hold tradition in high esteem and reject prostitution and drug trade. The underlying message here is that Don Corleone is exceptional and acceptable, even though he is a mafioso. If one considers the contemporary socio-political context with the threat of nuclear war and the rise of Communism, Vito’s old-fashioned manners and policy, although his “business” may be illegitimate, appear to be rather romantic.

Here again, as observed in the section on the antihero, Puzo takes advantage of multiple viewpoints to create reverse narrative dynamism, which enables him to romanticize the Mafia. While Crawford narrates his story from the omniscient point of view and does not directly criticize the Mafia, their destruction at the end illustrates his judgment. On the other hand, Puzo seems to tacitly but ironically suggest the chivalric side of the Mafia by introducing multiple viewpoints of social others, namely, those of marginal, voiceless characters. Their viewpoints reveal that America is far from an ideal land of freedom and equal opportunities. Rather, it is a world where the so-called law of the jungle prevails. Corrupt politicians, unethical judges, and evil cops dominate such an unfair world. The exploited voices of obscure characters endorse Don Corleone as their righteous savior. One episode that strongly supports this premise is that involving the undertaker Amerigo Bonasera. Upon Bonasera’s request, Vito relieves him of the mortification he suffers owing to the unjust assault on his daughter and the ineffectual U.S. legal system. The novel gives the impression that Puzo overuses the technique of multiple viewpoints; however, one soon realizes that the larger the multiplicity of voices, the more substantial are the proofs of Vito’s greatness.

In this case, one can observe that the Sicilian spirit and way of life, which are usually assimilative in nature, prove to be more effective. On the other hand, American standards—something that immigrants are encouraged to adopt—seem to be more dubious and harmful. In this sense, the Mafia headed by Don Vito is a type of resistance force in the imperialistic milieu of America. The marginal culture criticizes the flaws of the mainstream and uses reverse dynamism to try

and subvert it.²⁶

This subversion is completed when the heroine is wholly absorbed into the Mafia culture in *The Godfather*. Kay Adams belongs to the social mainstream that Michael desires to be part of. In addition to her family name, which suggests its relatively longer history in America,²⁷ this woman from New Hampshire²⁸ displays other signs of a privileged existence: a scholar/priest father, a college degree, and the profession of a schoolteacher. In terms of ethnic background, class, and higher education, regardless of her gender, Kay occupies an enviable position from Michael's viewpoint. At the beginning of the novel, readers gradually understand the Corleones from Kay's viewpoint. Although she should have an outsider's vision in order to observe the Mafia critically, she ends up adjusting to Sicilian culture and obtaining an insiders' viewpoint. Hence, her critique of the Mafia is repressed at the narrative level.

In this manner, by assimilating everything into the subordinate world, the romanticization of the Mafia succeeds in *The Godfather*, where black and white are reversed. Nonetheless, when Michael declares his intention to ensure that his family becomes "legitimate," the meaning of the Mafia becomes ambiguous. Further, he tells Kay of his desire to ensure that their children achieve the American Dream:

I want kids; it's time. And I don't want those kids to be influenced by me the way I was influenced by my father. . . . I want them to be influenced by *you* [Kay]. I want them to grow up to be All-American kids, real All-American, the whole works. . . . Maybe one of them will be President of the United States. . . . But I'll settle for my kids being doctors or musicians or teachers. They'll never be in the Family business. (Puzo, *The Godfather*, 348, italics mine)

Like Kay, readers of the novel probably begin to sympathize and side with Michael on reading the above lines. As seen, the real evils of the Mafia are seemingly nullified and its romanticization is reinforced. In this manner, over time, the minor Robin Hood-type mafioso in *Corleone* develops into the real hero of a Mafia epic.

Conclusion

As observed, the extent of intertextuality between *Corleone* and *The Godfather* suggests how Crawford's forgotten novel served as an archetype of *The Godfather*. The seeds of both novels lie in one of the exotic associations with Italy: the Mafia. When his reputed high romance of Italian nobles became unfashionable, Crawford found a new breakthrough in the dark side of his favorite subject, Italy. By taking advantage of his compatriots' tendency to romanticize Italy, including its negative aspects, Crawford seems to satisfy the capricious, Italophile readers. In other words, Crawford transformed orthodox Italian high romance into a new type of romance with the Mafia. Thus, he began a new tradition that was carried on by Mario Puzo's *The Godfather*, and even by one of today's popular TV series revolving around a Mafia family in New Jersey, *The Sopranos* (1999-2007).²⁹

The keyword in such a tradition is "family."³⁰ The tragedy surrounding a family underlies both *Corleone* and *The Godfather*. In *Corleone*, the fatal conflict is related to the efforts of the Pagliuca brothers to restore the family name, which leads to the complete destruction of the family. In *The Godfather*, the promising hero dares to give up the path to legitimate success and instead commits himself to the Family business. By transcending Crawford's melodramatic ending, Puzo intensifies the drama of the inevitable destiny of one family.

A close textual analysis, however, simultaneously reveals the two authors' opposing standpoints as well as their stance toward Italy/America. This is well observed in Crawford's apparent political unconsciousness. While Puzo views American society as it is as a second-generation immigrant, Crawford is perhaps too privileged to offer such a viewpoint. Despite the fact that he held American citizenship all his life, America itself perhaps was the other to the author.

Although Crawford delineates Italy in both a romantic and realistic style in various works, he does not refer to the mass immigration of Italians to America in the late nineteenth century. He also shows little awareness of the invisible "color line" or borderline that appeared in America at that time due to continuous mass immigration. Hence, it seems as though issues such as immigration, assimilation/acculturation, ethnicity, and identity did not concern this expatriate. Such unawareness is borne out by his portrayal of Sicily, which merely appears to be a foil to highlight Rome, the center of many Crawfordian narratives. A similar observation can be made about the representation of the Mafia, which he uses as

another exotic prop. Although he certainly refers to its spirit of resistance, the author does not explore the additional possibility of using his portrayal of the Mafia as a social critique. (To be fair to Crawford, though, it must be added that this also reflects his policy to avoid writing a “purpose-novel.”)³¹

On the other hand, Puzo was keenly conscious of his status as a second-rate citizen in America before the era of the civil rights movement. One can consider *The Godfather* as a vindication of “democratic” American society, which is not free of discrimination in terms of ethnicity, class, gender, religion, political creed, etc. All the multiple viewpoints of the novel discussed in the previous section attest to this point. Puzo’s portrayal of several Mafia families also indicates the fact that organized crime is an actual means of social mobilization in America. The reverse narrative dynamism throughout the entire story itself presents a strong case of social critique. In *Corleone*, although Crawford hints at the creation of some reverse dynamism by emphasizing the antihero, the narrative returns to the orthodox happy ending, without suggesting any implications of the existence of the Mafia.

Being an acute observer of his time, Puzo seemed to closely notice the social dynamism of the period, especially in terms of ethnicity. It is interesting to observe his foresight about the influence of multiculturalism throughout *The Godfather*. Even though Michael eventually begins to honor the Sicilian tradition, his strong desire to raise culturally hybrid children with Kay saves him becoming ethnocentric; in this sense, he becomes one of the pioneering embodiments of multiculturalism in America. As mentioned in the “Background” section, the historical context of the 1970s enabled *The Godfather* to acquire considerable readership. Michael Corleone, the ethnic hero, represented “our” hero to those who were excluded from the mainstream of American society. These “minority” readers (particularly in terms of ethnicity) were probably in a position to suitably understand Michael’s anxiety to take over his “family” business. They must have been deeply touched by his brave decision to give up his pursuit of the “legitimate” American dream and his taking pride in his Sicilian heritage. Michael’s perfect performance in becoming the new don was perhaps found to be more than satisfying. The chivalry of the Corleones also enhanced their appeal to non-privileged readers. In the absence of these qualities, it would be difficult for readers to accept criminals as “our” heroes. Hence, it seems that the readership of *The Godfather* continued to expand and include new “others”; this has certainly contributed to the novel’s longevity.³²

Thus, an examination of the intertextuality between *Corleone* and *The Godfather* reveals the overlooked continuity in the history of American popular culture. It is intriguing to observe how Crawford utilizes the genre of high romance as well as the subject of Italy and succeeds in pioneering the rich genre of Mafia fiction. In spite of the lack of a sympathetic vision toward social others, it has to be admitted that *Corleone* occupies an important position in genre fiction; the work deserves more serious critical attention in reconsidering American popular culture. Although Puzo's actual borrowing from Crawford cannot be proved in this paper, it is worth noting that the *Godfather* trilogy appears to be a contemporary version of the Saracinesca saga.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

- 1 F. Marion Crawford, *For the Blood is the Life" and Other Stories* (1911; Clarkston, Georgia: White Wolf Publishing, 1996), 176.
- 2 Mario Puzo, *The Godfather Papers and Other Confessions* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1972), 34.
- 3 Puzo, *The Godfather Papers*, 35.
- 4 John C. Moran, *An F. Marion Crawford Companion* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981), 34.
- 5 For a survey of the criticism on Crawford, see chapter one of the following dissertation: Taeko Kitahara, "Light and Shadow: A Comparative Study of Henry James and F. Marion Crawford." University of Tokyo, 2003, 21-44.
- 6 "Review of *The Godfather*, by Mario Puzo," *America*, 3 May 1969, 538.
- 7 John G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 52.
- 8 William L. Vance researches and explores this theme well in *The America's Rome, Volume Two: Catholic and Contemporary Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).
- 9 Until the 1960s, *omerta* was never broken. Joe Valachi was one of the first to break the code; he made the existence of organized crime public and testified in the U.S. Congress. The detailed accounts of the Mafia appear in his famous *The Valachi Papers* (1968). Fred L. Gardaphe, "Italian American Novelists," *The Italian American Heritage: A Companion to Literature and Arts*, ed. Pellegrino D'Acerno (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999), 178.
- 10 In cinematographic history, like the Western, "gangster" movies have a long, rich tradition. Here, one needs to note that the term "gangster" refers to mobsters of diverse ethnic backgrounds—not only Italian people but also Irish, Jewish, African American, Chinese, etc. Even among the Italians,

- there exist local criminal organizations such as the Neapolitan “camorra,” Milanese “teppa,” and Roman “bagherinaggio”; the Sicilian Mafia is considered to be different from these organizations. Italian gangs started appearing as the protagonists in movies in the 1930s: *Little Caesar* and *Scarface* portray the “big shot” modeled on Al Capone, who was from Naples. In fact, Capone has continued to remain a popular subject (e.g., *The Untouchables*, 1987). In this context, *The Godfather* (1972) was a pioneering film that shone the spotlight on the Sicilian Mafia without referring to the term explicitly. It inspired many films such as *Mean Streets* (1973), *Once Upon a Time in America* (1984), *Wise Guys* (1986), *Goodfellas* (1990), and so on.
- 11 Amy Gutmann, introduction, *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Charles Taylor (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3.
 - 12 Bruce J. Schulman points this out in his concise sketch of the “shift” in the 1970s: “‘Plugging In’: Seeking and Finding in the Seventies,” *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2001), 78-101; see especially 80-87 for accounts on the ethnic revival and fervor that surrounded the publication of *The Godfather*.
 - 13 The first two volumes are titled *Katharine Lauderdale* (1894) and *The Ralstons* (1895). While the former deals with the eponymous heroine’s secret marriage to the son of the Ralstons, the latter is about their marital life in New York society. The two novels are meant to be novels of manners; however, they seem to involve a greater focus on the characters.
 - 14 The fate of the children demonstrates the parallelism between the two texts. In the Corleone family, the first son (Sonny) dies; the second son (Fredo) drops out of the Mafia war; the third son (Michael) inherits the post of don; and the youngest child/only daughter (Connie) gets married but is widowed. In the Pagliuca family, the first son (Tebaldo) dies; the second son (Francesco) is murdered; the third son (Ferdinando) is killed after joining the Mafia; and the youngest member/only daughter (Vittoria) marries a Saracinesca.
 - 15 F. Marion Crawford, *Corleone: A Tale of Sicily*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1898), vol. 1, 153. All textual citations will be based on this edition and hereafter only the page number will be provided in parentheses.
 - 16 Melodramas have a distinct structure for presenting a stark contrast between good and evil. The typical structure is as follows: first, an “innocent” character is introduced; but the character is then threatened by some form of “evil.” After the confrontation between the two, the evil defeats the innocent one. At the end, however, the innocent manages to restore the original state of order by overthrowing the evil (or the evil destroys itself). Such a framework can be applied to many dramas/works of fiction that were written from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. Even contemporary entertainment such as the “police story, Western, [and] hospital drama” reveals a clear melodramatic conflict (Brooks 204). For an in-depth study on melodrama, see Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, and the Mode of Excess* (1976; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).
 - 17 Crime fiction has a long history that can be traced to the ancient Greek/Roman dramatists. Chronologically, after the ancient plays, the genre was carried on through the Shakespearean tragedies, the picaresque novels of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the classic detective novels of the

The Legacy of F. Marion Crawford: *Corleone* and *The Godfather*

- nineteenth century. The genre of crime fiction deals with diverse crimes/sins such as murder, theft, arson, and swindling. It usually focuses on serious crimes/sins committed by individuals and the punishment for the same. (The iconic title of Dostoyevsky's novel *Crime and Punishment* comes to mind in this context.) The late nineteenth-century detective novels simultaneously became archetypal mysteries, and the inspiration for the subgenres of hard-boiled detective as well as gangster fiction. For a detailed discussion on crime fiction and its history, see Cawelti, especially 51-79. *The Rough Guide to Crime Fiction* by Barry Forshaw (London: Rough Guides, 2007) also serves as a compact introduction to the genre.
- 18 Concerning this point, William Simon suggests that Michael is hypocritical toward Kay in his "An Analysis of the Structure of *The Godfather, Part One*," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 16, no.1 (1983): 85.
 - 19 Thomas J. Ferraro, "'My Way' in 'Our America': Art, Ethnicity, Profession," *American Literary History* 12, no. 3 (2000): 499-522.
 - 20 Mario Puzo, *The Godfather* (1969; New York: New American Library, 2005), 428. All textual citations will be based on this edition and hereafter only the page number will be given in parentheses.
 - 21 Mel Gussow, "Mario Puzo, Author Who Made 'The Godfather' a World Addiction, Is Dead at 78," *New York Times on the Web*, 3 July 1999 <<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html>>.
 - 22 "Sicily," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in *Encyclopaedia Britannica 2007 Ultimate Reference Suite* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2007); M. I. Finley, Denis Mack Smith, and Christopher Duggan, *A History of Sicily* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1986).
 - 23 "Mafia," *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., CD-ROM (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
 - 24 Crawford himself wrote nonfiction on the Mafia, *The Rulers of the South* (New York: Macmillan, 1905), 363-85. In addition to Raimondo Catanzaro's *Men of Respect: A Social History of the Sicilian Mafia*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: The Free Press, 1988), the following are some other historical works which provide relevant information: *The Italian Mafia* by Silvio Piersanti, trans. Kyoko Asada (Tokyo: Chikuma, 2007), 36; Alexander Stille, *Excellent Cadavers: The Mafia and the Death of the First Italian Republic*, trans. Hideki Matsuura (Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbun Publishing Division, 1999), 9-39.
 - 25 F. Marion Crawford, *The Novel: What It Is* (1893; Upper Saddle River, NJ: Literature House, 1970), 37-42.
 - 26 James Thomas Chiampi argues that in *The Godfather*, Puzo defamiliarizes America by using Sicilian values. See "Resurrecting *The Godfather*," *MELUS* 5, no.4 (1978): 18-31.
 - 27 Adams was one of the twenty most common names in America in 1790. Masashi Kimura, *British/American Surnames: the Origin and Historical Tradition* (1980; Tokyo: Yumi Press, 1994), 164.
 - 28 As a young boy, Puzo used to enjoy boarding with a private family in New Hampshire during summer; this was part of the programs organized by the Hudson Guild Settlement House—the "field of joy for slum kids." To Puzo, the verdant landscape of New Hampshire connoted a land of aspiration. *The Godfather Papers*, 20-22.
 - 29 Many academic works on *The Sopranos* are now available, suggesting an increase in critical inter-

- est. A useful anthology is *This Thing of Ours: Investigating the Sopranos*, ed. David Lavery (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).
- 30 Interpretations of *The Godfather* with a focus on the “family” (including the movie version) have been provided by Cawelti (51-79) and Richard Combs: “Coppola’s Family Plot: The Godfather Variations,” *Film Comment* 38, no.2 (2002): 38-44.
- 31 Crawford, *Novel*, 11-18.
- 32 Today’s popular Mafia TV series, *The Sopranos*, offers another ethnic hero, Tony Soprano. However, unlike the impeccable, brilliant, and handsome Michael, Tony, who is surely shrewd and charming, appears to be a more real-life figure with health and family problems. Because of the high levels of stress he experiences as a “don” of two families (i.e., private and business ones), Tony is obliged to consult a psychiatrist; this contributes to a convincing rendering of a contemporary mafioso.

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