The Corleones at Home and Abroad

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Paulie: Ton', what's your favorite scene?
Tony: I can't have this conversation again ... Don Ciccio's villa, when Vito goes back to Sicily. The crickets, the great old house. Oh, it's f**in beautiful. Maybe 'cause I'm going over there, you know?
The Sopranos (David Chase, 2000)

In 2008, two Mafia-related media events received national attention in the United States. On the lighter side, the famous horse head scene from *The Godfather* was revisited in an Audi commercial featured during the Superbowl. Four days later, indictments in New York led to mass roundups and arrests in both the U.S. and Sicily, one aim of which was to breach the intimate relationship between the Sicilian Mafia and the notorious American Gambino crime family. The first event was much discussed on websites and in the print media for quite some time (the video has been viewed millions of times on YouTube). The second disappeared from the public eye within days. The commercial, although clearly a spoof, was done exquisitely and, except for one minor detail, more or less replicates the scene from *The Godfather*, albeit without the brutality of decapitation. American audiences have grown so accustomed to the offer promised to us by Coppola that it supplants the criminal organization itself.

Clearly, the myth of the Mafia is still alive and well in the American imaginary, both on and off-screen.[1] What is not so clear to most Americans is that various Italian-American Mafias are still making a living off various illicit activities, albeit in a much less centralized and structured fashion than about ten years ago.[2] Of course, the same is true

of the various Italian Mafias as a daily look at Italian newspapers offers up stories of corruption, clan wars, raids, and homicides, all Mafia related. The 'octopus' (*piovra*) as it is called in Italy, has pervaded almost every facet of Italian cultural life. Italians acknowledge that the Mafia exists, is insidious, and can affect the average citizen's daily life. Italian filmmakers are dedicated to demonstrating the extent to which the Mafia extends into politics, on both national and international fronts. They associate the origins of the Mafia with the origins of the Italian state, and represent Mafiosi, anti-Mafia martyrs, politicians, and the everyday man or woman who lives daily under the Mafia's shadow. American filmmakers, however, tend to glamourize organized crime, and create sympathetic mobsters that many of us would like to invite over to dinner.[3] As a result, most Americans retain a romanticized view of the Mafia and tend to associate it with a severed horse's head in Jack Woltz's bed, the expression 'I'm gonna make him an offer he can't refuse,' or the famous melody composed by Nino Rota, all examples from the epic *The Godfather*.

Coppola's trilogy positioned the city of Corleone as the birth of *mafiosità*, even though filming took place in the nearby towns of Forza d'Agro and Savoca. Mafia ethos in the film equals honour, just vendetta, and traditional gender roles – 'In Corleone, a woman is more dangerous than the *lupara*,' Michael is told, and from Michael's fictional stay in the town that bears his name during the late 1940s up until about 1994, nothing was farther from the case as Corleone and surrounding areas witnessed hundreds of Mafia-related murders of 'excellent cadavers,' Mafiosi, and bystanders alike. Just some years ago, however, the town of Corleone engaged in a process of reinvention focusing on Mafia tourism and a proposed name change to 'Cuor di Leone.' Pasquale Scimeca's film *Placido Rizzotto* from 2000 treats the story of the eponymous character murdered in 1948 by the Corleonesi, the Mafia clan that shares the city's name, as a result of his anti-Mafia activity with the trade union. The film marks an important turn in this reinvention: Mafioso Luciano Leggio retains none of the glamourous and paternal properties associated with the Corleone clan in the Coppola trilogy,[4] and Placido's martyrdom opens the doors for new advertising opportunities. It is now possible to buy products such as pasta or wine from the anti-Mafia association Libera Terra that promise 'the taste of legality.' The Placido Rizzotto cooperative owns and operates the popular bed and breakfast 'Portella della Ginestra,' which was the summer residence of notorious Don Giovanni Brusca (made famous for

murdering anti-Mafia prosecutor Giovanni Falcone) and another residence soon to open: the former dwelling of 'boss of bosses' Toto Riina, run by the Pio la Torre cooperative. While on site, vacationers can sip a wine called 'Placido Rizzotto linea I cento passi.' *I cento passi* (*The Hundred Steps*) is the title of the film that treats the murder of anti-Mafia activist Peppino Impastato, and for only 50 euros a night sightseers can participate in the myth of a Mafia vanquished. It is not my contention that Libera Terra consciously sets out to capitalize on Mafia culture in the same way that, for example, numerous tour companies in New Jersey have by offering 'tours of Sopranoland.' Nonetheless, it is compelling how many pivotal events and notorious figures of Sicilian Mafia history since the Second World War are bottled, as it were, and decanted into a wine glass, all of which are treated in this volume of essays: the bandit Salvatore Giuliano and the infamous Portella della Ginestra May Day massacre in 1947, the murder of anti-Mafia crusaders Placido Rizzotto and Peppino Impastato in Cinisi in 1978, Pio la Torre in Palermo in 1982, and Giovanni Falcone in Capaci and Paolo Borsellino in Palermo in 1992. Just a few years ago, as witnessed by the lawsuit brought against Time Warner by the Italian American Defense Association, the Italian-American community was up in arms about the prejudicial identification of the IADA with the Mafia on *The Sopranos*; now Italy uses the mob to market itself to Italian Americans. In sum, Corleone and its surroundings have become minor tourist attractions, and all the while Cosa Nostra, 'our thing,' or the general term for the Sicilian Mafia, continues to operate effectively.

This is not the case for all of Italy's Mafias. The Camorra, the Mafia of the Campania region and the city of Naples is capturing the international imaginary, no doubt in part due to the mammoth success of the film, book, and play *Gomorra* (*Gomorrah*). Yet, it is doubtful that engaged art will influence the battle against the Mafia. One reviewer questions: 'As they say in the world of fashion journalism, is the Camorra the new mafia?'[5] In today, out tomorrow, around for hundreds of years. A case in point: just a few years ago, accounts of Mafia violence in Naples went largely unnoticed in the international community, but Naples today recalls Palermo of ten to twenty years ago. The news coverage of piles of rotting or burning garbage, attacks on the group of Africans in Castelvolturno and subsequent rioting, corpses in the streets, or troops occupying various Neapolitan cities evoke Sicilian author Vincenzo Consolo's description of Palermo from 1988:

> Palermo is rank, infected. In this fervent July, the bitter sweet stench of blood and gelsomino wafts in the air, a strong odor of creolin and fried oil. The smoke of the garbage burning at Bellolampo is stagnant over the city like an enormous compact cloud. Here, Palermo is a Beirut destroyed by a war that has lasted now for 40 years, the war of mafia power against the poor.[6]

In recent news, Naples and its surroundings is quite different from the region visited by Tony Soprano that represented a mythical font for the American Cosa Nostra. Tony, in fact, conflates the two geographies, evidenced by a discussion about the merits of *The Godfather: Part II* right before his departure to Naples, as cited in the epigraph above.

Indeed, the essays included in this volume offer unique perspectives on mob movie classics and sleeper films alike. Their authors are interested in exploring the myth of the Mafia that is so widespread in America, and tracing its history and function as it passes across time and through multiple cultures. Overall, the volume questions whether there exists a unique American or Italian cinema treating the Mafia and explores how filmmakers from the two countries approach the subject in dissimilar fashions, especially in terms of stereotyping, gender roles, and representations of violence. At first glance, it might appear that American directors are mainly interested in making films that romanticize and idealize mob life, while Italian filmmakers are concerned with socially conscious filmmaking. A key aim of this volume is to get the reader to think beyond these paradigms and to consider to what extent American films might represent the 'real' Italian-American Mafia or critique the very organization they apparently seem to endorse. We also want the reader to ponder the ways in which Italian directors branch out from 'engaged' or 'political cinema' into other genres (women's film, gothic, the western, film noir, or comedy) or, in more recent films, might be indebted to the Hollywood tradition.

Many readers will be familiar with several of the Hollywood blockbusters treated here that take us inside the gangster lifestyle and allow us to identify with characters played by Joe Pesci, Marlon Brando, James Gandolfini, Robert DeNiro, Al Pacino, or Johnny Depp. Yet, as this volume attests, Hollywood has had a long and evolving interest in representing the Italian-American Mafia, beginning with Wallace McCutchen's *The Black Hand* in 1906, arguably the first Mafia movie to tap into widespread prejudices against Italian immigrants and to align Italian ethnic identity with illegality, a fictional and ill-founded

association that still lives on in contemporary popular culture.[7] To be sure, essays in the first section explore these and other stereotypes in films made over the last century by Hollywood greats such as Francis Ford Coppola, Martin Scorsese, or Brian De Palma, along with some lesser studied films by Abel Ferrera or Martin Ritt, the shorts of D.W. Griffith, or the television series *The Untouchables*, and chart the way that filmmakers have engaged with the spellbinding figure of the Mafioso. In this section, 'family' stands out as a key theme, in particular the distinction between the 'family' that one is born into that must always be subordinated to the 'Family' into which the Mafioso enters through a symbolic ritual.[8] As a result, in many American films we see that generational conflicts are foregrounded and gender roles, with few exceptions, are far from elastic, and many Mafiosi and Mafia women come off initially as types: the cool headed don, the trigger-happy soldier making his way up the ranks, and the jealous or excluded wife or kept *goomah*, slang for the Italian *comare*, or mistress.

The second section of the volume includes chapters on films by the Italian directors most well known for their work on political cinema, such as Pietro Germi, Elio Petri, Francesco Rosi, or Damiano Damiani, and introduces other films to American and Canadian audiences for the first time, and although several chapters treat representations of the Sicilian Mafia, others are dedicated to films the engage with the Camorra or the Sacra Corona Unita, the Mafia of Apulia. While with few exceptions Hollywood films focus on figures at different levels of the mob hierarchy, Italian Mafia movies, more often than not, tell the story of peripheral or problematic figures; on the one hand, those involved in the 'system,' to borrow Roberto Saviano's wording from the best-seller *Gomorrah*, such as bandits, politicians, businessmen, or members of the police force, and on the other, figures who have stood up to the mob and, in most cases, paid with their lives for their efforts. Furthermore, although several Italian Mafiosi now have controversial fan pages on social networking websites such as Facebook, traditionally they have had none of the media cachet associated with the likes of Al Capone, John Gotti, or Joe Bananas. And while many American mobsters come off on screen as dapper, handsome, and even charming, writers here suggest that Italian Mafiosi, for the most part, are typically represented as excessively violent, ailing, or somewhat humdrum, as Zi' Bernardino was from *Gomorrah*, who can be seen as an anti-Don Vito Corleone in that he is unkempt, overweight, and suffering from throat cancer.

As we see in this volume, mise en abîme is key to the Mafia film genre; films cite one another ad nauseam, and real-life Mafiosi mimic what they watch on screen. As a result, the reader will note that several chapters point out the elastic confines of the Mafia movie genre. For example, local mob boss Giovanni from Scorsese's *Mean Streets* finds a model in Lucky Luciano, and many episodes of *The Sopranos* cite Mafia movies, from *The Godfather* trilogy to *GoodFellas* to Italian classics. Both the film and the novel *Gomorrah* point out how *camorristi*, the Mafiosi belonging to the Camorra, ape Hollywood stereotypes in order to lend themselves legitimacy, a self-reflexive motif already apparent in the cover design for John Dickie's *Cosa Nostra*, which is borrowed from Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs*. Saviano's chapter 'Hollywood' first describes Walter Schiavone's (the brother of Sandokan, a long-standing boss of the Casalesi clan in the Campania region) mega-mansion, now a rotting and burnt-out skeleton, which was dubbed 'Hollywood' and modelled after Tony Montana's villa in Brian De Palma's 1983 film *Scarface*, and then details various Mafiosos' reverence for and emulation of gangster characters in *Pulp Fiction*, *Donnie Brasco*, *The Godfather*, *The Crow*, or *Il camorrista*. In the media age, Saviano tells us, it is only natural that mobsters turn towards Hollywood prototypes and mimic 'mob' behaviour. This came full circle when in 2008, Bernardino Terracciano, who plays a mob boss in Garrone's *L'imbalsamatore* (*The Embalmer*) and the infamous Zi' Bernardino in *Gomorrah* were arrested together with six other suspected *camorristi*. One of the most striking mise en abîmes in *Gomorrah* is the brief scene shot on location in 'Hollywood' when wannabe *cammoristi* Marco and Ciro act out the famous fatal scene from De Palma's film. Marco reclines in the empty abandoned pool, another replica from the movie, and tells Ciro 'the world is ours,' a mantra which was originally borrowed from Howard Hawke's *Scarface* from 1932 and in these three films, leads Tony Camonte, Tony Montana, Marco and Ciro to their bloody ends. With Mafia then, it all comes down to representation; however, with real consequences. Therefore, life imitates art, but only up to a point and, indeed, several essays in this volume grapple with this dichotomy in an attempt locate the brutal, violent reality of the Mafia within the new millennium imaginary.

The fascinating role of women in, against, and around the Mafia is also a key theme running through the essays of both sections, as authors investigate what it means to be a woman in a 'men only society' where violence and fear have become such a normal part of daily life

that resistance seems futile.[9] Jane and Peter Schneider's introductory essay looks closely at gender relations and associated cultural productions of violence in the Italian and Italian-American Mafia. Although organized around the notion of the Mafia woman's 'submerged centrality' – her role is central in that she is frequently a silent witness and raises her children to follow Mafia values yet she is regularly denigrated and closed off from the inner workings of the secret society – this chapter also introduces many of the key themes that run throughout the following essays, such as the nature of blood symbolism, including intermarriage and recruitment rituals, the hierarchy and structure of the organization, the central role of *omertà*, or silence before the law, and the *pentito* phenomenon, the trend over the past twenty years or so for Mafia men and women alike to turn state's evidence and become collaborators of justice.

Beyond The Godfather: Over One Hundred Years of Gangsters, Wise Guys, and Sopranos on Screen

> It was an abortion, like our marriage, something that's unholy and evil. I wouldn't bring another one of your sons into this world! It was an abortion, Michael. It was a son, a son, and I had it killed because this must all end. I know now that it's over. I knew it then. There would be no way, Michael, no way you could ever forgive me, not with this Sicilian thing that's been going on for 2,000 years.
>
> Kay, *The Godfather: Part II* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1974)

> You know you talk about these guys like it's an anthropology class. The truth is, they bring certain modes of conflict resolution from all the way back in the old country, from the poverty of the Mezzogiorno, where all higher authority was corrupt.
>
> Meadow, *The Sopranos* (David Chase, 2004)

Above, Kay and Meadow voice two predominant misconceptions about the Italian Mafia in general and Mafia ethos at large: one, that the association has been around since the time of ancient Roman settlements, a widespread belief that, until quite recently in Italy, made it nearly impossible for prosecutors to identify it as a hierarchical organization with a specific history and an accompanying set of rules and power positions; and two, that Mafiosi have been traditionally thought

of as protectors of the poor or those disabused by a corrupt government. Instead, over the last twenty years or so, historians, anti-Mafia activists, and critics have aligned the birth of Cosa Nostra with the birth of the Italian state in the 1860s and have been privy to testimonies, documents, and first-hand insider reports that reveal a scrupulously organized and well oiled machine with a strict sets of rules and business interests. *The Godfather: Part II*, however, tells a different story,[10] one that suggests that ethnic family solidarity and organized crime are the natural by-products of a feudal and backwards Sicily. Coppola's film begins in 1901, the earliest period treated in the films of this section, to tell the story of Vito Corleone's tragic childhood in Sicily, emigration to America, and gradual ascent up the ladder of organized crime in New York's Little Italy. As John Paul Russo notes, Don Vito is aligned with plenitude, nature, and the old country and its accompanying values – vendetta, the don as protector, and a close-knit family – while Michael as don shares none of these attributes. The empty chair that opens the film signifies Michael's difference from his father and Coppola's distance from his film of just two years earlier: Michael represents a new, internationalized multi-ethnic Mafia that could not be more different than the organization Don Vito headed in Little Italy after murdering Black Hand extortionist Don Fanucci in the earlier part of the twentieth century. Two chapters treat films that reflect growing anxieties regarding the Italian Mafia in America at the beginning of the last century, in particular the threat of the *Mano nera* or Black Hand and the vengeful, hot-headed, and morally depraved Sicilian up to no good in the urban centre. Films made at this time capitalize upon anti-Italian sentiment as a result of mass migration of southern Italians into the U.S. between the 1880s and the 1920s and offer a visual equivalent to the eugenics movement so widespread at the time that defined southern Italians as culturally backward and lacking in intelligence and a solid work ethic. Vincenzo Maggitti's chapter positions Wallace McCutchen's *The Black Hand* (1906) as launching the Mafia movie genre in the U.S. and argues that McCutchen latches onto nativist fears of the other at the dawn of modernity. Inspired by an actual kidnapping case, the Biograph one-reeler is meant to be educational, to warn law-abiding citizens of the threat of Italian immigrant Mafiosi, labelled 'Black Hand' due to a common signature on ransom notes, while at the same time tapping into a sensationalist discourse running awry in the media. Although it is true that the Italian Mafia arrived in America with waves of Italian immigrants before and after the turn of the last century,[11] McCutchen's

film, in that it comes off as an amalgam of fiction and documentary, would have us believe that drunken, illiterate, and violent Italians were waiting around every urban corner, intent on stealing our children and disrupting our moral order. Both McCutchen's film and several of D.W. Griffith's Biograph shorts made between 1908 and 1912 suggest that Italians must assimilate into American culture, and leave behind backwards codes of *omertà*, amoral familism, and brutish force brought over from the old country, as did Joe Petrosino, an Italian immigrant and NYPD officer who was dedicated to bringing down Italian criminals and went so far as to travel to Sicily in 1909 with the aim of infiltrating the crime syndicate abroad. Instead, he was gunned down in a piazza in Palermo, and thus became one of the first 'excellent cadavers' in the American fight against organized crime. JoAnn Ruvoli looks at the ideological discourse at work in several of Griffith's shorts, and identifies various stereotypes associated with non-assimilated racial difference: a thirst for vendetta at all costs, moral turpitude, and excessive emotion, in order to position one of his later and most well-known shorts, *The Muskateers of Pig Alley*, from 1912 as an early embodiment of Michael Corleone's famous dictum 'It's not personal, it's strictly business.'

By the years of prohibition, Mafia syndicates were well established in many American cities, and branched out of blackmail, kidnapping, and thievery into the more lucrative markets of embezzlement and black-marketeering. Three chapters treat works that depict aspects of the Chicago Mafia, known as 'The Outfit,' and the legendary figure of Al Capone. Norma Bouchard argues that Mervyn LeRoy's *Little Caesar* (1931) and Howard Hawks' *Scarface* (1932) solidify the cliché of the 'Hollywood Italian,' to borrow from Peter Bondanella; a cliché that has been running through Hollywood cinema since *The Black Hand*. To be sure, these two quite popular pre-Hays Code films represent Italian gangsters, both are loosely modelled on Capone's life, and present the audience with overly ambitious gesticulating buffoons driven by ego and destined to succumb to the forces of good. Thanks to the invention of sound in film, audiences were privy to what was considered a more 'realistic' depiction of gangster life, one where markers of 'Italian-ness' and ethnic culture bar the immigrant from integrating into the American mainstream.

By the time the popular and controversial television series *The Untouchables* premiered in 1959, several Italian-American organizations were well established in the U.S. and quite active in protesting the

Italian-American-equals-gangster formula that was prominent in the popular media and had been so for several decades. Without a doubt, the popularity of the television series was augmented by the media sensation of the Kefauver hearings of 1950 and 1951, during which close to one thousand people were subpoenaed to testify before a committee of senators whose aim was to better understand the extent and activities of organized crime in the U.S. Americans were fascinated, finally able to put a real-life name to a fictional face. Jonathan J. Cavallero looks closely at competing discourses about ethnicity in and around the ABC series, particularly in terms of how the network responded to protests from several Italian-American organizations. The series focuses on Eliot Ness, the famous agent of Chicago's prohibition bureau, and his band of 'Untouchables' who battled Capone's crime syndicate in the two-part premiere 'The Scarface Mob,' and after his arrest in 1931, held forth against a series of fictional and true-to-life Chicago mobsters. Cavallero's institutional analysis reveals that even though writers responded to criticisms by aligning Italian and Italian-American characters with both sides of the law (i.e., we all have a choice and criminality is not pre-destined based on ethnicity), 'good' Italians are still portrayed as inferior to the likes of Eliot Ness and other Caucasian gunslingers. Conversely, Norma Bouchard's chapter on Brian De Palma's *The Untouchables* from 1987 questions why this film, which, unlike other mob movie classics, not only paints a very negative image of the Italian gangster but also presents the 'good guys' as no better than those they are attempting to put away, met with little to no protest and was extremely popular. Unlike the TV series, De Palma's film only focuses on the years that precede Capone's incarceration, and as Bouchard argues, in its postmodern appropriation of such well-known genres as the western and the early mob movie, the film highlights the fictional status of these mobsters as such and invites the viewer to sit back and enjoy the visual spectacle of a good guy/bad guy narrative that is much distorted from its original.

While quite often in earlier gangster cinema, integration into American culture came hand in hand with the rejection of mob mores, as in the example of Joe Massara from *Little Caesar*, and markers of alterity were exploited and derided on screen, other films tell a different story, one that weds the rise to power in organized crime syndicates with traditional American values such as hard work, loyalty, and prosperity, all the while that families hold onto their ethnic identity. In the decades that followed the end of prohibition, Mafia Families expanded

beyond local business interests such as bootlegging, prostitution, and racketeering into the more global and legitimate realms of gambling, the film industry, the stock market, and other investment opportunities. Thus we see a generational conflict emerge: on the one hand, first-generation Mafiosi held onto traditional 'Old World' values. On the other, many second-generation Italians distanced themselves from their ethnic origins through higher education or entering mainstream businesses. Significantly, or perhaps as a result, in this changing landscape we are frequently brought inside Mafia Families to witness private battles for control of mob hierarchies. And Abel Ferrara's *The Funeral* (1996) is most troubling in its portrayal of the enduring legacy of the culture of vendetta. Set in 1930s New York, the film is an exemplum of power and violence gone awry once they have turned inwards. Lara Santoro reads the film from a gendered perspective and argues that female characters problematize mob mores and challenge their male counterparts. Through investigating and questioning spaces that in the Mafia ethos are traditionally thought of as 'male' and 'female' (above all, the inner sanctum of the home versus the public domain of business), Santoro exposes the Tempio brothers as sadistic and deranged killers. Ultimately, the brothers destroy one another, and the women are left alone to possibly forge a different path away from Mafia influence.

Fratricide is also central to Martin Ritt's *The Brotherhood* (1968). Often referred to as a forerunner to *The Godfather*, Ritt's film, as Robert Casillo points out, announces many of the other's themes, in particular in how it plays out the tension between various types of blood symbolism and kinship ties in Mafia Families apparent in the double entendre of the title – here, agnatic kinship (consanguinity) and ritual friendship (blood brotherhood) in the threatening presence of vendetta.[12] The clash between Old and New World mentalities looms large in both films, and even though *The Brotherhood* takes place in the 1960s while *The Godfather* is set during the decade following the Second World War, in drawing sharp parallels between agrarian and traditional Sicily and the urban centre as the locus of Mafia expansion, both films show that family loyalties only go so far, as they are by demand subsumed to the larger interests of the Family.

Of course, Coppola's *über*film is oft cited for its so-called unjustifiably admiring portrayal of mob lifestyle, and commentators frequently point out how Don Vito's paternalistic, Old World ways are discordant with his position as head of a violent crime syndicate. Anthony Julian

Tamburri investigates this paradox, and looks towards visual clues in the film that allow for a more complex reading, one that challenges the prevalent tag line that the film glorifies mob violence. Tamburri warns the viewer to read beyond the obvious (i.e., Don Corleone is a benevolent immigrant grandfather, a man of the soil, his successor Michael represents a new type of businessman that both critiques capitalism and the war in Vietnam) to discern an aura of the macabre within the machinations of America's favourite family; and let us not forget that the film makes a very loose reference to the 'Five Families' that have been in control of the American Mafia from 1931 to the present day.[13]

In its gritty depiction of life on the streets in New York's Little Italy in the early 1970s, Martin Scorsese's *Mean Streets* (1973) offers a counterpoint to Coppola's presentation of the dignified Mafioso. Through focusing on a group of idiosyncratic 'Mafia wannabes' trying to scrape their way up and around the mob hierarchy, Scorsese's film, as Pellegrino D'Acierno argues, can read as a demystification of the Mafia movie. By now considered seminal to the genre, the film, which was shot in only twenty-seven days, offers a frenzied, nihilistic, and carnivalesque portrait of gangster life. A series of meta-cinematic references reminds the viewer of the self-reflexive nature of the genre and disavows identification with mobsters or mob lifestyle. As D'Acierno tells us, *Mean Streets* could be retitled *Cinema Streets*.

While in *Mean Streets* gangsterism was presented as local in nature, *The Godfather: Part III* offers a radically different portrait of New York mob life in the 1970s, one that leaves the street and goes global to uncover ties between the Mafia and big business, Italian politics and the Vatican, in particular with the Banco Ambrosiano scandal of 1982. John Paul Russo looks at the film in light of the first two of the series and wonders why Coppola was so intent on punishing and killing off Michael, therefore bringing the saga to an abrupt and frustrating conclusion. Coppola's final message is clear: Michael's unquenchable thirst for power costs him dearly when his daughter is gunned down in front of his eyes on the steps of the Teatro Massimo in Palermo, and years later his solitary death on the island is dramatically different from that of his own father, who passed away while playing with his grandson in a vegetable garden. Conversely, John Huston's black comedy *Prizzi's Honor* (1985) offers a parodic take on issues of honour, familial loyalty, and vendetta so ingrained in the gangster genre. As Rebecca Bauman notes, Huston turns the genre on its head through depicting two women who challenge the sexual politics of mob life. On the one hand, we have

the hired killer and ethnic outsider Irene whose strong-willed, career-oriented nature is in line with contemporary depictions of the New Woman in Hollywood cinema and, on the other, Maerose Prizzi, who, like Connie Corleone some years later, works behind the scenes to manipulate power structures within the Mafia and to secure a solid place for herself at the top of the mob hierarchy. Although Huston does not offer an alternative to mob life for these women (one is killed off, the other at ease with the system in which she now flourishes), he does present a more ambiguous study of gender than do several of the genre's predecessors.

Yet another take on the Mafia wife is offered in Martin Scorsese's *GoodFellas* (1991) through Karen, wife of real-life gangster-turned-informant Henry Hill, who is granted some agency through having her own voiceover in the film, but is still pigeonholed in the reductive yet all too realistic role of Mafia wife and mother. Scorsese's film is one of several in the volume that touches upon the consequences of the Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations statute (RICO) passed in 1970 that allowed the government to prosecute entire organizations and not just individual Mafiosi for illegal activities. Much more so than in past years, federal agents went undercover to infiltrate criminal organizations and many Mafiosi turned state's evidence, tempted in part by the Organized Crime Control Act (1970) which, among other things, established what is commonly referred to as the Witness Protection Program. And so in depictions of 1970s mob life and beyond, a new type of Mafioso emerges on screen: one whose loyalties only go so far, or who is easily seduced into other ventures (drugs, for example.) Scorsese's representation of Hill and his gang of 'goodfellas,' as Fulvio Orsitto tells us, captures this new gangster impeccably: he, together with his wife, is an average Joe seduced by mob life, and believes that he is following the American Dream which becomes 'the American nightmare.' Scorsese felt a compulsion to tell this story as he had lived it years before, and takes the viewer on a violent and defamiliarizing Dantesque journey through New York mob life from 1955 to 1980 that pushes the limits of the mob genre in order to suggest that we all, like Henry, could possibly be drawn to the allure of money and power associated with the mob take on capitalist enterprise. And this is exactly what happens to the eponymous character of Mike Newell's *Donnie Brasco* (1997), whose connection to made man Lefty Ruggiero trumps his loyalty to the FBI, which, as Robert Casillo tells us, is portrayed in the film as an impersonal bureaucracy little interested in one

of its own. The film, based on the true story of Joe Pistone whose infiltration into the Bonanno crime family from 1976 to 1981 led to 200 indictments and 100 convictions, grants us insight into the codes of conduct, homosocial relations, and common jargon (such as the many variances of the phrase 'fuhggedaboudit') omnipresent in mob life. Newell, who takes considerable liberties in his adaptation, plays on viewer sympathies and foreshadows the type of mobsters we see in *The Sopranos* just a few years later: cold-blooded killers are cast as the everyday man, with real fears, illnesses, and enduring friendships. Indeed, Pistone looks towards Lefty, for whose death he feels responsible, as a surrogate father. Betrayal also lies at the heart of Scorsese's *The Departed* (2006) which, according to Margherita Heyer-Caput, plays out the anxieties surrounding a lost (departed) ethnic identity in the context of late capitalism. Set in contemporary Boston, the film focuses on the deceptions of three men who all, in different ways, turn their back on their ethnic past in order to seek acceptance, power, or material wealth in and around South Boston gang life. Although the film treats the Irish-American Mafia, Heyer-Caput shows that Scorsese harkens back to the story of real-life Mafioso Frank Costello (born Frank Castiglia, 1891–1973) who renounced his Sicilian roots in order to integrate into the more established Irish-American mob syndicate. Ultimately, Scorsese leaves us wondering if such a thing as a universal ethnic identity is possible in the postmodern age.

Ethnicity once again is at the fore of one of America's most popular and controversial TV series, David Chase's *The Sopranos* (1999–2007), which takes us away from the urban centre and into the New Jersey suburbs. The two chapters that engage with the program look closely at the mechanics of identification both within the economy of the show and between the viewer and Tony to consider why domestic and foreign audiences alike went wild for a balding, slothful, and cold-blooded killer. Franco Ricci investigates the complicated psychodynamics of identification and repulsion that categorize the relationship between Tony and his therapist Dr Melfi, and places the crux of the narrative drive of the series in the battle between the word, traditionally associated with masculinity, and the more feminized image. Tony is essentially divided: he is outwardly masculine, yet traumatized since childhood, 'petrified,' as it were, by female power. It is not until he is able to exorcise all feminine qualities within himself, therefore conforming to the rhetoric of masculinity demanded by Mafia life that he previously breached through therapy,[14] that he, and we, are able to let him go.

Paradoxically, Melfi finally renounces Tony as a patient only after banishing her interest in the dark side of her own ethnicity and reaffirming the power of the written word. Lombardi reads the season's much-anticipated and debated final season in terms of Chase's deliberate thwarting of viewer expectations. Narrative uncertainty is central to Chase's project, yet, as Giancarlo Lombardi notes, the final season is carefully constructed so that we are ready to begin to turn our backs on Tony and all that he represents. Indeed, the elaborate mise en abîme of the Sopranos, friends, and colleagues watching Christopher's movie premiere, whose plot borrows greatly from their own lives, breaks all codes of traditional Hollywood identification constructed around the driving principle of visual pleasure and leaves them, and us, deeply uncomfortable. The fade to black that ends the series and that caused so much dissension and outright anger among the show's millions of fans engenders Chase's profound and paradoxical critique regarding future representations of the Mafia on bigger and smaller screens: Don Vito has been unmasked, and we are all now frighteningly aware of what he, and others like him, are capable of. Nevertheless, we do not want to let them go, cannot stop watching, and anxiously await someone to fill his shoes.

Myth and Resistance in the Italian Mafia Movie: From the Corleonesi to the Camorra

> Sleep my dear Chevalley, sleep is what Sicilians want, and they will always hate anyone who tries to wake them.
>
> Prince Fabrizio, *Il gattopardo* (*The Leopard*, Luchino Visconti, 1963)

> Who should we fight against? Against the rich and powerful bosses? Against the field guards? Against the corrupt? Or against ourselves? ... If we want to build a future, we have to do it with our own hands. Our enemy is not the bosses, but ourselves ... We are not born master or slave, we become it.
>
> Placido, *Placido Rizzotto* (Pasquale Scimeca, 2000)

The history of Sicily is frequently summed up in the illustrious quotation from Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's 1958 novel *The Leopard*: 'If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change.' Uttered by Tancredi Falconeri to his uncle Prince Fabrizio di Salina on the eve of

Unification, the oxymoron points towards a broader understanding of the perseverance, power, and reach of the Mafia in Italy. As Elizabeth Leake argues, Luchino Visconti's eponymous film from 1963 can be thought of as the mother of all Italian Mafia movies, even though there is nary a Mafioso in sight. Instead, Visconti's film, borrowing heavily from Tomasi's novel, performs a double operation: it encodes *mafiosità* at the individual level, thereby furthering the Sicilian equals Mafioso identification which had been at the heart of debates around the 'southern question' for a century and firmly positions the Mafia as inside and not ancillary to the Italian state. Like Tancredi, who embodies the operation of transformism at work during Italian Unification, Cosa Nostra has proven to be extremely adaptable, first off by capitalizing on the wide economic and cultural gulf that separated the island from the mainland through insinuating itself into the withering feudal system, soon to be replaced by a modern state when the newly formed country transitioned from monarchy to republic. The deeply impoverished peasants were the organization's first victims, and from there, the Mafia enterprise quickly and adeptly expanded beyond petty crime and brigandage in and around Palermo and into politics, legitimate business, and the church. How did this happen so quickly? And, more crucially, why today are Italy's many Mafias bigger and stronger than ever before? In the film, at least, one answer lies in Sicily's deep-rooted and much debated mistrust of outsiders (the government or the police force, for example), which stems from thousands of years of colonial rule and translates into Prince Fabrizio's declaration regarding a generalized desire to sleep, meaning to withdraw from history, and to follow the all too common practice of *omertà* instead of looking inwards, as Placido Rizzotto urges above, and finding the courage to stand up to the 'honoured society.'

In fact, it was not until 1925, three years after Mussolini took power of the Fascist Party, that something was to be done on the level of government: he decided to send 'Iron Prefect' Cesare Mori to the island to wage a war against the Mafia, which to him represented opposition and chaos and was, incidentally, quite a well-crafted PR move.[15] Although the regime famously took credit for defeating the Mafia, Mori's violent and erratic campaign did little to impede its basic operations. Mafiosi sat tight, maintained discretion or even entered politics, and when the war ended, were prepared to get back to business as usual. After the war, the Mafia was considered in public opinion as more or less untouched by fascism, a favourable, if not mistaken, perspective which

might have influenced what has been called a sympathetic or romantic image of Cosa Nostra in what is broadly considered to be Italy's first film on the subject: Pietro Germi's *In nome della legge* (*In the Name of the Law*) from 1949. Instead, Danielle Hipkins' gendered reading shows that Guido, the new sheriff in town intent on establishing law and order, is initially aligned with the weak and ineffective state through his identification with Teresa, the corrupt land baron's wife, which leads to his feminization and marginalization. Only after being granted the approval and support of his surrogate (Mafia) father is he able to assert his masculinity, previously compromised through his association with the gothic heroine, and win the respect of the townspeople. In this decidedly Oedipal battle, although it might appear good has trumped evil, Mafia law still rules the day.

Italy's most engaged political filmmakers have frequently turned towards the subject of the Mafia and have taken issue with Tomasi's problematic statement. And this is the case with Francesco Rosi's *Salvatore Giuliano* (1961) that treats the story around the eponymous bandit, commonly referred to as Italy's Robin Hood, who was active in the Movement for Sicilian Independence following the Second World War. He was considered responsible for the Portella della ginestra May Day massacre of 1947, and was murdered in 1950 in his native Montelepre, where, the narrator tells us, the population is dominated by '*omertà*, passion and fear.' However, as Laura Wittman points out, the film which bears his name is not really about Giuliano at all – in fact, we only see him up close after his death – but about Sicily and the web of corruption and impenetrability that has haunted the island for centuries. Rosi's enigmatic, non-linear narrative comments on the ambiguity surrounding Giuliano's life, death, and deeds, and is meant to prompt scepticism, to get us to think beyond the 'whodunnit' of the bandit's death, and to lead us on an investigation into the serious face of power, what Rosi labels the 'holy trinity': 'the Mafia, bandits, and the police.' Michael Cimino's American production *The Sicilian* (1987) offers a drastically different portrait of the bandit, one that, as Chiara Mazzucchelli points out, aligns Giuliano with the New World/American values of capitalism and determination and thus sets him apart from his native Sicily, which Cimino imbues with an overwhelming sense of Lampedusian slumber (in fact, Giuliano wrote to Henry Truman entreating him to annex Sicily to the U.S.). Cimino constructs Giuliano as a mythic hero who cooperates with the Mafia only under duress, and thus Giuliano becomes a tragic figure as he attempts to exact change in

a land where nothing changes. Cimino's straightforward take on a historically complex and unresolved tale is in line with the Coppola trilogy in its construction of Sicily as America's subordinate other.

Corleone, just twenty miles from Montelepre, is the home of Placido Rizzotto, the title character of Pasquale Scimeca's film from 2000. Rizzotto has returned from fighting with the Partisan Resistance at the end of the Second World War to find his town in the stronghold of the Cosa Nostra. While Giuliano's alliances are still up for debate, Rizzotto was clearly united with the subaltern classes. As head of the local labour union, he engaged Michele Navarra and Luciano Leggio, contemporary and future *capo dei capi* of the Corleonesi, in a battle to reclaim land illegally appropriated by the Mafia, for which he paid with his life. Scimeca's film, as discussed by Amy Boylan, offers a 'different view of Corleone' from that of Coppola: the mobster who lived by the rules of rustic chivalry and old-fashioned courtship is replaced by one who uses excessive violence, such as rape and the *lupara bianca*, or murder where the body disappears, to achieve his goals. Although quite regional in subject matter, Scimeca's film elevates a previously little-known figure to the status of national martyr through proposing a subtle comparison between the battle against Mafia and the battle against Italian fascism. In doing so, the director reminds the viewer of the vital role that cinema can play in witnessing, remembering, and commemorating those fallen.

Films like *Salvatore Giuliano* made in the 1960s and 1970s, however, leave the viewer with more questions than answers regarding the nefarious reach of the *piovra* with the goal of prompting us to continue our research long after the screen goes black. Many films of this period fall into the classification of 'political cinema' or *film inchiesta*, the investigative film, which presents both facts and conjecture around a well-known event that the viewer is left to interpret. Yet, due to the convoluted and impermeable nature of the Italian legal system, not to mention Italian cultural life at large, clarity is frequently wanting, as is the case with Francesco Rosi's depiction of Charles 'Lucky' Luciano, the notorious Italian-American mob boss whose career spanned several continents. Luciano infamously consolidated his power in America on the night of the 'Sicilian vespers,' between 10 and 11 September 1931, when he ordered the murder of around forty Mafiosi. In 1936, he was arrested and imprisoned on prostitution charges, was repatriated to Italy in 1946 under circumstances that are still up for debate today, and eventually died of a heart attack in 1962 in the Naples airport. In

Lucky Luciano (1973), Rosi is not interested in getting to the bottom of the facts surrounding the relationship between Luciano, the FBI, the Narcotics Bureau, and the Italian authorities (Luciano was instrumental in the heroin trade of the 1950s and 1960s that connected the American and Italian Mafias). Instead, as Gaetana Marrone puts forward, Rosi offers a deliberately ambiguous exposé of what facts are known around the Luciano case in order prompt us to rethink previously accepted ideas or challenge the official point of view (that Luciand's release in 1946 was part of a deal made with the U.S. government because he helped facilitate the allied invasion in Sicily, for example). Rosi knows that there are no simple formulas for eradicating the Mafia. His films show this through his journalistic approach which is deliberately alienating, anti-lyrical, and non-conclusive.

Neat conclusions and happy endings are absent from the novels and short stories of Leonardo Sciascia, whose writings during the 1960s and 1970s on the infrangible bond between the government, the church, big business, and organized crime have garnered him international acclaim. Three film adaptations of his novels are included in the volume. The first, *Il giorno della civetta* (*The Day of the Owl*), published in 1961 and adapted to the screen in 1968 by Damiano Damiani, turns the narrative conventions of the thriller genre, known in Italy as the *giallo*, upside down. In Damiani's Sicily, reason and the law, personified in Captain Bellodi who hails from the north and is dead set on exposing the local Mafia Don as a murderer, are trumped at every turn. Although, as Piero Garofalo demonstrates, Bellodi ultimately fails, the reasons for which are shown by the film's director who unmasks the intricate system of corruption based on favouritism and personal justice that extends from the Mafia to the Christian Democratic Party. The director borrows heavily from the western genre, and turns the unnamed Sicilian town into a 'land outside of time,' from which the law-abiding sheriff is banished and where Mafia law stands in for an absent and negligent state.

In 1966 Sciascia pushed his blatant critique of the all-too-easy collusion of organized crime and regional and national politics further in *A ciascuno il suo* (*To Each His Own*), which was adapted the following year by Elio Petri. This time, his 'detective' is a local, a teacher who takes an interest in a double homicide out of pure intellectual curiosity. Daniela Bini shows that while both works critique the ineffective leftist intellectual, and by extension the impotent and compromised Communist Party in Italy, Petri's didactic film is much more politically engaged. Here, Professor Laurana is intent on bringing the guilty to justice.

Writing is central to both works, yet in Petri, the words seem to leap from the page and lead the viewer on an investigation into an impuissant legal system. Ultimately, our protagonist is unable to understand the world around him and is easily distracted by Luisa Roscio, cast as a femme fatale, who leads him to an untimely demise. Petri's expansion of the figure of the femme fatale raises questions regarding the imbrication of eros and thanatos in a Mafia context.

Opening scenes of Rosi's *Cadaveri eccellenti* (*Illustrious Corpses*, 1976, originally published by Sciascia in 1971 as *Equal Danger*) establish connections between death, power, and cultural decay that run throughout the film. Although in the novel Sciascia leaves the socio-political scene purposefully ambiguous, Rosi grounds it in present-day Italy, creating a poignant exposition of the abuses of power so common during the 'leaden years' or period of intense terrorism in Italy, which lasted roughly from 1968 to 1980. The film touches upon many acute contemporary problems such as a fear of a coup d'état, the 'strategy of tension,' or terrorist attacks designed by extreme rightwing groups to create a generalized sense of panic and chaos, and the 'historic compromise' by which the Communist Party would back the Christian Democrats so as to foster a stronger and more stable government. Alan O'Leary informs us that 'Mafia' in the film is meant to be read metaphorically for corrupt absolute power at large and that the cameras, documents, and tape recorders so omnipresent in the film are tools used to survey the general public – all of which remind the viewer of the organizations' tentacular reach.

In comparison, Alberto Lattuada's dark comedy *Il mafioso* (1962) would initially have the viewer think that the Cosa Nostra was excessively confined within Sicily. Nelson Moe, however, demonstrates the director's interest in deconstructing the stereotypical dualism that positions the north as modern, industrial, and technological and the south as primitive, uncivilized, and traditional through looking at the trope of precision in the film, a vital trait for both the floor manager of a Milanese Fiat factory and a cold-blooded killer. Nostalgia turns into nightmare during the protagonist Antonio's much-awaited return to his native Calamo in Sicily from Milan as he slowly realizes that he has gone from being a big shot in the north to just another cog in a very large and ever expanding wheel. When, early in the film, he enthusiastically declares to his blond wife and daughters that the bridge connecting Sicily to the mainland will be built in the very near future, we cannot help but pick up on Lattuada's prescient irony of almost half a

century earlier. While up north, Antonio might embody modern values and support his wife's semi-emancipation, he is 'Sicilian at heart,' meaning he falls back without difficulty into the ubiquitous honour politics of his small town and becomes just another *picciotto*, or low-ranking Mafia soldier, an easy target to be exploited. Lattuada's film, in particular in its focus on regional identity, codes of honour, and internal migration undoubtedly inspired Lina Wertmüller's *Mimì metallurgico, ferito nell'onore* (*The Seduction of Mimì*) of ten years later.

The second comedy treated in this section of the volume, as argued by Thomas Harrison, posits that the Mafia is a synecdoche for Italy at large through tracing Mimì's identification trajectory throughout the film. Although Mimì's abrupt shift from outspoken member of the Communist Party at home and in the northern city of Turin in the context of the 'Hot autumn' of 1969 to *picciotto* for the Mafia of Catania might seem implausible, Harrison demonstrates that Mimì's political activism is always trumped by a patriarchal clan mentality, which is the basis of the Mafia family, made clear when the supposed liberally minded Mimì screams, after having learned of his wife's infidelity, 'screw communism, I am a cuckold!' Mob thinking, in particular the thirst for revenge, de rigueur subservience of women, and hyperbolic emphasis on personal honour, finds its roots in the traditional family unit, whose structure is the blueprint for the Mafia hierarchy.

While Mimì, victim to his wounded honour, conforms to societal pressures and reaffirms the primacy of amoral familism, which is a linchpin to Mafia psychology, other figures fight for the right to live, and to live without fear, basic civil liberties methodically attacked by the organization. Marco Tullio Giordana's *The Hundred Steps*, released in the same year as *Placido Rizzotto*, tells the story of passionate anti-Mafia activist Peppino Impastato, born in Cinisi in 1948 into a family with ties to the Cosa Nostra and who was violently murdered thirty years later on the order of capofamiglia Gaetano (Tano) Badalamenti. As George de Stefano argues, Giordana's film reminds us that Peppino's struggle against the Mafia is also against his father, who he outrightly refuses to 'honour,' identifying instead with his mother Felicia with whom he has a deep, yet ambivalent relationship coloured by Oedipal undertones. Felicia represents a counterpoint to the traditional Mafia wife and mother whose primary task is to instill Mafia values, such as the transmission of the cult of vendetta, in her children. Both in the film and real life, Felicia supports her son's rebellion and after his death became actively involved with her surviving son Giovanni in the

anti-Mafia campaign. Peppino's murder represents another case of *lupara bianca*, the aim of which is to deprive the family of the basic rite to bury, and therefore to properly grieve, the dead. And although his death is overshadowed in the national scene by the murder of ex-prime minister Aldo Moro by the Red Brigades, Giordana celebrates his martyr status through concluding his film with a fictionalization of a popular anti-Mafia rally held in his name days after his death.

The figure of Aldo Moro, one of the chief architects of the aforementioned Historic Compromise, haunts Gabriele Salvatores' *Io non ho paura* (*I'm Not Scared*, 2003) which is set in a remote village in Apulia during the summer of Peppino's and Moros' assassinations. Although the film does not directly reference the *Sacra corona unita*, the Mafia of south-eastern Italy, the topos of kidnapping, one of the branch's most historically lucrative endeavours, links the group of desperate villagers to the organization at large. As Michael O'Riley tells us, the film is about missed opportunities and unfinished projects, both within the economy of the film between the southern peasantry and the northern bourgeoisie and in the broader cultural context of Antonio Gramsci's southern question by which the northern proletariat would assist and therefore mobilize the agrarian south. Ultimately, Salvatores' small-time crooks are motivated by the promise of capitalism, which remains elusive. The final images of an unrealized union between the two child protagonists suggests that not much has changed in terms of regional politics, economic disparity, or state intervention since the films of Lattuada or Wertmüller.

Just one year after Peppino and Moro were murdered, Giorgio Ambrosoli, the lawyer responsible for the liquidation of corrupt international banker Michele Sindona's accounts, was gunned down outside of his Milanese flat on orders from Sindona. As Carlo Testa points out, Michele Placido's representation of Ambrosoli in *Un eroe borghese* (*A Bourgeois Hero*, 1995) highlights the crusader's isolated position in his battle against the Mafia and its accompanying 'spider-web' of egregious corruption. Testa outlines the various key players in the Ambrosoli case, including Italian banks and bankers, the Catholic Church, high-ranking politicians across the political spectrum, the Italian and Italian-American Mafia and the Freemason Lodge called 'Propaganda 2,' and argues that Placido's ethically committed film is faithful to an 'ideal of understatement' that encapsulates Ambrosoli's selflessness.

Many are the fallen in the battle against the Mafia. Yet, it is not until the murder of Judges Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino within less than two months of each other in 1992 in Capaci and Palermo, respectively, that the anti-Mafia crusade came to occupy centre stage in the international media. For the first time since its inception 130 years earlier, there emerged a heightened, albeit temporary, awareness of the organization's homicidal potential and an immediate, yet short lived governmental crackdown against organized crime. It is the fallout from the death of these two 'excellent cadavers' that haunts Ricky Tognazzi's film *La scorta* released in the following year, even though neither judge is mentioned therein. Instead, the film focuses not on a central martyr figure, but on the peripheral yet indispensable group of *scorta*, or bodyguards, charged with protecting a judge loosely based on real-life magistrate Francesco Taurisano. The circumstances under which these men work – there are only two bulletproof vests for four men and there is no armoured car at their disposal – not only shock the modern viewer but also remind us of the perils those who are committed to the anti-Mafia struggle place themselves in on a daily basis. The film, as Myriam Ruthenberg notes, is a sort of male-bonding movie under the most stressful of circumstances that offers a new take on the family/Mafia family dichotomy. The alternative family formed by these men through communal rituals such as dining is based on an ethical commitment to the community at large and leaves the viewer with a sense of hope that communal solidarity will eventually translate into actual changes in the socio-political arena.

Marco Turco's 2005 documentary *In un altro paese* (*Excellent Cadavers*) based on the homonymous book by Alexander Stille from 1995, shatters any optimism conveyed in Tognazzi's film. Instead, as Maddalena Spazzini puts forth, the documentary that begins with the assassinations of Judges Falcone and Borsellino and then traces their efforts in the anti-Mafia campaign – in particular their work with the Maxi trial and appeals process during the mid 1980s and early 1990s that led to the conviction of 360 Mafiosi – concludes on a much more somber note. Indeed, although the film represents a clear indictment of the collusion between the Mafia and government politics, it insinuates that, although Palermo is by no means the war zone that it was in the early 1980s (when there were three Mafia-related deaths per week), the organization succeeded in further entrenching itself in the government at all levels. (Stille, the film's narrator, tells us that over 80 per cent of Palermo

businesses are forced to pay bribe money to the mob.) In its juxtaposition of extremely graphic images of Mafia-related deaths, many of them taken by photojournalist and anti-Mafia activist Letizia Battaglia, and newsreel footage that functions to humanize Judges Falcone and Borsellino, among others, Turco's exposé strips all vestiges of glamour from the Mafiosi of the Cosa Nostra. But the overarching public reaction following the murder of several 'excellent cadavers' in the early 1990s prompted the ever-adaptable Mafia to be less public and to enter into new, more legitimate lines of business.

With the documentary *La mafia è bianca* (*The Mafia Is White*), released in the same year as Turco's film, Stefano Maria Bianchi and Alberto Nerazzini denounce the Mafia's infiltration into and misuse of the health care system in Sicily, in particular through handpicking many of the directors of private, and very well governmentally funded, clinics. Robin Pickering-Iazzi positions this film as being in line with several other recent documentaries about the Mafia. He discusses the particularly challenging task of discerning the contours of an 'invisible Mafia,' which is not one that we see on the street corner, in the midst of illegal activity, but one that has seamlessly manoeuvred itself into regional politics and a corrupt health care system. While public hospitals are underfunded, understaffed, and literally falling apart, private clinics are flourishing, with a large portion of the profits going into the pockets of the likes of Bernardo Provenzano, ex-boss of bosses who was on the run for forty-three years until his arrest in 2006. Ultimately, Bianchi and Nerazzini position the viewer as witness to an unseen crime, with the hopes of fostering debate and, eventually, rebellion.

Set in a boy's reformatory in contemporary Palermo, Marco Risi's *Mery per sempre* (*Forever Mary*, 1989) offers a look into a taboo subject in the Mafia milieu: the threat of homosexuality and transvestism in a subculture governed by phallocentric values. Risi, as noted by George de Stefano, attempts to breakdown the classic male/female binary by proposing a new type of father figure in Virzì, a teacher sent from the north but Sicilian in origin who accepts the title character's sexual difference and attempts to get his pupils to think outside the narrow framework demanded by allegiance to Mafia values. Virzì's teachings temporarily stand in for Mafia law, yet, paradoxically, only within the walls of a prison-space. Once the boys leave, the film implies that heteronormative practices in the Mafia context, including rape or the compulsory dependence upon *omertà*, will win out over any sort of enlightened perspective.

Point of view is fundamental to Catherine O'Rawe's chapter on Roberta Torre's film *Angela* from 2002. Based on a true story, Torre's film is extraordinary in its attempt to give voice and vision to the daily ins and outs of a woman working with and married to the mob. O'Rawe questions whether it is possible to make a 'woman's film' in the hypermasculinized Mafia context, and explores genre and performance to conclude that it does not succeed in representing the female condition, even though the film is centred on Angela and relates her experiences as a Mafia wife and drug courier in present-day Palermo, her affair with another Mafioso, and her arrest and court proceedings. That is, at the end of the film we do not 'know' Angela at all. Instead, due to both the generic constraints of the mob movie genre and the actual physical constraints with which Mafia women must live daily, the title character is in the end fundamentally left adrift in a no (wo)man's land and deprived of any agency.

Both Torre and Paolo Sorrentino in *Le conseguenze dell'amore* (*The Consequences of Love*, 2004) borrow heavily from the tradition of Italian film noir, in particular the use of colour, shadow, and angulation, to critically represent the Mafia. Mary Wood analyses noir conventions in Sorrentino's film in order to pin down the director's representation of the new millennium Mafia in the context of globalization, where almost everything, as a result of both a corrupt media and international commerce, might well be tinged by the organization. Sorrentino's main protagonist is on the surface a reserved man exiled from Sicily to live a solitary life in Lugano, Switzerland, as punishment for having lost the Cosa Nostra billions of dollars. If the Mafia is everywhere, how can we see it? Wood answers this question through looking at the film's style, in particular at moments where narrative is disrupted and the viewer is made aware of the split between Titta's cool and controlled exterior, key elements to the Mafia's code and culture, and his more hidden attributes that are at odds with the Mafia essence: humanity, generosity, memory, and most importantly, that which leads him to his demise: love.

Sorrentino's film demonstrates how far the Cosa Nostra has advanced in terms of a 'modernization project,'[16] in particular its global reach, immense wealth, and relative autonomy. Although often grouped together with Italy's other Mafias, the workings and history of the Camorra are remarkably different than the Cosa Nostra,[17] most notably in its structure. This is described by Roberto Saviano in *Gomorrah* as more of an intricate 'system' of both corrupt and legitimate connections

into national and international commerce, industry and politics, which resembles a spider's web more than a triangle and is responsible for 4,000 deaths over the last thirty years, or, as pointed out by the author, one every three days. Furthermore, some historians trace the inception of the Camorra to the prison system of 1500s. Therefore, while Cosa Nostra was originally rural in nature, the Camorra was a product of the urban centre, a motif played out in Francesco Rosi's *Le mani sulla città* (*Hands Over the City*, 1963), which engages the Camorra's long-standing monopoly over the building sector. Another apt example of 'political cinema,' Rosi's film is interested in exposing the corrupt system of quid pro quo based on kickbacks and patronage that involved regional politicians and real estate speculators in the postwar period of accelerated urban planning and expansion known as the 'sack on Naples.' Anna Paparcone points out that although the word 'Camorra' is never mentioned in the film, Rosi superbly captures the essence of the association: seamless collaboration between economic and political sectors. Sweeping aerial shots of the city remind the viewer that every new development project has already been planned to the advantage of the wealthy and unscrupulous who prey on the disenfranchised who are easily manipulated into voting in the next Mafia-backed ticket.

The complete negligence of the state in the new millennium is exposed by Antonio and Andrea Frazzi in *Certi bambini* (2004), which is unique in its focus on how the contemporary Camorra preys on children, a more recent phenomenon resulting from the status of minors as immune from prosecution. As Allison Cooper notes, social institutions in and outside of the film are morally bankrupt and have failed the populace; subsequently, the children of the film's title easily turn towards local members of the Camorra, who are tempting surrogate fathers to step in where other families and institutions have failed them. Rosario, the film's eleven-year-old protagonist, journeys through the slums of Naples and introduces the viewer to the ins and outs of the everyday existence of a soon-to-be-initiated *camorrista*, which involves petty crime, pedophilia, a visit to a pre-pubescent girl prostituted by her mother, and, finally, cold-blooded murder. The Frazzi brothers' message is clear: in a dystopian society where civilization is thwarted or lacking, the appeal of ritualized violence generally wins out.

The final film treated in the volume is Matteo Garrone's hit *Gomorrah* from 2008, based on Roberto Saviano's best-selling eponymous novel and filmed on location in the Camorra strongholds of Scampia and

Secondigliano. Pierpaolo Antonello tells us that while Saviano's text, which is a composite of detective fiction, horror novel, pulp fiction, and reportage, does to some extent mythologize the very mobsters it intends to denounce, the film does no such thing. Instead, Garrone's raw 'anthropological look' at the Camorra strips its members of any vestiges of glamour or mystique they attempt to cultivate through their obsessive imitating of Mafia movie icons. The film ends by presenting a list of facts regarding the Camorra's international reach – the number of people killed, the extent and profitability of the drug trade, and the vast expanse of toxic waste and dramatic increase in cancer in the region. The final message that 'the Camorra invested in the reconstruction of the World Trade Center,' speaks directly to the American viewer, and reminds us that the Mafia is all about self presentation, remessaging, and repackaging. With the Mafia, like with most advertising campaigns, the extent to which one cares is equivalent to the extent to which public image is damaged. Ironically, in attempting to wake us up, to remind us of the international grasp of the Camorra, Garrone has us return to a more real, yet very displaced, reality.

NOTES

1 See Nelson Moe, 'Il padrino, la mafia e l'America,' in Gabriella Gribaudi, ed., *Traffici criminali: Camorre, mafie e reti internazionali dell'illegalità* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2009); George De Stefano, *An Offer We Can't Refuse: The Mafia in the Mind of America* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2006); Chris Messenger, *The Godfather and American Culture: How the Corleones Became 'Our Gang'* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002); and Peter Bondanella, *Hollywood Italians: Dagos, Palookas, Romeos, Wise Guys and Sopranos* (New York: Continuum, 2004).

2 Although many commentators argue that the Italian-American mob heyday is in decline, organized crime in the United States is far from defeated. See Bob Ingle and Sandy McClure, *The Soprano State: New Jersey's Culture of Corruption* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008) or Selwyn Raab, *Five Families: The Rise, Decline and Resurgence of America's Most Powerful Mafia Empires* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006).

3 See Robin Pickering-Iazzi's Introduction to *Mafia and Outlaw Stories from Italian Life and Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

4 Or, for that matter, in some historical accounts Leggio seems to have co-opted Don Vito's look and demeanour for his court appearances in 1975.

See John Dickie, *Cosa Nostra: A History of the Sicilian Mafia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2004), 260.

5 Cosmo Landesman, '*Gomorra*,' *Times Online*, 12 October 2008, retrieved 7 November 2008 from http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/film/film_reviews/article4907928.ece

6 Vincenzo Consolo, *Le pietre di Pantalica* (Milan: Mondadori, 1988), 170.

7 See Fred Gardaphè, 'A Class Act: Understanding the Italian/American Gangster,' Ben Lawton, 'Mafia and the Movies: Why is Italian American Synonymous with Organized Crime?' and others in Anna Hostert Camaiti and Anthony Julian Tamburri, eds., *Screening Ethnicity: Cinematographic Representations of Italian Americans in the United States* (Boca Raton: Bordighera, 2001).

8 See Renate Seibert, 'The Family,' in *Secrets of Life and Death: Women and the Mafia*, trans. Liz Heron (London: Verso, 1996).

9 In the chapter 'Death,' in *Secrets of Life and Death*, Renate Seibert applies Hannah Arendt's thesis regarding 'the banality of evil' that played out under the reign of Hitler to the type of 'crude, gratuitous, passionless evil' at work in the Mafia (74).

10 Although the essays are arranged chronologically by release date in two sections, the introduction does take some liberties and groups them thematically. Michael Cimino's film *The Sicilian* is discussed in the Italian film section as it treats the story of a Sicilian bandit.

11 See 'The Mafia Establishes Itself in America,' in Dickie, *Cosa Nostra*, or Thomas Reppetto, *American Mafia: A History of Its Rise to Power* (New York: Henry Holt, 2004).

12 See Anton Blok, 'Mafia and Blood Symbolism,' in Frank K. Salter, ed., *Risky Transactions: Trust, Kinship and Ethnicity* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002), 109–28.

13 For a complete history of the Genovese, Bonanno/Massino, Lucchese, Gambino, and Colombo families, see Raab, *Five Families*.

14 See Siebert, *Secrets of Life and Death*, where she argues that the Mafioso must renounce all feminine qualities in order to enter into 'the most holy of mothers' (56).

15 See Christopher Duggan, *Fascism and the Mafia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) for the most thorough discussion of the period. Pasquale Squitieri's film *Il prefetto di ferro* (*The Iron Prefect*, 1977) fictionalizes Mori's time in Sicily.

16 Felia Allum and Percy Allum, 'Revisiting Naples: Clientelism and Organized Crime,' *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 13, no. 3 (2008): 340–65.

17 For a discussion of the Camorra's recent evolution and expansion, see Felia Allum, *Camorristi, Politicians and Businessmen: The Transformation of Organized Crime in Post-War Naples* (Leeds: Northern Universities Press, 2008). For a more general history of the Camorra, see Isaia Sales, *La camorra, le camorre* (Rome: Riuniti, 1988) or Tom Behan, *See Naples and Die: The Camorra and Organized Crime* (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2002).