

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The power-related conflict happens when two people or more struggle to get more power and most of them will do anything to achieve the power they want. According to Merriam-Webster online dictionary, power means “possession of control, authority, or influence over others” (“power”). The conflicts that occur because of power still happen nowadays. It is one of the biggest issues that may lead into conflicts between human beings. Thirst of power manipulates human behaviour towards others. Some people can control their hunger for power, but others cannot manage to control it.

Power-related conflicts often become good sources in a crime novel. One of the most famous crime novelists, Mario Puzo, also uses power-related conflicts in his best-selling novel *The Godfather*. Mario Puzo (1920-1999) was known for his underworld mafia and crime novels. He published his first novel *Dark Arena* in 1955 and his second novel *The Fortunate Pilgrim* in 1965. Neither of his first two novels became a best-seller, but he received good reviews from American

readers for both of them. In 1969 he published *The Godfather*, which soon became the best-selling novel in America and he made a lot of fortune from this novel. “As of 1997, there were 21 million copies sold worldwide” (Malta). In 1972, Francis Ford Coppola, an American movie director, made the movie adaptation of this novel and the movie won three Academy Awards and Puzo himself won the Oscar for the Best Adapted Screenplay. Marlon Brando, the actor who acts as Vito Corleone in the movie, won two awards which are the best actor in a leading role on 45th Academy Awards and the best motion picture actor on 30th Golden Globe Awards.

R. Z. Sheppard, a critic, describes Mario Puzo as follows: "The Godfather of Mafia fiction, Mario Puzo has built an empire of best-selling fictional tales from the world of organized crime" (“Mario Puzo Biography”). In his best-selling novel *The Godfather*, Don Vito Corleone’s quote “I’ll make him an offer he can’t refuse” (Puzo 40) has become very famous in American popular culture.

According to Lawrence Perrine’s book, conflict is “a clash of actions, ideas, desires, or wills. The main character may be pitted against some other person or group of persons (man against man); he may be in conflict with some external force (man against nature) or he maybe in conflict with some element in his own nature (man against himself). The conflict may be physical, mental, emotional, or moral. (Perrine 44-45)

The story of *The Godfather* portrays the life of the Italian organized crime families in America. The story takes place in New York City after World War II when the Italian-American mafia families are flourishing in America. They are known for their violence and greed for power. Unlike low-class criminals, they

are very well-organized in their illegal business such as narcotics, prostitution and gambling. They are known for their vow of silence called “*omerta*” which means the member of the mafia family will not talk about their mafia family or their involvement in mafia no matter what happens to them. “La Cosa Nostra is the foremost organized criminal threat to American society. Literally translated into English, it means “this thing of ours.” It is a nationwide alliance of criminals linked by blood ties or through conspiracy dedicated to pursuing crime and protecting its members.” (“La Cosa Nostra”). This novel also includes the story about five-families of New York City which is based on real mafia families. The five-families of New York City, namely Bonanno, Colombo, Gambino, Genovese, and Luchesse, are the biggest mafia families operating in New York City.

The Godfather contains a lot of conflicts, and most of them are related to the greed for power. The major characters are in conflict against each other because their greed for power. In this thesis I will analyse six social conflicts that happens between the major characters in this novel which are related to the main issue about power.

Statement of the Problem

The problems I am going to discuss are:

1. What social conflicts are experienced by the characters in the novel?
2. What are the causes of the social conflicts?
3. What are the resolutions to the social conflicts?

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of the study are:

1. To know the social conflicts experienced by the characters in the novel

2. To analyse the causes of the social conflicts
3. To analyse the resolutions to the social conflicts

Method of Research

I used library research in writing my thesis. First, I read Mario Puzo's *The Godfather* as my primary text. Second, I found the most important elements to be analysed, which were the conflicts in the novel. Third, I look for other sources both printed and from the internet to support the analysis. After that, I analysed the social conflicts, then I drew some conclusions from my analysis. Finally, I wrote the thesis.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of three chapters. Chapter One is the Introduction, which consists of the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two contains the analysis of the social conflicts in Mario Puzo's *The Godfather*. Chapter Three is the Conclusion; then followed by the Bibliography and the Appendices, which contain the summary of the novel and the biography of the author.