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Caesars and Corleones:
Augustan Rome and *The Godfather*

By Edythe T. Malara

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Submitted for Honors in the Department of Classics

UNION COLLEGE

June, 2016

To my hero, mi abuelo, Lesmes Rodrigo.

You loved learning, books and school supplies. Thank you for giving me your appreciation for education.

Your life inspires me. Your family lived on one chicken a week during the Great Depression; you spent a term at Union, but could not afford any more.

You swept the floors at General Electric, but after years of hard work you ran the Aerospace division.

You struggled with heart disease, but you never struggled with your faith.

Your courage never expired, even as you received one of the first heart transplants in Upstate New York.

This thesis and four years of hard work is for you. You started your education at Union, and I finished for you.

We both walked by the Nott.

Now we will both walk at graduation: me in my cap and gown, with your spirit that has been with me since volaste a Dios.

Te amo para siempre.

Abstract:

What do *The Godfather* and the Roman Empire have in common? This thesis will compare the Augustan period of the Roman Empire and Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather*. Themes such as power, religion, family, and morality play a large role in *The Godfather* as well as in the life of Augustus. Even the personal character of Augustus seems to parallel the character of Don Vito Corleone. First, a historical background is provided about Augustus, the empire he ran, and how he ran it. I examine excerpts from famous authors of antiquity such as Suetonius, Cassius Dio, and Horace. I also examine the *Res Gestae*, the accomplishments of Augustus, as well as the Ara Pacis. These texts and monuments depict Augustus as a patriotic, paternal, and paradoxical figure. These characteristics seem to apply to the character of Vito as well. The historical arc of the life of Augustus, with the results of the transfer from the *pater patriae* to later emperors, will also be described as paralleling the history of the Corleone family's many transitions.

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Don Vito Corleone was both a ruthless killer and a devoted family man. His character in *The Godfather*, directed by Francis Ford Coppola, is a paternal, powerful and paradoxical leader. He protected and guided the people who looked up to him, and was loved so much that after he was gone, his successor, his son Michael, would act as a Don who was trying to emulate what was once great: the era of his father, Vito. Another paternal, powerful, and paradoxical leader who was beloved, feared, and one who would be the model leader for his Empire's successors, was the Roman Emperor, Augustus. Immense parallels can be drawn between the film and the Augustan Era of the Roman Empire. The parallels bridge the two worlds of Classics and Film Studies, while shedding light on approaching the ancient world with a modern lens and the modern world with an ancient lens.

* * *

Suetonius, who lived after Augustus from 70 CE to 130 CE, wrote extensively on the lives of the Caesars. His work on Augustus provides answers to questions and how he behaved in different situations, which helps define his character as a person and as a leader. Other topics include information about how Augustus felt about making new friendships, or how he decided who to spare punishment and who not to. Other topics Suetonius wrote about can give us an idea of what type of character Augustus had. Topics such as Augustus' feelings about family, how he implemented religion into his rule, and even information about how he decorated his home. Interestingly, Suetonius also provided evidence about the death of Augustus that seems to allude to foreshadowing of the event.

Suetonius' writings on Augustus paint a picture of his personality, character, and his life as a prominent leader. Certain sections of his account on Augustus give an impression of him that parallels Don Vito Corleone from *The Godfather*. Suetonius provided evidence of the parallels included in sections which discussed what he was like at dinner parties, his responsibility to his greater family, instances of foreshadowing, implementation of religion, making friends and his intolerance for disrespect.

Suetonius 74 elaborates on Augustus and his dinner parties¹:

“He gave dinner parties constantly and always formally, with great regard to the rank and personality of his guests.”

“Augustus himself writes that he once entertained a man at whose villa he used to stop, who had been one of his body-guard. He would sometimes come to table late on these occasions and leave early, allowing his guests to begin to dine before he took his place and keep their places after he went out.”

“...[he] introduced music and actors, or even strolling players from the circus, and especially storytellers.”

Augustus did not discriminate with whom he would celebrate, for he was even known to entertain his bodyguard. His frequent dinner parties show that in Augustus' character, time spent with his family, greater family and friends was very important to him—important enough to have parties with them ‘constantly.’ The mention from Suetonius that Augustus would bring in musical acts and other entertainment shows, and mentions that he would not tend to be at the dinners long, arriving late and leaving early, shows that he cared about if his guests were enjoying themselves.

¹ All translations of Suetonius are from the published translations in the Loeb Classical Library.

Responsibility to family was very important to Augustus and Vito Corleone.

Augustus' responsibility to his greater family is written about by Suetonius in section 30:

He divided the area of the city into regions and wards, arranging that the former should be under the charge of magistrates selected each year by lot, and the latter under "masters" elected by the inhabitants of the respective neighborhoods. To guard against fires he devised a system of stations of night watchmen, and to control the floods he widened and cleared out the channel of the Tiber, which had for some time been filled with rubbish and narrowed by jutting buildings. Further, to make the approach to the city easier from every direction, he personally undertook to rebuild the Flaminian Road all the way to Arminius, and assigned the rest of the high-ways to others who had been honored with triumphs, asking them to use their prize-money in paving them.

According to Suetonius in this segment, Augustus had implemented an organizational system of running Rome. Augustus wanted it to be run efficiently and in the best interest of the Roman people. He was looking out for the Roman people, as a father would for his family, by taking the role as a protective figure. By creating a system of fire prevention—fire being a significant issue in the ancient world, he displayed to his people that he actually cared about their wellbeing. By personally rebuilding the Flaminian Road that was to be used for future triumphs, he eternally ingrained his legacy into the minds of the Roman people—for every Roman in attendance at the triumphs on the Flaminian Road would remember that their 'father' Augustus had been the one who made it possible for them to watch the triumphs on that road.

In *The Godfather*, there are scenes of foreshadowing, and specific signifiers of misfortune and crime. In Suetonius 97, there is also evidence of a type of foreshadowing:

“His death, too, of which I shall speak next, and his deification after death, were known in advance by unmistakable signs. As he was bringing the lustrum to an end in the Campus Martius before a great throng of people, an eagle flew several

times about him and then going across to the temple hard by, perched above the first letter of Agrippa's name.”

“At about the same time the first letter of his name was melted from the inscription on one of his statues by a flash of lightning; this was interpreted to mean that he would live only a hundred days from that time, the number indicated by the letter C, and that he would be numbered with the gods, since aesar (that is, the part of the name Caesar which was left) is the word for god in the Etruscan tongue.”

Just as foreshadowing is planted in works of literature or in films, evidence of real life foreshadowing was very present in the life of Augustus. Suetonius provides us with examples from the foreshadowing signs of Augustus’ death. Romans, generally speaking were a very superstitious people who took all omens and signs from their environment very seriously. So, when the signs explained above by Suetonius occurred, it seemed clear that Augustus would pass soon, and that he would also be deified.

The implementation of religion was important to Augustus’ effort to associate himself with not only the deities, but also with ethics and morality. Suetonius writes about this topic in section 31:

“...He increased the number and importance of the priests, and also their allowances and privileges, in particular those of the Vestal virgins. Moreover, when there was occasion to choose another vestal in place of one who had died, and many used all their influence to avoid submitting their daughters to the hazard of the lot, he solemnly swore that if anyone of his grand-daughters were of eligible age, he would have proposed her name. He also revived some of the ancient rites which had gradually fallen into disuse, such as the augury of Safety, the office of Flamen Dialis, the ceremonies of the Lupercalia, the Secular Games, and the festival of the Compitalia. At the Lupercalia he forbade beardless youths to join in the running, and at the Secular Games he wouldn't allow young people of either sex to attend any entertainment by night except in company with some adult relative. He provided that the Lares of the Crossroads should be crowned twice a year, with spring and summer flowers.”

In this section, Suetonius describes how Augustus increased the importance of religion in the lives of Romans. He influenced this by making more religious positions available attached with a wider range of privileges that are associated with being a priest or Vestal Virgin. Augustus also increased awareness and participation in religion by reinstating the ceremonies described above: the Lupercalia, the Secular Games, and the festival of Compitalia. These events put religion in the spotlight—for example the Secular Games would have been held as all ancient games were which began with the ancient Greek games: as religious dedications to the gods. It is extremely significant that Augustus brought back the Lupercalia, usually held around our modern Valentine's Day. This was a holiday that celebrated the foundation story of Rome. It was to honor the *Lupa*, female wolf, who mothered the founder of Rome, Romulus and his twin brother Remus. Augustus often found ways to connect himself in the eyes of the public with the foundation of Rome to emphasize his role as *Pater Patriae*, the Father of Rome. Also, by Augustus issuing that the Lares of the Crossroads were to be decorated with flowers in the spring and in the summer, it was a way of influencing the Roman people to fall in love with their Empire. Appearance of one's surroundings has a profound mental effect on one's quality of life. Beautiful flowers would have not only showed the Roman people that their emperor loved his empire enough to adorn it, but it would have been aesthetically pleasing to them.

It is not often that we learn about the personal qualities of individuals from antiquity, unless they are recorded. Suetonius was able to create a humanistic image of Augustus for later generations by writing about how he was as a person, not just as an

emperor. In section 66, he wrote about Augustus' hesitation in making friends which can tell the modern world more about the personality and character of Augustus:

“He did not readily make friends, but he clung to them with the utmost constancy, not only suitably rewarding their virtues and deserts but even condoning their faults, provided they were not too great.”

He did not seem to easily trust people upon meeting them but if an individual was one that Augustus respected and considered a friend, then that man would receive his praise even if they were in the wrong.

“In return he demanded of his friends affection on their part, both in life and after death. For though he was in no sense a legacy-hunter, and in fact could never bring himself to accept anything from the will of a stranger, yet he was highly sensitive in weighing the death-bed utterances of his friends, concealing neither his chagrin if he was left a niggardly bequest or one unaccompanied by compliments, nor his satisfaction, if he was praised in terms of gratitude and affection. Whenever legacies or shares in inheritances were left him by men of any station who had offspring, he either turned them over to the children at once, or if the latter were in their minority, paid the money back with interest on the day when they assumed the gown of manhood or married.”

Suetonius continues to add that in exchange for the effort of starting and maintaining a friendship, Augustus expected the same amount of effort from his friends to express proper respect towards him. Augustus' unwillingness to express trust toward strangers even went as far as him not accepting anything, such as inheritances, left to him by people he did not know well. Given his very respectful and honorable character, he would bestow the unwanted gestures to the children of the stranger, and even allow it to accrue interest if it could not immediately be given to the children due to young age.

Additionally to the subject of how Augustus felt about making friends, information about the simplicity of Augustus' home can further our knowledge about the personality and character of Augustus. This is mentioned in section 73 of Suetonius:

“The simplicity of his furniture and household goods may be seen from couches and tables still in existence, many of which are scarcely fine enough for a private citizen. They say that he always slept on a low and plainly furnished bed. Except on special occasions he wore common clothes for the house, made by his sister, wife, daughter or granddaughters...”

Augustus was a humble man. According to Suetonius he lived with very simple furniture and did not wear flashy clothing. Perhaps Augustus had this humble home to prevent himself from allowing his role of *Pater Patriae* absorb his thoughts. Just like during triumphant processions Augustus had a slave stand behind him and whisper that he was mortal. A humble home would serve the same purpose as the slave, a reminder to Augustus that he should not let his power consume his mental state.. On the contrary however, he also may have lived like this simply because he enjoyed leading a simple life, and that his character was actually humble despite his very high leadership role.

Another section by Suetonius about Augustus that parallels to Vito Corleone, deals with how Augustus dealt with those who would or would not be reprimanded. Evidence about who Augustus chose to spare from punishment and who he chose not spare, are mentioned in section 51 of Suetonius' account of the life of Augustus. It seems that Augustus did not have tolerance for when individuals, no matter their position or rank, were disrespectful to his family. Maintaining respect for the family was very important to Vito and the Corleone family as well. As Father of Rome, and the head of his own family, he did not have mercy for those who spoke words against what he was

responsible for and devoted to. An example of this intolerance for this disrespect toward his family can be found in Suetonius, Volume I.

“Again, when he was hearing a case against Aemilius Aelianus of Corduba and it was made the chief offence, amongst other charges, that he was in the habit of expressing a bad opinion of Caesar, Augustus turned to the accused with assumed anger and said: "I wish you could prove the truth of that. I'll let Aelianus know that I have a tongue as well as he, for I'll say even more about him..."

Here, Augustus was hearing the case of a man from Spain, whose main offense was making his negative opinion of Julius Caesar known. Julius Caesar was the uncle of Augustus and was the one who named Augustus (at that time his name was still Octavian) as his successor. Augustus had made a great effort as emperor to associate himself with the good name of Caesar, because in the eyes of the Roman people, Caesar had a very positive image. So, to Augustus any insult from this man about Caesar was aggressively negative, personally offensive and an insult to not only the imperial family, but additionally also to the Roman people, Augustus' extended family. In this instance, Suetonius explains to us that Augustus spoke with an angry tone to the Spaniard, and wanted him to know that he could be just as awful to him as he was being to the deceased Caesar.

* * *

One predominant and paramount theme throughout the rule of Augustus was the importance of family. Augustus was accustomed to putting his family into the Roman spotlight in a public manner by intertwining his family into areas such as public projects and religion. These areas had an impact on the Roman people because they were heavily

incorporated into the daily lives of Romans. An example of a religious public work that was constructed by Augustus that is infused with the family theme is the *Ara Pacis Augustae*, the Temple of Peace of Augustus. The purpose of this temple was to celebrate the peace, which Augustus brought to Rome upon returning from Spain and Gaul (Severy 2003, 104). Evidence we have about the purpose of construction can be found from writings of Augustus himself, specifically from his *Res Gestae*, “things having been accomplished”. He wrote:

“In the consulships of Tiberius Nero and Publius Quintilius (13 BC), when I returned to Rome after my successful conduct of affairs in Spain and Gaul, the Senate resolved that an altar to Augustan Peace, consecrated to my return, should be set up in the Campus Martius, and ordered that the magistrates, priests, and Vestal Virgins should perform an annual sacrifice.”

This statement from Augustus can give us an idea of the concept of what peace meant for the Romans. It seems that peace celebrated with the *Ara Pacis* was defined from the victory of war activity in Spain and Gaul. Peace was successful acquisition of lands that extended the borders of the Roman Empire. Also, by connecting the involvement of the Vestal Virgins with the annual sacrifice at the *Ara Pacis*, Augustus connected himself to religion and to one of the most highly respected groups of people in antiquity. The Vestals involvement would have attracted large crowds of people to come to the sacrifices. And the crowd would then be exposed to the images on the *Ara Pacis*, which would influence their opinions of Augustus and his family. By including almost every member of his family on the monument, Augustus took “...a clear step toward a defined public role for his private family (Severy, 2003, page 104).” When Augustus incorporated his family, he emphasized that he was the head of the imperial family as the father, which also helped to emphasize to the Roman people that Augustus was the father

of the empire. “In this familial context, the leadership of Augustus himself over Rome is naturally depicted as paternal (Severy, 2003, page 104).” The location of the temple was in a very noticed and public spot in Ancient Rome. It was “...just west of the Via Flaminia in the northern part of the Campus Martius (Severy, 2003, 104).” There are marble walls surrounding the altar, that depict many relief images which connected Augustus to the foundation stories of Rome. There are also relief images that connected his family to both religion and business—all of which further propagated the perceived role of Augustus as the father of Rome in the eyes of the Roman people. There are six different images on the monument. Facing from the front, the frieze on the top left corner is the foundation story



2

of Rome, the Lupercal. This image depicts Romulus and Remus suckling from the She-Wolf. The She-Wolf is the only female in the image; the other two adults in the image are fathers of Romulus and Remus. On the left is Mars, the god of War, and he is the alleged biological father of Romulus and Remus. On the right is Faustulus, the shepherd who found the twins and assumed the role as their adoptive father. There is also a fig tree in the image, which is important to the foundation story because it was the location where the twins floated ashore and were found by the She-Wolf. The significance of this image in shaping the perception of Augustus as a father to Rome is subtle, yet profound.

² All photos of the *Ara Pacis* were taken by myself in Rome, Italy on August 25, 2015

Augustus was associating himself directly with the Foundation story of Rome, and with the images of both fathers of the founder of Rome. By being associated with the birth of Rome and with the father figures in the legend, he was legitimizing and emphasizing his power. What is interesting about this is that he did not blatantly claim himself in this image as the Father of Rome, but used an indirect approach of associating himself with paternal images—one of the tactics of Augustus' propaganda.

The image on the front at the top right is speculated to be one of two options, but whichever one it may have been intended to be, both promote Augustus' *Pater Patriae* image.

The first theory of the frieze is that the man depicted on the right is Aeneas, the son of Venus and a Trojan, sent after the Trojan war to find an area for Rome. He is with some



attendants,
who are
holding
food and
bringing a
pig,
probably
for a
sacrificial
ceremony.
Some
interpret

the young boys in the image to be the son of Aeneas, Iulus, and that he is assisting his father in the sacrifice to the *Penates* (Severy, 2003, page 107). *Penates* were the household gods, which seem to be depicted in the background of the image in a temple. This is very significant that Aeneas was leading the sacrifice, because he was a divine and leading figure from Roman mythology, who was for the first time depicted as *pontifex maximus*, the greatest priest (Severy, 2003, page 107). This is important because later in his time as emperor, Augustus had actually been inaugurated as *pontifex maximus* in 13 B.C.E. (Severy, 2003, page 107). Through the subliminal use of images Augustus in a way became the reincarnation of Aeneas (Severy, 2003, page 107).

The second theory of this relief claims that the man in the image is too old to be Aeneas. If this is so, then it is speculated that the man is Numa Pompilius (Rehark, 2001) —the second king of Rome who established early peace. He established peace when he sacrificed a pig to the household gods. This theory would seem to work as well because the animal being offered and led by the young boys happened to in fact be a pig. If this is the story on the relief, then that would have been the very first altar of peace depiction. By Augustus initiating the creation of the first ever altar of peace depiction, he was associating himself with the ability to be a proper leader. Additionally, by depicting a ruler from very early on in Rome's history, he was additionally engraining his association with the foundation of Rome into the minds of the people, which further enhanced his growing image as the Father of Rome.

On the opposite side of the Ara Pacis, on the same side as the Aeneas/Numa Pompilius image, there is another relief with a speculated depiction.



This relief shows a woman holding two plump babies. She has farm animals at her feet and at her side there are both the personified image of Wind with a swan and Water with a sea creature. Vegetation grows in the background behind the women, Wind and Water. The speculation about this image deals with the specific identity of the woman in the middle. Without a doubt it can be agreed upon that the message associated with her presence is "...rampant fecundity (Severy, 2003, page 107)." Her breasts are accentuated to be made evident on first glance at the relief, there are babies on her lap, and she is surrounded by nature. Given what we see of this fertile woman, her identity can be one of many possibilities. She may have been intended to be Tellus—the goddess of earth. She could also be Pax Augusta—personified Augustan peace. A third possibility may be that she is in fact Ceres, the goddess of fertility and the patron of the harvest. However

another speculation, and one that would further connect Augustus with the foundation stories he depicted on the other side of his Ara Pacis, is that the woman in the center is actually Venus Genetrix. In Latin *Venus Genetrix* is translated to mean the title, Venus the Originator—the woman who gave birth to Rome. This identification certainly connects Augustus to the foundation of Rome— a further facilitation Augustus’ father image in the eyes of the Roman people—but also it is massively significant because of what important previous Roman leader Augustus would be connecting himself with using Venus Genetrix. It is not often that Venus is depicted in this form, and the temple to Venus Genetrix, located on the grounds of the Forum in Rome, was created by Augustus’ beloved predecessor—Julius Caesar. By choosing to express a visual of Venus similarly as Julius Caesar, Augustus had oriented himself in association with his uncle in a religious connotation. Caesar had connected his family lineage back to Venus Genetrix and now Augustus was reminding his audience of that divine connection. If this woman is indeed Venus Genetrix, with the addition of this one relief, Augustus had augmented his role as the Father of Rome, as the family member of the deified Julius Caesar, and with his connection with the gods. With these connections his rule was legitimized and his divine lineage that his uncle established was further emphasized to the Roman public. This therefore associated his entire immediate and extended family with power and religion.

Also on the back of the Ara Pacis, opposite of the Lupercal relief, there is another important relief of a woman.



There are only fragments of the image remaining left today, but when it was created, it depicted an armored woman. She holds a staff and wears a Roman helmet. She sits upon a shield and possibly trophy of war. She is probably Roma—the personification of Rome. This personification is significant to the public image of Augustus because it is another image solidifying the importance that Augustus had in the role of protecting Rome. As a father, he was required to be responsible for values important to the Ancient Romans—fertility and protection. The purpose of the previous image of a woman was fertility, abundance, nature and peace, and femininity—while this one, although she is a woman, has a more masculine purpose. She is the personification of the Empire resting upon a pile of spoils of war. These spoils of war are interestingly placed upon an altar of peace-- today in our modern society we do not associate war spoils with peace. On the contrary

though, the image of war spoils would have had a symbolic and empowering message to the Roman people because it would have been displaying victory. The spoils of war indicate that the Roman Empire had just conquered a people; the shield is a symbol of protection; Roma is over both protection and successful conquest, indicating that she is in control of the balance between the two. Since Augustus is the Father of Rome, and has the leadership role as Emperor of the Roman Empire, he is the human in control of the balance between protection of his people and the successful conquest that would expand his Empire. Therefore he was not only defining this important role of himself to his audience, but he may have also been defining the makings of Augustan peace in itself. To him, the definition of peace he was preaching to the Roman people was determined by the expansion and enrichment of his Empire accompanied with a simultaneous emphasis on the defense and safety of his empire.

With the Ara Pacis, Augustus visually created the definition of what Augustan peace was, and where it came from. It was peace that was perverted by imperial drive. Peace which constituted the purpose of the altar's construction, that had been defined by Augustus' successful conquest wars over Gaul. Peace which also was symbolic of total imperial family domination. As shown on the monument, Augustus intentionally incorporated numerous members of his family, including women and children, onto the monument.



They are alongside himself and members of the senate. By depicting his entire family line and government officials on either side of himself, Augustus made a few things evident with the familial image: that he was the father of his family and father of Rome; that family meant everything to him, even as far as to put it on his monument; that his large family after a winning war was symbolic of Augustan and Roman peace; and finally, that he was the focus of the peace that his family and his empire were centered around.

Family was a theme which dominated the entire monument, and to a greater extent a theme which dominated his entire character and rule. Family was present in both of the foundation story reliefs—with an emphasis on the role of fathers in both. On the precession reliefs, neither depiction shouted the role of father but rather those reliefs

whispered a powerful paternal presence. Although it was indeed constructed by Augustus, and that he had placed significant paternal symbolism throughout it, when he placed his image of himself onto the family procession he did so in a surprising way. One might expect a man known as the “Father of Rome” to flaunt his image loudly, but instead Augustus depicted himself alongside his family, seemingly camouflaged in with the crowd. This spoke so much to the personal and professional character of Augustus—it tells us that he knew who he was, but he also was humble. He could have dedicated an entire side just to himself, but he chose to dedicate it to the members of his family, with no greater emphasis on his image than any other family member’s image on the wall.

Another notable conclusion about the character of Augustus can be drawn from observing who is depicted near Augustus on the procession relief. Augustus is surrounded by attendants and priests, which we know because of the specific hats the priests are depicted wearing, called an Apex. The significance of being surrounded by priests also molds a positive character image of Augustus because usually those surrounded with “holy” and “pious” people can be inferred as virtuous individuals and people of credible character. In another scene on the Ara Pacis on a south frieze on the right, Augustus is depicted performing a sacrifice. This would have put emphasis on his title as *pontifex maximus*, and would have visually connected him to Roman religion. By putting an image of himself leading a religious activity, it was a way of showing the Roman people that he was also the father of their religion. This image of himself must have had an impact on the average individual in a way that would have been more tangible than the religious associations which he also put on the Ara Pacis. The religious associations in the foundation stories were useful to plant seeds in the minds of the

people to facilitate their thoughts of connecting religion with Augustus, and then the actual image of Augustus performing a sacrifice would solidify and confirm those thoughts to associate him with religion. Eventually the result of the effect of combining these images, the Roman people, upon seeing this frieze on the south right, would not only associate Augustus with religion, he would be perceived as their leader of religion.

Additionally, one can conclude from the procession reliefs about the character of Augustus is that he was a very family-oriented man. He not only was very expressive of the role of the father throughout the other reliefs, but he chose to include his entire family in his company. This is important because he chose to incorporate his family in the only depiction of himself on the *Ara Pacis*—it was an imperial family unit, not just an image of a single imperial ruler. This was unusual, it was the first time that a Roman leader chose to put his family into the public spotlight with himself. They were now also symbols of Augustan peace. They are portrayed on the monument as a very large family, surrounded by vegetation—a flourishing family and flourishing plants insinuate that nature is prosperous (Severy, 2003, 108). And, what brings this abundant prosperity? — Peace, more specifically, Augustan peace.



The large family depicted on the relief also acted as a reminder to the Roman people about how Augustus felt about family and the laws he instituted to protect the integrity of a moral family. He made laws that encouraged women to bear children, and many babies were included in the relief such as Lucius Caesar and Germanicus. The image of Germanicus was even detailed so that he was shown wearing a “bulla,” a phallic necklace worn to protect children from the evil eye. He preached the importance of marriage and made laws against the act of adultery. To show he was loyal to his wife, he illustrated her on the southern wall relief of the procession. There is some speculation that it may be Julia, his daughter, but considering that the male image near her is probably the depiction of Tiberius, it seems more likely that the woman would be Livia since she was the mother of Tiberius. Tiberius was the adopted son of Augustus. By

including his wife and his stepson in the relief with his entire extended family in their company, he was emphasizing the importance of the nuclear family as well as the advantage of having an extended family. The ability to have and sustain such a large family was made possible due to the peace and prosperity which Augustus brought to Rome.

* * *

The Ara Pacis was also able to act almost as a symbolic model of the laws that Augustus created, which dealt with family and moral obligations. Using the Ara Pacis, Augustus, "...strikes down the dominant note: the practice of social responsibility is impossible without responsibility for a family (Galinsky 1996, 132)," as mentioned in Cassius Dio 56.7.1. In a way, the imperial family on the Ara Pacis is displaying and advocating the family laws in order to encourage the general Roman public to behave in the same way. Cassius Dio elaborated some of the laws that Augustus created. In 54.16:

(A) "He laid heavier assessment upon the unmarried men and upon the women without husbands, and on the other hand offered prizes for marriage and the begetting of children. And since among the nobility there were far more males than females, he allowed all who wished, except the senators, to marry freedwomen, and ordered that their offspring should be held legitimate."

Additionally, Aulus Gellius notes another law in his *Noctes Atticae* 2.15 pertaining to Augustus' goal to increase marriages:

"The consul (of a pair of consuls) who has the larger number of children is to be considered the senior consul. If each has the same number, the one who is still married is considered senior. If both are married and each has the same number of children, only then is the elder in terms of chronology considered the senior (Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 2. 15)."

Here, Augustus was offering incentive to senators and consul members to get married and produce offspring. The incentives from law (A) were that Augustus offered prizes for senators that got married and prizes for if they had children as well. And to cover the statistic that the noble men outnumbered the noble women, Augustus declared that if noble men marry and reproduce with lower status women, their children would have ensured legitimacy. The incentives in (B) from Augustus must have created serious competition among consuls. Since most people in politics are power hungry and searching for higher governmental status, Augustus used that desire for power to increase marriages and children among his consuls. His consuls would compete for senior consul status by way of marrying and then having more and more children. The law would work like this: The married consul with the most children would be the highest ranking; A married consul would have a higher rank than a single consul; and married consul without children would have a lower rank than a married consul with children.

Consuls, senators and other men of nobility were not the only Romans given incentives to marry and reproduce. Augustus also made laws that were in the interest of freedmen and even in the interest of women.

(C) “Freedmen who have two or more children are exempted from certain of the obligations which could be placed on them by prior oath by their former masters as conditions for emancipation.

This law, (C), would have been extremely popular with former slaves. It meant that any condition or agreement which a slave may have made with his master that would continue to be honored after freedom was granted to the slave, would actually be no longer mandatory for the slave to follow if they produced at least two offspring.

(D) “Women who have three or more children (if they are freedwomen, four or more) are exempted from the law which requires them to have a guardian [*ius trium liberorum*] (Adams, 2010).”

This action by Augustus was an incentive for Roman women to receive a freedom and be released from the power over her by her father or a male relative. If every free born woman had at least three children and if a formerly enslaved woman had at least four children, that would ensure that the likelihood that a percentage of the offspring surviving would increase, since more babies would be being produced.

The *Lex Julia de maritandis ordinibus*, marriage and reproduction laws created by Augustus, also included that it was mandatory for men to get married or remarried between the ages of twenty-five to sixty, and for women between the ages of twenty and fifty (Galinsky, 1996, pg 130). Also, within six months to a year from the date of the death or divorce of a husband, female divorcees and widows were required to find another husband. However after some time Augustus realized he had been considerably strict with the time frame of finding a new spouse, so he changed it, as mentioned in Suetonius 34.1:

“(E) Having made somewhat more stringent changes in the last of these than in the others, he was unable to carry it out because of an open revolt against its provisions, until he had abolished or mitigated a part of the penalties, besides increasing the rewards and allowing a three years' exemption from the obligation to marry after the death of a husband or wife.”

There were also financial hindrances to avoid, at the cost of being unmarried or without children. For example:

(F) “Unmarried men (*caelibes*) are forbidden to receive inheritances and legacies. This disability begins for men at twenty-five years of age, and for women at twenty years of age. It ends for men at sixty years of age, and for women at fifty (Adams, 2010).”

(G) “*Orbi* (widowers) without children are deprived of one-half of a legacy or inheritance (Adams, 2010).”

These laws would have forced marriage and the reproduction of children upon the Roman population as a necessary financial component to having an economically cushioned life —only though if one’s economic status and lifestyle happened to depend upon their family inheritance.

These series of laws show that Augustus had a strong desire to perpetuate the development of Roman families. As depicted on the *Ara Pacis*, family was important to him, so he wanted it to be important to his extended family: the Roman people. Augustus as a *Pater Patriae* and like a Don to his people as Vito Corleone was to his family, he wanted what was best for them—and in his eyes this meant marriage and as many children as possible. However, as father to the Roman people, he was also responsible for protecting his people. As explained in Cassius Dio 54.17.7, Augustus made marriage laws that did indeed protect the vulnerable citizens who were targets to be taken advantage of--young girls.

“The marriage of men to underage girls, for the purpose of avoiding taxes against unmarried men (*caelebs*) or the legal disabilities that went with being unmarried, were regulated. A minimum age of ten years was fixed; marriage had to take place within two years of the betrothal; twelve was designated as the official age of female puberty.”

This law protected young girls from being married off at an age that was too young. He understood that his financial incentives which he made for men to get married and have children, and given the statistic that there were more noble men than noble women, that consequently some men may attempt to marry any single girls so that the legal and

financial rewards would begin. To protect the young girls from being married off to these greedy men, Augustus made it illegal to marry a girl before the age of twelve, which was the year of age that most girls began to menstruate.

Emperor Augustus was a, "...value shaper (Galinsky, 1996, 131)." The Ara Pacis Augustae and the set of laws in which Augustus created both are evidence of his display of importance and significance he placed on the family, marriage, children, religion, and Augustan "peace." All of these values he projected out to his people and upon his image, ultimately shaped the values of his people and his own legacy as an emperor. A "value shaper" is often one who remains consistent with what they believe in and Augustus exhibited, "...almost boorish consistency over long periods of time in support of his one or two transcending values. No opportunity too small, no forum too insignificant, no audience too junior (Galinsky, 1996, 131)." Also, a "value shaper" can be a parent—as a parent shapes the values of their child, Augustus was the father of Rome, the father of family, and the father of religion who used his power as emperor to shape the values of his people.

* * *

Evidence from arguably the most famous writing by Augustus, also gives us a depiction of his attitudes on family, morality, power and gives us a peek into his own character. This work is named the *Res Gestae*. The *Res Gestae* was an inscription written by Augustus describing his accomplishments and actions he took as Emperor. It was "...not designed to offer an accurate narrative of the Augustan era (Augustus & Cooley, 2009)." It does however, reveal the themes upon which Augustus focused on in his retrospective career and provides the things for which he wished to be remembered

for (Augustus & Cooley, 2009). His position on family comes up quite often, beginning with section two. The entire section two is about the actions of vengeance in which he carried out for his father's death.

“Qui parentem meum interfecerunt, eos, in exiliu expuli iudiciis legi timis ultus eorum facinus et postea bellum inferentis rei publicae vici bis acie.”

“Those who slew my father I drove into exile, punishing their deed by due process of law, and afterwards when they waged war upon the republic I twice defeated them in battle.”

Augustus would not have gone through the effort to get justice for his father if he himself did not have a powerfully impactful association with the role of a father. And this amount of respect, admiration, and dedication which would have prompted such a responsive behavior from the death of his father, is probably the way in which Augustus himself would like to be thought of as a father. After all, he was the *pater patriae* both to his family and to his empire. Given that he was also the father of his empire, the *Res Gestae* states in section three: ³

“Bella terra et mari civilia externaque tóto in orbe terrarum suscepi victorque omnibus veniam petentibus civibus pepercí. Externas gentés, quibus túto ignosci potuit, conserváre quam excídere malui. Míllia civium Rómanorum adacta sacrámento meo fuerunt circiter quingen ta.”

“Wars, both civil and foreign, I undertook throughout the world, on sea and land, and when victorious I spared all citizens who sued for pardon. The foreign nations which could with safety be pardoned I preferred to save rather than to destroy. The number of Roman citizens who bound themselves to me by military oath was about 500,000.”

³ All translations of the *Res Gestae* are from http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Augustus/Res_Gestae/home.html

In this section, Augustus used the statement: “*conservare quam excidere malui*”. “*Malui*” coming from the verb “*mālo, mālui, malle*” which means “to prefer”, is used by Augustus in the first person, singular, perfect, indicative, active voice. Then he uses two verbs in the infinitive form: “*conservare*” meaning “to preserve”, and “*excidere*” meaning “to destroy or perish”. “*Quam*” can have numerous meanings according to the context of the statement. Augustus’ usage of “*quam*” is very interesting here for a couple of reasons. First, according to the context, Augustus is implying that “*conservare*” is a better decision than “*excidere*”, hence why he is writing that he accomplished it. Therefore, according to the Lewis and Short dictionary, “after verbs implying preference or superiority” *quam* can be interpreted as “rather than”. This is significant to Augustus’ efforts to display himself as a father figure to the empire because since he decides to keep conquered people and make them Roman, he was assuming them into his empire, “rather than” destroying them. His empire was his extended family, and therefore by adding section three into his *Res Gestae*, Augustus was explaining how he created a larger extended family, and felt responsible enough to be the father of a growing empire.

Section six of the *Res Gestae* depicts simultaneously the power Augustus had over the Roman people and his humble character.

“...senatu populoque Romano consentientibus ut curator legum et morum summa potestate solus crearer, nullum magistratum contra morem maiorum delatum recepi. Quae tum per me geri senatus voluit, per tribuniciam potestatem perfeci, cuius potestatis conlegam et ipse ultro quinquens a senatu depoposci et accepi.”

“...the Senate and the Roman people unanimously agreed that I should be elected overseer of laws and morals, without a colleague and with the fullest power, I refused to accept any power offered me which was contrary to the traditions of

our ancestors.²⁷ Those things which at that time the senate wished me to administer I carried out by virtue of my tribunician power.”

By Augustus stating in his own words that the Senate and the Roman people “unanimously” wanted to give him “the fullest power” shows us that he was indeed very popular with the public, and that he was not ashamed of that. In fact, he wanted it to be remembered forever that he was so popular, that he included it into his writing which title translates to mean “things having been accomplished.” Augustus’ timelessly positive image with the public of his empire and with the Senate, was considered by him to be an achievement. This desire by the Roman people to elect Augustus as the “overseer of laws and morals” reinforce the fatherly image of Augustus as the *pater patriae*. It speaks to his character as a respected person by the Romans to set the law of their land, and to determine what was moral and immoral. Another attribute of this section that displays the humble character of Augustus was his additive that he refused to accept any power that was contrary to standard rule of his governmental predecessors. In other words, absolute power and control was contrary to the Roman Republic, even though Augustus did have that power. However, because he refused officially to have the title of that power, it showed that he solely care about his image to be associated with power and control over people, but as a father guiding and watching over his people.

There is a concept from the ancient Romans that emphasizes the important notion to put in the effort to return to what was once great, meaning to emulate their ancestors as much as possible. Augustus made sure to elaborate this concept to his audience in the *Res Gestae* in section eight. The last sentence of section eight states:

“Legibus novis latis complura exempla maiorum exolescentia iam ex nostro usu revocavi et ipse multarum rerum exempla imi tanda posteris tradidi.”

“By the passage of new laws I restored many traditions of our ancestors which were then falling into disuse, and I myself set precedents in many things for posterity to imitate.”

Augustus wants his audience to know that he brought Rome closer to their ancestors, to their foundation, and to their roots. Augustus included this in his recording of accomplishments because it was very important to the essence of being a Roman. Furthermore, this accomplishment helped to promote and propel the image of Augustus as the father of Rome because he was further associating himself with the foundation stories that made Rome great and what set the standards for them to be. Using this affiliation, Augustus was insinuating that he was bringing Rome back to greatness and would morally and legally guide his empire to meet the ancestral standards once again.

In the last section, section thirty-five, Augustus concluded his paramount *Res Gestae* with an official mention of his role as father of Rome. The last section states:

“Tertium decimum consulátum cum gerebam, senatus et equester ordo populusque Románus úniversus appellavit me patrem patriae idque in vestibulo aedium meárum inscribendum esse atque in curia et in foró Aug. sub quadrigis, quae mihi ex s. c. positae sunt, decrevit. Cum scripsi haec, annum agebam septuagensimum sextum.”

“While I was administering my thirteenth consulship the senate and the equestrian order and the entire Roman people gave me the title of Father of my Country, and decreed that this title should be inscribed upon the vestibule of my house and in the senate-house and in the Forum Augustum beneath the quadriga erected in my honour by decree of the senate. At the time of writing this I was in my seventy-sixth year.”

Augustus deliberately placed this significant event of being given the title of the father of Rome by the senate, equestrian order and the “entire Roman people” at the end of the *Res Gestae*. Augustus saved this mention for the last section and he rationalized this decision

as a conscious placement for his own propaganda purposes. The purpose of his propaganda efforts was to create his image the Roman people as a respectable, moral, and powerful father of his empire. He wanted it to be known, as previously stated in section six of the *Res Gestae*, that he refused to accept any power offered to him that was contrary to the traditions of ancestors. But Father of Rome is not a position of power, and since Augustus was not thought of as a ruler thirsty for power, when he did accept this title, it was considered more of as an imperial caretaker of the empire, not as a dictator.

Augustus established for his audience that he was deserving of this title as Father of Rome by displaying all he had accomplished, hence the title meaning just that. He not only provides evidence of family, morality and character, but he even shared examples of his involvement in expansion, public works projects, and charity. He would have had to include these categories in the *Res Gestae* in order to show the *populus Romanus* that he was working for them. Augustus needed to show the people that he did not solely hold a title, but that he was watching over them and actually putting forth the effort to act as the empire's paternal figure.

The evidence provided thus far from Suetonius, Cassius Dio, the *Res Gestae* by Augustus himself, and images from the *Ara Pacis* all paint a specific picture of the character of Augustus. As the audience of these works, we are influenced by these sources about Augustus, which ultimately affects how we all view Augustus as a person. The ancient world is so distant from our modern world, and this gap in centuries between us and them, leads to some gaps in trying to understand the personalities of people from antiquity. This can be frustrating because sometimes an individual's legacy left behind, does not fully match their real personality and virtues as claimed in ancient sources. In

other words, we are given a painting of the character of Augustus, but there may be layers of paint underneath the top layer that many people do not know exist, unless they chip away at the layers of his great moral the image. Given the evidence thus far about Augustus, we can generally tend to associate him with words such as “family,” “father,” “morality,” “respect,” “loyal,” and as a leader who set an example as the *Pater Patriae*. We have been given the surface of the painting, a very positive image of the Father of Rome. However, the character of Augustus seems to be paradoxical and more complex than what has been shown. Evidence provided from Suetonius and Horace can chip away at the top layer of paint, and give us a peek at the colors of his personality which lie underneath the efforts of his positive propaganda.

In Suetonius’ writings on the life of Augustus, section 62 gives us a glimpse into the other side of Augustus. Suetonius states:

“In his youth he was betrothed to the daughter of Publius Servilius Isauricus, but when he became reconciled with Antony after their first quarrel, and their troops begged that the rivals be further united by some tie of kinship, he took to wife Antony's step daughter Claudia, daughter of Fulvia by Publius Clodius, although she was barely of marriageable age; but because of a falling out with his mother-in-law Fulvia, he divorced her before they had begun to live together. Shortly after that he married Scribonia, who had been wedded before to two ex-consuls, and was a mother by one of them. He divorced her also, "unable to put up with her shrewish disposition," as he himself writes, and at once took Livia Drusilla from her husband Tiberius Nero, although she was with child at the time; and he loved and esteemed her to the end without a rival.”

In this passage, there are various issues and flaws with the character of Augustus described that contradict the basics of his positive character image. As described in Suetonius 34.1, Cassius Dio in 54.16, in *Noctes Atticae* 2.15, and in the *Lex Julia de maritandis ordinibus*, Augustus instituted marriage laws, strict rules on instances of remarriage and offered privileges to those who married and started families. However in

this section, Suetonius takes away those layers of paint and tells us that for political reasons Augustus has actually left a marriage he had recently began in order to amend a dispute he had had with Antony, and instead married a relative of Antony so that no “bad blood” between the two would remain. This by no means was a legitimate reason by the set Augustan standards for divorce and remarriage. Another calamity about the new marriage was that it had occurred while the young new bride was “barely of marriageable age.” Augustus had specifically created a marriage law, mentioned in Cassius Dio 54.17.7, that was issued to protect young girls from being married off too young. Here Augustus was not acting as a “father” would, not to his family, nor to his Empire. After marrying this young girl, Augustus divorced her as well, and as like the previous divorce, it did not have an evident reason for having been done. He shallowly mentioned that it was due to his dislike in her personality.

Suetonius’ section 65 about Augustus also reveals a dimension of Augustus’ character that was definitely not depicted on the Ara Pacis, nor in his *Res Gestae*, and not in the writings that only focused on his positive character. This section contradicts his commitment to family, a commitment which was a major theme surrounding his character and legacy. The importance of family was a major focal point of his propaganda efforts, and he preached to the Roman people through the images of his family on the *Ara Pacis*, that they were the Roman model of family goals. We learn in Suetonius’ 65 on the life of Augustus, however, that the dynamics of his family did not exactly match his propaganda efforts making him appear as a supreme father. Section 65 states:

“He found the two Julias, his daughter and granddaughter, guilty of every form of vice, and banished them.”

Banishing both his daughter and his granddaughter was not very fatherly. Indeed, it is true that they broke his marriage laws, and that he was setting an example for the empire that this behavior would not be tolerated, but then the thought arises, as found in section 62, Augustus indeed broke the marriage laws as well. If Augustus was a model for all fathers, being known as the father of his family and as the *Pater Patriae* of the Roman Empire, then why did his offspring deviate so far from proper Augustan morality? Did Augustus fail to father his family while he fathered his empire? Was he not the father he was portrayed to be on the Ara Pacis? His daughter's and granddaughter's behavior and his behavior of banishing them to an island, are more evidence to support the paradoxical character of Augustus.

Suetonius' Section 65 also states:

“He then publicly adopted his third grandson Agrippa and at the same time his stepson Tiberius by a bill passed in the assembly of the curiae; but he soon disowned Agrippa because of his low tastes and violent temper, and sent him off to Surrentum.”

Here is another example that reveals complexity in the character of Augustus. At first, one supposes that this example fits his role as a paternal emperor. However then the complexity arises when we learn that soon after adopting his grandson Agrippa, he then revoked his patrimonial duties, and disowned him. Agrippa may not have acted like the perfect son, apparently having had a violent temper, but he was still family. As *Pater Patriae*, did Augustus actually care about his imperial family, or did he only care about the image of his imperial family to the Roman people? Since his family was now in the public and political limelight, Augustus needed his family to be moral and perfect by

Roman standards. By ensuring that they absolutely would appear this way, Augustus did not act like the father he was promoting himself as.

At the conclusion of section 65, Suetonius writes about the manner in which Augustus would speak about Julia, his daughter, Julia, his granddaughter, and Agrippa:

“He also provided by a decree of the senate that he should be confined there for all time, and at every mention of him and of the Julia’s he would sigh deeply and even cry out: “Would that I never had wedded and would I had died without offspring”; and he never alluded to them except as his three boils and his three ulcers.”

By alluding to your offspring as “boils” and “ulcers” and feeling as though dying without children would have been preferable to having produced those three, Augustus was not speaking like a model father. The image of a big and ideal family depicted on the *Ara Pacis* was not a realistic one, in terms of Augustus being a great and respectable *pater* to them all. He seemed to only view himself as the *pater* for the ones whose flaws were not known by the public. Julia, Julia, and Agrippa unfortunately had too much about their own characters known by the Roman people, and they were not good attributes to their characters. The moment each one of them threatened the perfect image of Augustus in the mind of the Roman people, Augustus rid himself of them. He contradicted his own image, as an ideal father and as an emperor promoting family, in order to selfishly preserve that image as his legacy.

Section 71 of Suetonius’ account on the life of Augustus also brings up certain paradoxes in his character that lead us to view him as more complex than the image he presented of himself in his propaganda efforts. Suetonius states in section 71:

“He could not dispose of the charge of lustfulness and they say that even in his later years he was fond of deflowering maidens, who were brought together for him from all quarters, even by his own wife. He did not in the least shrink from a reputation for gaming, and played frankly and openly for recreation, even when

he was well on in years, not only in the month of December, but on other holidays as well, and on working days too.”

This section has just highlighted two major paradoxes. The first one is the more serious one, and perhaps can even be considered as a flaw. Suetonius states that Augustus was “fond of deflowering maidens” even into the later years of his life, and while he was married. This was blatant adultery. This is a serious paradox because Augustus had not only made a series of laws discouraging adultery, but he had even banished his daughter and granddaughter for repetitive sexual crimes including acts of adultery. What intensifies the paradoxical nature of this behavior of Augustus is that his wife would even sometimes bring the women to him. Therefore, by having a knowledgeable association with the acts of adultery, and by facilitating it on occasion, a conclusion can be drawn that his own wife was just an adulteress as her husband, the *Pater Patriae*, was an adulterer. The second paradox found in this section is that Augustus was not shy to hide his habitual gambling. This also continued into his later years. This may seem like a harmless habit, but it was actually significant because Augustus had gambled not just during recreation, but on designated work days for the Romans. This lack of control on the part of Augustus to not be able to control his gaming on work days shows a weakness in his role as emperor and Father of Rome that was not displayed to the Roman people. The people probably viewed him as one who could do no wrong, as the strong leader who was the father of the imperial family as well as of the Roman people. This piece of his character, of a lack of self control to a behavior that could potentially risk away personal resources, was not displayed to the public in propaganda literature, and therefore adds to the complexity of Augustus as an individual.

* * *

Supplementary to the evidence provided by Suetonius in his writings on Augustus, we can use other sources of literary evidence to support the claim that there was more to Augustus than what was projected to the public with his propaganda. The seeds of conspiracy about another side to Augustus were eloquently planted by Horace in his *Ode* 37, Book 1, about the death of Cleopatra. Before reading or analyzing the poem, one must be aware of the information circumferential to it.

Here is a brief synopsis describing the events leading up to the context of the poem: Cleopatra became queen of Egypt in 51 BCE, ruling with her younger brother and husband, Ptolemy XIII. Ptolemy XIII then removed Cleopatra in 48 BCE. Simultaneously, in Rome, there was a civil war happening between Julius Caesar and his rival Pompey. Eventually Pompey fled to Egypt, and Ptolemy XIII captured him, beheaded him, and presented his head to Julius Caesar upon his arrival to Egypt. While Caesar was visiting the palace of Ptolemy XIII, Cleopatra had been smuggled in, and this is when she was able to meet Caesar and explain to him her side of her situation with her brother. This is also when their romantic relationship began. The following year in 47 BCE, she bore him a child, named Caesarion. After the birth of their son, Caesar moved Cleopatra to Rome. This was very upsetting to the Roman people, it made them anxious to have their beloved leader romantically involved with an Eastern woman. However in 44 BCE, Caesar was stabbed to death on the Ides of March by members of his own senate. After his removal from the Roman government, there was a need for a new leader and there was a split of support between Marc Antony and Octavian. Augustus' name was Octavian at that time. After the death of her lover, Cleopatra moved back to Egypt

with Caesarion. Then, in 41 BCE, Marc Antony, who was responsible for the eastern provinces, summoned her. She connived her way out of having to answer to his charges against her from the Roman Empire by seducing him. They engaged in a serious romantic relationship. Cleopatra bore Antony three children, Alexander Helios, Cleopatra Selene, and Ptolemy Philadelphos. Antony married Cleopatra, despite the fact that he was married to Octavian's sister, Octavia. This extremely upset the Roman people--not only was Marc Antony spending all of his time with Cleopatra instead of in Rome, but he was committing adultery on a Roman woman with a foreign woman. This was significant because it was against Roman law at that time to marry anyone foreign. What was most upsetting, in addition to marrying Cleopatra and dismissing Octavia, was that Antony was giving away Roman territory to her--and Rome was fed up. Octavian declared war on Cleopatra in 32 BCE, and successfully won at the last battle in Actium, Greece in 31 BCE, and then he proceeded on to enter Egypt in 30 BCE. Antony assumed that Cleopatra had died, and he then committed suicide. Then while in Egypt, Octavian soon had Cleopatra captured. The intention behind capturing her alive, was so that she could be led through the streets of Rome in Octavian's triumphal procession to showcase his victory in Egypt. However, before he was able to take her out of Egypt, servants brought Cleopatra a fatally poisonous snake. Cleopatra allowed the snake to bite her, and she died without having to shamefully walk through the streets of Rome as a slave to Octavian. Octavian returned to Rome, adopted her three children that she had with Antony and sent out an order to have Caesarion killed. Since Caesarion was Julius Caesar's son, he posed a threat to Octavian's rule. Octavian later changed his name to

Augustus and continued to serve the people of Rome as their emperor and as their *Pater Patriae* (Jones, 1971).

Given this historical framework to Horace's poem about the death of Cleopatra, portions of the poem can now be analyzed and used to argue that Augustus had a paradoxical personality⁴. In the first stanza, lines 1-4, Horace is telling the Roman people to celebrate by drinking, dancing, with decorations, and by having a sacrificial feast. The reason for celebration is Augustus' victory over Egypt, due to the fall of Cleopatra. The second stanza, in lines 5-8, reads:

“Antehac nefas depromere Caecubum
cellis avitis, dum Capitolio
regina dementis ruinas,
funus et imperio parabat”

“Before it was unpermitted to draw forth the good wine from the ancestral cellar, so long as the queen was preparing the mad ruin to the Capital, and she was preparing the funeral for the empire.”

This stanza is specifically referring to the Roman feelings toward Cleopatra during the military conflict between Rome and Egypt. What these lines from the poem are saying, is that Cleopatra was so insane and awful for Rome, that as long as she was trying to get the empire, the best wine in Rome would be undrinkable. Horace is using a metaphor that just as Cleopatra had “contaminated” Julius Caesar and Marc Antony with her Eastern influences and her conniving madness, which the Romans thought she was casting on the Empire, had also “contaminated” the best wine in the empire.

⁴ All translations of Horace are my own translations.

Horace continues to elaborate on the context in which the Romans saw Cleopatra. Transitioning down to lines 12 through 21, he writes about Augustus' victory over the a "mad mind", a further insinuation that Cleopatra was thought of negatively.

“ ... Sed minuit furorem

vix una sospes navis ab ignibus
mentemque lymphatam Mareotico
redegit in veros timores
Caesar ab Italia volantem

remis adurgens, accipiter velut
mollis columbas aut leporem citus
venator in campis nivalis
Haemoniae, daret ut catenis

fatale monstrum. ...”

“The escape of barely one ship from the flames, and Caesar having driven back the mad mind crazed with Egyptian wine into true fears, pursuing closely fleeing from Italy with oars just as the hawk pursues the gentle dove or just as the hunter having driven out the charm into the field of Trachin snow, destined to be thrown into chains, deadly monster.”

The contextual setting of these lines take place at Actium, Greece, the setting where the final battle of the conflict between Augustus and Cleopatra took place. She had a “crazed mind” because she was drinking the Egyptian wine. Horace was insinuating that Roman wine and virtues were superior, while Egypt was eastern, different, and a threat to the way of life in Rome. Here, Horace refers to Augustus (Octavian at the time) as Caesar. He said that Augustus drove back Cleopatra, who despite once again having been referenced to as being mad, was portrayed as a defeatable force. He used the analogy that Augustus' naval fleet closing in on Cleopatra was like a hawk pursuing a gentle dove. In other words, she was no match for him, and “destined to be thrown into chains”-- Cleopatra would inevitably be captured by Augustus. This stanza was very anti-

Cleopatra, and seemed to be channeling the message across to the reader that she was the evil force, or the “bad guy” in the conflict, and that Augustus was the *summum bonum*, as the “good guy” defending the image of Rome.

However adversely, the remaining stanzas in the Ode, lines 21-32, shed a different light on the defeat of Cleopatra and on the character of Augustus. These lines, 21-29, are the most important lines in the poem to use as evidence for arguing that Augustus indeed had a paradoxical character contrary to the visage to the public:

“... Quae generosius
perire quaerens nec muliebriter
expavit ensem nec latentis
classe cita reparavit oras;

ausa et iacentem visere regiam
vultu sereno, fortis et asperas
tractare serpentes, ut atrum
corpore conbiberet venenum,

deliberata morte ferocior;
saevis Liburnis scilicet invidens
privata deduci superbo,
non humilis mulier, triumpho.”

“But she wanting to die more nobly, neither a double edged sword could terrify her like a woman, nor [could] recovered lurking ships with causing a great division; daring to look upon her empire laid low with a serene face and strong in handling the serpents so that they drink a black venom into her body, becoming fiercer with death having been pondered about; obviously she cast disdain upon his swift galleys, begrudging them the honor to be led in triumph crownless, she was not a humiliated woman brought down.”

This feeling toward Cleopatra in these lines is entirely different from the first half of the poem. No longer was Cleopatra an evil foreign queen from the East, she was a brave

woman who sought to have a noble death, and not experience the humiliation which Augustus had allegedly intended to put her through. Horace noted her bravery by writing that neither the approaching ships of Augustus' Roman fleet, nor the thought of "wanting to die more nobly", meaning suicide, frightened her like a woman. By mentioning that Cleopatra was not acting like a woman, and insinuating that she was being very brave and noble was a compliment from Horace to her character. He did not say the same for Augustus. Is this another insinuation? Throughout the progression of the poem, Horace began with negative tones toward Cleopatra, probably because her reputation was awful in the eyes of the Roman people. However, at the moment of her death, she is painted by Horace as actually very respectable, fierce, and noble compared to the "hawk," Augustus, who was chasing her. Horace's line states that Cleopatra had become fiercer when she pondered about killing herself with the venom of snakes. But why would Horace treat this suicide as an honorable choice, and why was Cleopatra notable of being so strong while Augustus' strength was not mentioned at all in this section even though he had been the one to defeat her? Her death was honorable and respected by Horace because instead of being humiliated, Cleopatra chose to end her life herself rather than be led in Augustus' triumph stripped of her crown.

On the surface of this last section of the poem, Augustus' role appears to be simply a Roman leader who has conquered his enemy, and intended to showcase the leader of his enemy in his own triumphal procession. However then that enemy, the infamous Cleopatra, took her own life before the victorious Augustus had been able to take her to Rome. However, Augustus actually may have been involved and proactive in the death of Cleopatra, which is subtly introduced by Horace in this ode. This 37th

carmina of Horace's first book of Odes chips away at the top layer of paint of Augustus' personality, and unveils a lesser known color of his personality, which lies underneath his image as a moral *Pater Patriae*. This ode suggests the possibility that Cleopatra was given an ultimatum from Augustus. Seeds of conspiracy bleed through the lines in the last stanzas of the ode, giving an impression that maybe Cleopatra had not chosen out of free will to kill herself only for honor. Augustus may have given her an offer she could not have refused-- if she took her own life before she left Egypt, and saved not only herself but also Augustus the obligation to parade her through the streets in the procession, then in return he would raise and support her children. If this indeed did happen, this was a very clever strategic move by Augustus to maintain an honorable image of himself in the eyes of the Roman people. If the Roman people had seen Cleopatra in chains, enslaved, uncrowned, and being dragged through the streets, they probably would have sympathized with her. Even though the Romans despised her for contaminating two of their leaders, they did not tolerate public cruelty toward women in the triumphs. Augustus knew this, and he knew that by marching her as the prized slave of his victory, that it would perhaps lower his popularity with the public⁵. Augustus was trying to positively build his character at that time--in 30 BCE when Cleopatra was captured and committed suicide, Augustus was on track to evolving into the *Pater Patriae*. This gives us an impression of Augustus that we do not see on the *Ara Pacis*, or from the morality of his marriage laws. This is the image of man asserting his growing power to psychologically manipulate upon the interests of Cleopatra. He knew that she did not want to be in the triumphal procession and he knew that she wanted her children

⁵ Arisnoe, Cleopatra's sister, was led in Caesar's triumph and it provoked pity from the crowd, Dio 43.19.3-4

to be safe. So, he channeled into those preferences of hers, and twisted them with an offer that would actually benefit him more than the offer would personally benefit her. He was dismissed of the controversy of whether he should march her in the triumph or not, dismissed her from the earth so that she could not contaminate any more leaders, and in return her children would be cared for as if they were his own. Also, the absence of Cleopatra from the parade would have meant more focus on Augustus' presence in the parade. Overall, it was an offer Cleopatra could not refuse, and resultantly, Augustus' reputation was not hindered and he was still seen positively as the victor over Egypt. There is evidence in Suetonius' writings to confirm that Augustus did in fact keep his promise to Cleopatra: his end of the offer that he would care for her children. Suetonius, 17.5 states:

“But he spared the rest of the offspring of Antony and Cleopatra, and afterwards maintained and reared them according to their several positions, as carefully as if they were his own kin.”

Here Suetonius clearly states that Augustus was respectful to his end of the deal and really did care for her children. And by caring for them at all, is evidence in itself to support the conspiracy that Augustus indeed had given Cleopatra an offer. All of the evidence surrounding the seeds of conspiracy about Cleopatra's suicide support the complex character of Augustus. Augustus set the stage for the emergence of the ultimate paradoxical paternal ruler: a man who was simultaneously a compassionate caregiver and a cold-blooded killer. His character was negative and evil to essentially force Cleopatra to commit suicide, and yet by keeping his secret promise to the dead queen by caring for her children, he displayed that he was a respectable man. He showed that he was an

honorable man who was trustworthy to keep his word, and this was especially evident because Cleopatra wasn't even physically there to oversee that the promise was kept.

There is an interesting twist to the fate of Cleopatra's children cared for by Augustus though. Another sentence from Suetonius 17.5 adds more substance to the paradox of Augustus' respectful fulfillment of his promise to Cleopatra, whom he murdered indirectly. Even though Augustus did care for Cleopatra's children, he only cared for the children she had that were fathered by Antony. Suetonius informs us of the fate for the child Cleopatra had who was fathered by Julius Caesar, Caesarion.

“Caesarion, too, whom Cleopatra fathered on Caesar, he overtook in his flight, brought back, and put to death.”

There is complexity even to Augustus' honorable act of keeping his promise. Augustus killed Caesarion because the child was a threat to his imperial rule. Augustus was named heir to Julius Caesar, in Caesar's will, but the existence of a son of Caesar had the potentiality to pose confusion in the Roman government about which heir had the legitimate right to rule Rome. Augustus saw that the non-threatening children of Antony were well cared for, but “knocked off” the threatening child of his uncle, Julius Caesar, in order to ensure that his path to becoming *Pater Patriae* was a one on smooth waters, not on rocky waves that an adolescent Caesarion may have caused. Augustus saw no other option, Caesarion had to die because he was a threat making the waters rough for Augustus, and he could have had the capability to sink the power seeking ship Augustus was on.

The last notable piece of evidence to argue that Augustus had a paradoxical character was also written in Suetonius' writings on the life of Augustus. In addition to the forced suicide of Cleopatra, there is a direct mention of a forceful suicide of Antony

ordered to him by Augustus himself. Another example of Augustus punishing his enemy with death, but in a way that eliminates the enemy without Augustus actually doing the act of murder with his own hands.

Section 17.4 of Suetonius writes:

“Although Antony tried to make terms at the eleventh hour, Augustus forced him to commit suicide, and viewed his corpse.”

Here, Suetonius gives his readers the impression that Augustus was merciless to Antony, commanding him to end his life even as he was pleading to Augustus. A ruthless Augustus had the blood of Antony on his hands (as he had the blood of Cleopatra on his hands) without even having been the physical and technical murderer.

* * *

Many similar themes associated with the character of the leader Augustus, the first emperor of the Roman Empire, draw parallels with the character of Vito Corleone, the first Don of the Corleone Family in *The Godfather* by Francis Ford Coppola. Themes such as power, religion, family, and morality play a large role in *The Godfather* as well as in the life of Augustus. The evidence provided thus far has proved Augustus' character to be a paternal, powerful, and paradoxical one. If one examines the character of Vito Corleone in *The Godfather*, one will observe that he is the paternal, powerful and paradoxical leader to his family, as Augustus was as *Pater Patriae* to the Roman Empire.

* * *

Parallels can begin to be drawn in the first scene of the first film: the wedding scene. The wedding scene opens the film and establishes a feeling of “..benevolent paternalism at the heart of the family myth, ritualized in Vito's role and actions as father

to his immediate family and as Godfather to his extended family”(cite Cambridge). The biggest theme in this scene is family, however the undertones of both the themes of power and paradox also are evident in this scene.

The purpose of the wedding scene essentially parallels the purpose of the *Ara Pacis*. The *Ara Pacis* connected Augustus with the role of the father, the foundation stories of Rome, religious sacrifices and gods, and portrayed his own imperial family alongside religious leaders and members of the government. Similarly, this wedding scene was important for establishing Vito’s foundation of paternalism, connection to ancestral Italian heritage, association with religious ceremonies, and even the incorporation of family into Vito’s business. From the very beginning of the film in the wedding scene, specific themes are evident and essential to the formation of the characters in the family. Paternalism, power, paradox, and family are the themes we are given a taste of throughout this scene.

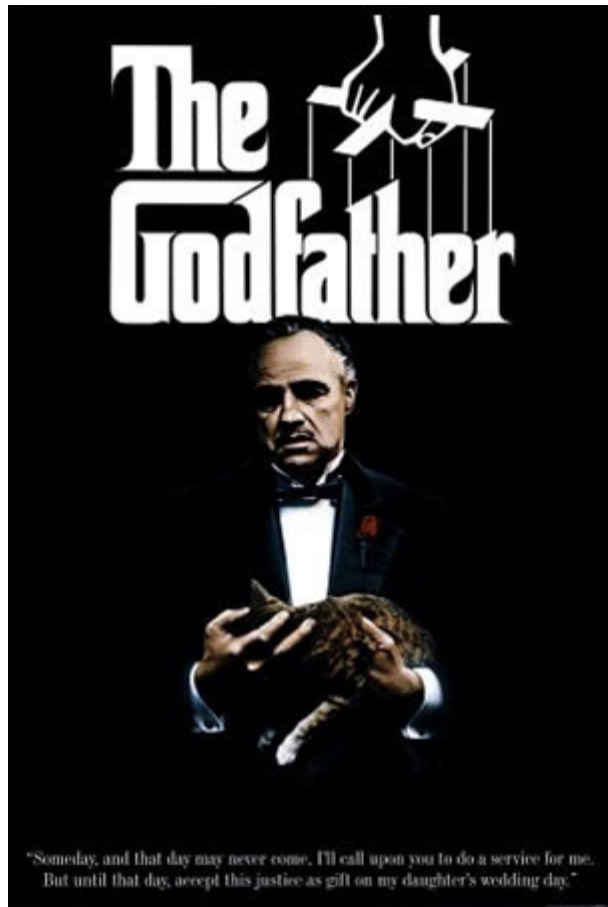
For the foundation of paternalism, it is initially conveyed to the audience on the very basic role of Vito in the scene: he is the father of his daughter, Connie, on her wedding day, and he is even conducting business on this family oriented and religious day. In only just the first 27:04 minutes of the film, it is understood that Vito is the father of the Corleone family and father to his extended “family,” meaning his branch of the New York City Italian-American mafia. Don Corleone’s role emulates Emperor Augustus’ role as *Pater Patriae* in various ways. He is first presented to the audience as doing business, and is clearly the leader in the room, since men are coming to him for favors. If he did not have an abundance of power, he would not be so busy helping to solve clients’ problems on Connie’s wedding day. After he helps Amerigo Bonasera, he

attends some of his daughter's wedding. He continued throughout the wedding scene to oscillate between filling the role of father to his immediate family by being there for his daughter Connie, and by working the role of father to his mafia family. By Vito rotating these two roles simultaneously at the same event is just a snapshot of his overall blending of the two paternal roles. The job of a Don was to watch over his relatives, the people in their neighborhood, and his personal friends. The fact that he maintained this large paternal presence in the lives of many people made him similar to Emperor Augustus, because it made Vito a *Pater Patriae*. The entire wedding scene at Vito's home symbolically represents the essence of what it means to be *Pater Patriae*. The wedding scene was the creation of an environment that was celebrating the family and showcasing cultural heritage. Everyone was able to have a happy day because they felt secure and protected at the home of Vito, and it was a surprise to the family when the FBI disrespectfully showed up around the border of the home's property.

One sign of being *Pater Patriae* for Augustus was the popularity he had with the people of Rome. The wedding scene depicts the popularity, love, and devotion the Corleone family organization had for Vito. An example of this reverence for Vito can be observed with the behavior of Luca Brasi. More than once he is shown sitting on his own practicing how he has prepared to thank Vito for inviting him to Connie's wedding. Over and over with sincerity he recites to himself: "Don Corleone, I am honored and grateful that you have invited me to your home on the wedding day of your daughter. May their first child be a masculine child." Then at 15:00 he finally gets the opportunity to meet with Vito, and he stumbles slightly in his articulation of the thanks he had practiced. He added, "I pledge my ever-ending loyalty" and gave a gift for Connie's bridal purse. Vito

could sense the earnesty in Luca Brasi's gesture and tells him that he is his "most valued friend." This give-and-take of respect and admiration solidified and strengthened the loyalty to the Corleone family organization.

Power is another major theme in the wedding scene. The first shot in the first scene is of Amerigo Bonasera who is coming to Vito for justice. His daughter had been raped by two non-Italian men, and Bonasera had gone to the police for help but was not satisfied with the judicial process, so had then come to his Don for justice. The first time we see Vito in the film we are facing his back, he is in the left side of the frame, and Bonasera is in our clear view. There is a shadow cast upon Vito, and the shadow remains in his eyes when we see his face for the first time at minute 04:08. Usually when lighting from above casts shadows onto a character, it can make them seem vulnerable--on the contrary, Coppola did so to make Vito seem mysterious, threatening, and powerful. A major component in the Italian-American Mafia was the concept of respect, and if there was evidence of disrespect then tensions rose. Bonasera showed disrespect to and insulted Vito because he did not come to the Don for justice initially. We enter the film when Bonasera is begging Vito to use his power to kill the men who assaulted his daughter. This alone displays to the audience that Vito is a powerful leader. The second favor that we see Vito helping a client with is one that purely involves having political power. The baker of Connie's wedding cake came to Vito because he wanted Enzo to be able to stay in America to marry his daughter. He came to Vito for help because it was known that Vito had friends, influence and indirect power in the US government. As it is suggesting in the visual title to advertise the film, Don Corleone "held the strings," which made him a very powerful man.



The third favor Vito granted, displaying his power in the wedding scene was for Johnny Fontane, whose character is loosely based off of the great Frank Sinatra (Messenger, 2002). Vito was the symbolic and actual Godfather to Fontane. Michael explains to Kay, who is obviously an outsider to the family, how Vito helped Fontane's career. He explains how Fontane was bound to a personal service contract that he had very badly wanted to get out of. His bandleader would not allow him to leave the contract, so Vito went to go see the bandleader with Luca Brasi, and Vito gave the band leader an offer he couldn't refuse: that either his brains or his signature would be on the contract to release Fontane. When Fontane came to see Vito this time at the wedding, he

⁶ <https://onceuponascreen.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/the-godfather-44.jpg>

needed help once again with his career. He wanted to be the main role in a new film but the director refused to allow him to have it--so Vito promised Fontane that he would making the director “an offer he can’t refuse.” Fontane was visibly reassured, for he knew what that meant and the power that Vito had to get anything he wanted.

This entire scene also emphasizes the importance of the family unit, just as the Ara Pacis does. The wedding is a celebration of gaining a new member of the Corleone immediate family, and a celebrating this with the entire extended family. The family is accompanied with food, friends and a festa, and are brought together with a commonality--their tie to Don Vito Corleone. Vito shows his devotion to family throughout the scene. He dances with his wife among the crowds, showcasing his long-lasting and faithful marriage. He refused to take the family wedding photo without his son, and future prodege, Michael. He is filled with joy when his godson Johnny Fontane comes to the wedding all the way from California. When meeting with Fontane, Vito asks a question evidently important to his own values: “You spend time with your family?” Fontane responds, “Sure I do.” Vito is pleased and his response embodies how important the family unit was to the Corleone family: “Good. Because a man who doesn’t spend time with his family can never be a real man.” A few moments later in the film, Vito and Connie dance their father-daughter dance, with which the scene closes out. They dance together to the iconic theme song of the film, “The Godfather Waltz.”

The Ara Pacis painted a positive image of Augustus, however his paradoxical character was still underneath the surface, and Don Vito had a paradoxical and complex personality just as it was proven that Augustus had. This opening scene provides evidence of this paradox. The paradox of the Godfather shown in this scene is expressed

when Vito openly does business and discusses his organized crime plans, including that of murder, at his own daughter's wedding and at his home. The fact that he did his mafia business at home is very significant because the home is associated with family, comfort, and security, which happen to be some of the same things that Vito provided for his "extended family". His extended family was his following of Italian-Americans including relatives, friends, and "medigan's" in power such as government officials, judges and more. Another paradox that can be observed is when Vito is meeting with Amerigo Bonasera. Vito is petting his cat as Bonasera is telling him that he wants the men dead who had performed an injustice to his daughter. Vito has ordered murder in the past, and has the power to order it to anyone at any time, yet he gently pets a loving cat who purrs almost continuously throughout the meeting. If Vito were inherently a bad person, like the side of his character who is a cold blooded killer, then why does this animal love him so much? Vito must have been a good person simultaneously, since after all, he was a very loving father to his family. He was a man feared by enemies and a man beloved to his friends and family. This paradox is the personality enigma of the Italian-American Mafia: Don Vito is a family man and a premeditated murderer.

* * *

Shortly after the the wedding scene, Tom was sent by Vito to Hollywood, California to speak with the "Hollywood bigshot," Woltz, about giving Johnny Fontane the film part he wanted. This scene embodies the power and ruthlessness Vito had as a Don, and how he reacted to those who disrespected his power, his family, and his ethnicity. When Tom confronts Woltz about allowing Fontane to have the role, Woltz responded with venomous insults against Fontane, Vito, and Italian-Americans. After

Tom explained to Woltz about the sacred, close and cultural importance of the Godfather relationship, Woltz responded that he knew that the part was perfect for Fontane but that he was going to “run him out of the business”. Woltz added that Fontane ruined an acting investment with his “olive oil voice and Guinea charm.” Before Tom leaves to tell Vito the bad news, Woltz mocks Vito by calling him the extremely insulting ethnic slur “goombah.” The power which Vito displayed back, in response to Woltz’s non-compliance with Vito’s request for Fontane, heavily outweighed any behavior of Woltz. Woltz told Tom in the studio that he would not be muscled; he yelled in Tom’s face: “a man in my position can’t afford to be made to look ridiculous.” He even mentioned as he threw Tom out of his house that he was not a bandleader--insinuating that he knew about how Vito helped Fontane before. However in response to Woltz, Tom simply asked to be taken to the airport because it was very important that Vito hear bad news immediately. He needed to hear Tom’s news quickly, so that action could be taken against him swiftly and efficiently since shooting of the film Fontane wanted to be in began in only a week. The manner in which Vito chose to change Woltz’s mind about giving the part to Fontane showcases how ruthless Vito could be. Vito’s character is known thus far as a father to his people and to his family, while really all that is inferred about his mafia behavior is from his wedding scene meetings and from Michael’s story to Kay. However after Tom leaves Woltz’s home, the shot pans into Woltz’s home, and all that is heard is the silence of grasshoppers chirping in the early morning hours. The sun is just beginning to rise and The Godfather Waltz begins to play as the camera shot comes closer to the window of Woltz’s bedroom. Suspense should be stirring inside the bodies of the audience. Then the shot shows Woltz in his bed, made up of silk golden sheets. As the camera comes

closer to Woltz in his bed the music gets faster, intensifies, and sounds more anxious. As Woltz awakens, he turns over and a pool of blood in his bed is shown, but it is not his own blood. Then he unravels the sheets and the head of his prized possession is in his bed. Woltz made a significant error when he was with Tom by revealing his weakness-- his love for his horse. By revealing what was important to him, Woltz made himself vulnerable to Vito. The combination of it being early morning, Woltz sleeping in his home and in his bed, and the slaying of an innocent horse amplify the vulnerability of Woltz and the ruthlessness, power and paradox of Vito's character. The audience feels compelled to want to love and respect Vito's character, but then it is shown what evils his power is capable of. After Woltz's reaction screaming in terror to his dead horse's head, the shot changes to the outside of his Mediterranean style villa and it then fades into Vito's face. The shot of the house, the suspense, the shot of the horse head, to the shot of the house again and then into the face of the Don is a symbolic movement that seems to mean the Woltz should have known that Vito was a powerful leader and a serious man who was not to be overlooked or taken lightly. Vito, like Augustus, always made sure he won for his name, his family, and his power.

* * *

Despite being a ruthless murderer, Vito was also an ethical man, a moral man and he did not let the temptation of becoming more wealthy corrupt him. The next scene of the film is when Sollozzo, "the Turk," meets with the Don, and this scene shines light upon the ethical side of Vito as a father and as a powerful leader. Turk knows that Vito is a powerful man and comes to him for help. He says in the meeting, "I need a man who has powerful friends, I need one million dollars in cash, and I need, Don Corleone, those

politicians that you carry in your pocket, like so many nickels and dimes.” Vito asks him “What is the interest for my family?” This is very significant because it shows that Vito’s character was not one that only looked out for himself, but one that was like a *Pater Patriae*, who made decisions for the betterment of the entire Corleone family organization and not just for the enlargement of his personal wealth. The Turk wanted Vito to make a deal with him to involve the Corleone family in the business of narcotics in exchange for what is attached to the Corleone name: finance, political influence, and legal protection. Vito’s moral compass made his final decision for the family: no to getting involved with the Turk. Despite Tom and Sonny’s enthusiasm to get involved with the Turk, Vito made his own decision not to. Vito explained to the Turk that his interests did not intertwine with his own and that even if they did, strategically for his family being involved with drugs would eliminate his legal and political influence. Additionally, Vito’s paternal role extended in this scene as specifically being a father to his oldest son Santino, who is referred to as Sonny. Sonny’s impulsive, short-fused and emotional personality made an appearance when the Tattaglia family was mentioned by the Turk as a form of security for the Corleones if they were to get involved. During the meeting he apologizes to the Turk for his son’s outburst and explains that he had spoiled his children and had a sentimental weakness for them. After the meeting Vito continues to be paternal toward Sonny,

“Santino, come here. What’s the matter with you? I think your brain is going soft from all that comedy you’re playing with that young girl. Never tell anybody outside the family what you’re thinking again.”

Vito’s words to Sonny are significant. They express some of his personal opinions about the importance of family. By telling him that he should not talk to anyone outside of the

family about his opinion is insinuation that only family matters and that the devotion to the family unit is so strong that they are the only ones to be trusted. Another personal opinion about the family which Vito expresses during his scolding of Sonny was how he feels about adultery. As Augustus had, Vito expressed disapproval of adultery, and specifically that his son was fooling around with a “young girl.” He even insinuated that Sonny’s improper behavior was affecting his judgement.

* * *

The next 50 minutes of *The Godfather* provides important evidence within the scenes that reveal predominant themes in the film and noteworthy moments of paradox. The theme of Insiders vs. Outsiders to the family is paramount to understanding the various characters in the film. This theme is especially symbolic and crucial to understanding Michael’s character and the major personal transformation he experiences. As a direct result of the circumstances involving the Turk and the Corleone family, Michael morphs from a voluntary outsider to an involved insider. Specifically, this circumstance is the Turk’s attempted murder of Vito. This action ignited a chain reaction, like a domino effect, of the transformation of Michael and the entire Corleone Family. Vito, as observed throughout the film thus far, was revered as a father to his community. So this universal love for him mixed with the fear of his death aroused a panic in the entire family, community, and New York City. This panic is more evidence that Vito was like a father to his community, just as Augustus was *Pater Patriae*. The Corleone family seems lost and disheveled without Vito able to be leading them. He was a living symbol of not only the Father of the Family, the *Pater Patriae*, but he was also a symbol for the heart of the family. It was because of Vito that the Family was successful and close. He was the anchor that held down the family from deviating from their family

and their heritage. Two specific examples of this widespread reaction to the attack on Vito are from Fredo and then Michael when he is shown newspapers printed with headlines about his father.

Fredo was with Vito when he was shot. Pauly was supposed to drive them both back home, but since he had called in sick that day, Fredo got the car to drive them both home. Before Vito was supposed to get into the car to leave with Fredo, he decided to go across the street to buy some fresh fruit. Then, as Vito is picking his fruit out, he is ambushed and shot. After Vito fell and became still, Fredo sits down next to his body and begins to cry. A crowd forms around the spectacle of a devastated and shocked Fredo near the body of his father. In the background a baby begins to cry--the emotional sadness of the scene seems to be manifested in the timeless lone cry of a vulnerable infant. Also in the background the cry of a dog can be heard--manifesting the animalistic and ruthless nature still existent in humans. Then the Godfather Waltz begins to play solemnly, purposefully like a tribute to Vito's life. Fredo pushed his hat off as he rubbed his head in an emotional reaction of despair as he whimpered. When he pushed the hat off, he was no longer a man in the mafia, but a boy and a son, crying for his father. The scene ends with a shot of Vito on the ground from above behind Fredo. There is blood dripping down from Vito's mouth while Fredo is rocking back and forth, crying and screaming, "Papa." The intense emotional response from Fredo suggests evidence that Vito was a significant paternal figure to him.

* * *

When the assassination attempt scene closed with Vito on the ground and Fredo screaming by his side, the next scene opens up showing the cinema. As soon as it opens

up, the sound of bells tolling can be heard. This is extremely significant and is symbolically connected to an infamous piece of literature from the seventeenth century poet, John Donne. He wrote in his Meditation XVII:

“No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend’s or of thine own were: any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.”

Donne is saying that events in the lives of men and deaths of men, in this case the assumed death of Vito, are not isolated, but touch the lives of numerous individuals. By the scene closing abruptly with a view of Vito’s body and switching instantaneously to the bells tolling in another part of the City, and keeping the excerpt from Donne in mind, the association that can be made is clear: the attempt that had just been made on Vito Corleone’s life would universally affect everyone in the film. This event would alter Michael’s character permanently by consequently propelling him to become an Insider. The shots fired upon Vito began the evolution of Michael’s character from an Outsider to an Insider. It would lead to the death of the Turk and Captain McCluskey, a NYC policeman, and that would start a war. Every scene after Vito is shot is a direct consequence of that event. The bell is tolling for the attempted murder of Vito, for the death of “Outsider” Michael, and for the diminishment of the love in the relationship between Michael and Kay.

Michael is informed about his father when Kay spots the newspaper headlines on the side of the street. Vito is popular and well-known enough that his possible death was newsworthy and of interest to the City. Michael’s discovery marks the moment in which the first domino fell, setting off the progression of his transition over to an Insider.

A significant frame in the scene is when Michael runs to the phone booth to call his family. In this shot, while he speaks to Sonny on the telephone, the theme of Insiders v. Outsiders is very evident. He temporarily barricades himself from Kay while he is inside the phone booth. While he is inside the booth he is cut off from the Outsiders and is with the Insiders, the Corleone family. This is the first time he moves toward the Insiders, and shuts out his Outsider facade. His life as a voluntary outsider included an Ivy League education, a heroic World War Two tour, and now a leisurely life of dating Kay. The attack on his father is the prompt for Michael to make the first move back toward his family. In this moment his devotion to his family, and especially to his father is shown. Michael is speaking with his brother, who is telling Michael that he was worried about him, and that he should be home with their mother--home with the Insiders.

The lighting in this frame of the scene is very significant for the beginning of Michael's personal transition to an involved Insider. Michael's eyes are shadowed just as Vito's eyes were shadowed in the the opening scene of the film. When Vito was meeting with Bonasera his eyes had a deep cast shadow due to the lighting being from above. In the phone booth, the lighting was also from above. "Lighting thrown on a character from above can be used for many different effects, but a common result is to make a character appear vulnerable or...threatening and mysterious (Barsam & Monahan, 2013, 241-242)."

In a way Michael was all of these characteristics due to the lighting. He was vulnerable to being pulled into the world of the Insiders, and yet at this moment the audience can see an image of his father's role as Don in his eyes. Whether the audience consciously connects the similar shadow of the eyes from father to son or not consciously, a feeling

that Michael will become like his father is planted in the minds of the viewer. Michael is still a private citizen, but in the booth he is totally disconnected for the first time from the Outsiders. This instigation of the transition adds mystery and anticipation for how far Michael will go into the Insider world and if the shadow of power and revenge for his father in his eyes will cause him to transversely block out the Outside world--including Kay. This is why Kay is outside the booth and looking in patiently wondering what Michael's next move will be. Another notable observation can be made about the characters of Kay and Michael from this frame. Michael's eyes are deep, mysterious, powerful, and almost seem like they are holding back the eyes of a man who has not yet realized who he is. In contrast, the audience can see, behind the barrier of the phone booth, into Kay's eyes without any shadow to cover them. This tells us that Kay's role and character had already been determined and is rigid. Kay's character will not be fluid through the rest of the film--she will remain an Outsider and Michael will begin to relate to her less and less as he moves closer and closer to the Insiders.



From this point onward in the film, Michael will never be the same character as he was at the wedding. At 58:21 the scene fades into Michael sitting alone with his head down, seemingly pondering. As the scene begins and shows Michael, the Godfather Waltz is playing. This view of Michael surrounded by serious colors, a black fence, and sitting on a white bench, combined with the music is independently foreshadowing his momentum toward the Family Insiders. When he is sitting on this bench he is in a state of limbo in between the world of the Insiders and the Outsiders. While he is sitting and thinking, probably about the attempt on his father's life, he is alone, but also in the presence of a significant object. There is a statue of what looks like to be a *putto*, which is the word in Italian for the artistic depiction of a baby male angel. *Putti*, the plural of *putto*, actually derive from the depiction of religious idols in ancient Roman religion and were very popular in 15th century Italy (Armstrong, 1981, 2-3, 119). They represent the presence of Christianity. This *putto* is placed on the far left of the frame subtly, and he is looking away from Michael in the opposite direction. Perhaps the *putto* knows that Michael will soon murder two men. However the *putto* is looking in the direction of the Corleone's home, so perhaps he also knows that the Corleones are still people who have a set of morals and ethics that are very important to them, such as not getting involved with drugs and keeping family close.



Michael's refusal to tell Kay that he loved her when he was called to the phone is another sign that his relationship with Kay would suffer due to the attempted murder of Vito. Unlike at the wedding, now Mike did not want to show affection for an Outsider in front of the Insiders. Furthermore, he was even distant when Kay and him were alone at dinner before Michael left for the hospital to see Vito. At dinner Kay asked him when she would see him again more than once and he replied that he did not know.

The next scene when Michael visits the hospital is extremely pivotal for Michael's character as a metamorphosing insider. He enters the hospital alone and the camera shows him in a vacant hallway. As an audience, we notice what Michael notices: no nurse on duty, an empty office with a hot coffee, and an uneaten freshly unwrapped sandwich--someone had left their post on that floor very recently. The mood becomes more tense as Michael continues to walk down the hallway and a skipping record is playing. A chorus stirring negative feelings then begins and Michael begins to run. When Michael reaches his father's room, what he feared the most was happening: Vito

was alone, which meant that he was vulnerable and that the Turk was attempting to finish the murder. A hint to the audience that a second murder attempt by the Turk was in the works that night is when Michael found his father. The frame shows the doorway and gives us a view over the shoulder of Michael: of Vito laying vulnerably in bed, the lighting in the room giving his eyes the same deep and mysterious shadow in which we saw him with in the first scene of the film. The shadowed eyes are symbolic of Vito still being a powerful man despite his poor state of health. The significant feature of the frame that hints at the second attempt on Vito's life is on the left side, on the doorway: it is the number "2." The number is right above the name "Corleone". The moment that Michael crosses the threshold into the room of his father, he will become involved. He will join his father and he will be his father's hero. A father who had done everything in his life to protect his family, was now being protected by his child who had tried so hard in his life up until this point to be an Outsider. The decision Michael made to tell the nurse to move Vito into another room, would be one of the first commands he would make for the Corleones.



Additionally, the first time Michael is seen in the hospital hallway he is alone and an Outsider, but the second time we see him in the hallway, he is with his father and taking his first step as an involved insider. This is the first transition point of Michael's character. This is symbolic that he will soon totally be an Insider, lose his connection with the Outsiders and protect the Corleone family, as he was there protecting his father, the *Pater Patriae* of the Corleones.

On the subject of the hospital scene and of Vito being *Pater Patriae*, a sincere man who genuinely loved Vito and came to visit him at this time when Michael was visiting, is Enzo. Vito was a father to his people and his community and this was evident with what Enzo said to Michael:

“If there is trouble, I stay here to help you. For your father! For your father!”

Enzo is only a baker, he is not involved with the mafia other than baking the cake for Connie's wedding. Vito is his *Pater Patriae* however, and despite having no weapon or

experience with the mob-like warfare, he was willing to protect Vito. Enzo had courage for Vito's protection, even though he only arrived with a bouquet of flowers instead of with a gun.



When Enzo goes outside like Michael told him to, Michael then looked down at Vito and spoke to him. He said:

“I’m with you now. I’m with you.”

After he spoke these words to his father, the Godfather Waltz began to play. As it slowly played, Vito smiled up to Michael, and Michael kissed his hand. This was a sign that at this point the character of Michael had a transition realization--his transformation to an Insider was almost complete. Michael was discovering his new role as an involved Insider. Michael was mentally an Insider now, but to the other characters in the film he was still an outsider and only went as a private citizen to see his father. However when Captain McCluskey, the unethical policeman working with the Turk, arrived, he immediately began to use slurs against Italian-Americans. When Michael questioned the

Captain about his partnership with the Turk, McCluskey had Michael held back and then he punched him in the face, leaving Michael with a broken jaw. Michael was attacked as a citizen, and now he will want revenge--a personal, ethical, and protective revenge against the Turk and McCluskey. The thirst for revenge will throw Michael into being a heavily involved Insider and eventually the Father of the Corleone family--and it was all sparked by the Turk's attempted murder on Don Vito: "Therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

When Michael made both justice for his father and his jaw his own priority over his future with Kay, he was entering the family business and the world of the Insiders. This feeling of revenge for a father's life was echoed in Suetonius 7 from his writings on Augustus. In this section, Suetonius says:

"The initial reason for all these wars was this: since he considered nothing more incumbent on him than to avenge his uncle's death and maintain the validity of his enactments, immediately on returning from Apollonia he resolved to surprise Brutus and Cassius by taking up arms against them; and when they foresaw the danger and fled, to resort to law and prosecute them for murder in their absence."

Julius Caesar was a dominant father figure to Augustus because his father died when he was young. Augustus initiated wars and made it a priority of his to get revenge for his uncle, just as Michael would for Vito.

The scene at the hospital leads into another pivotal scene for Michael's character. It begins when the audience sees a view of the Corleone estate and a black car rolling up with Michael inside. Significantly the chorus of the Godfather Waltz plays as Michael's car enters and drops him off. By this playing, there is a sense while watching, that Michael will soon be an involved Insider. His involvement is clearly observed in this scene when he is listening to Sonny, Tom, Clemenza, and Tessio discuss what to do about

McCluskey and Sollozzo, the Turk. Sonny is speaking irrationally as a hothead fired up with emotion and rage about the situation--he does not want to meet with Sollozzo and is not speaking like a wise Don. Tom's composure is lost as well as he tries to explain to Sonny that any moves made by the Family should be "business not personal." The problem with Tom's argument, is that the entire situation is very much personal because it was their father and the community's father that had his life almost taken. Tom does not realize that the ringing from the tolling of the bells for Vito were still very loud. Given all the men in the room that were Insiders, it was actually Michael the metamorphosing Insider, who was thinking most like a Don and who rationalized "taking it personal" as "business." The point when Michael becomes involved is when he interjects the discussion and formulates the plan for revenge on McCluskey and Sollozzo. He very boldly established his presence as not only another Insider in the room, but as a strategic and powerful one. When Michael gave his plan he did not speak it as a suggestion of what he could do, but he stated it as a declaration of what he would do. He explained it as though it would be the only plan that would work. As Michael is speaking his plan, Coppola used a very influential camera technique to insinuate to the audience that Michael's character was changing and that he was aware that it was. This technique was a form of camera movement known as the dolly shot (Barsam & Monahan, 2013, 267-268). When Michael states the words "Let's set the meeting." the camera begins to dolly in. "When the camera is used to dolly in (move toward) on a subject, the subject grows in the frame, gaining significance not only through being bigger in the frame but also through those moments in which we actually see it growing bigger (Barsam & Monahan, 2013, 267-268)." As the camera is used to dolly in toward Michael sitting in

the chair, he looks more and more like a Don and his status as an Outsider is gaining legitimacy. The dolly in's "...gradual intensification effect is commonly used at moments of a character's realization and/or decision, or as a point of view shot of what the character is having a realization about (Barsam & Monahan, 2013, 267-268)." The dolly in technique stops when Michael says, "I'll kill them both." The commencement and the finalization of the dolly in is significantly timed with Michael's formulation of the plan from the beginning to the end of his thought process. The dolly in of the camera helps the audience understand the personal transformation Michael is going through at that very moment. The technique is helping the audience and Michael realize that he is truly an Insider now.

Michael at this point in the film must believe that he should be considered an Insider, and that his opinions on family affairs should be respected. He became defensive in defending his plan when Clemenza, Tessio, and Sonny all laughed after he said he would kill both the Turk and McClusky. After Michael finished, Sonny for a second seemed amazed and convinced by the plan, but gave into robust laughter once Clemenza began. Sonny said to his brother:

"What are you going to do? Nice college boy, eh, didn't want to get mixed up in the family business. Now you want to gun down a policeman because he slapped you in the face a little bit? What do you think this is--the Army where you can shoot 'em a mile away? You gotta get up close like this and bada-BING you blow their brains all over your nice Ivy League suit. Come here, you're taking this very personal. Tom this is business and this man is taking it very, very personal."

When Sonny said this, Michael's tone and appearance changed in a way that his character had never been seen before. He defended his plan with the justification that he could kill McClusky because he was an unethical, crooked cop. According to Michael, killing

McCluskey would not be like killing an average policeman because he had been involved with drugs and was dishonest. He then says that if this reasoning for the plan is considered, then the murders could be justified as a fair way to achieve revenge on the Turk and McCluskey and at the same time Michael to complete his transformation into the world of the Insiders. Michael's appearance after establishing this plan as plausible is very symbolic. His eyes are locked in, very dark, and extremely serious. His eyes have not had these characteristics until this point when he was having a character realization that he was moving to be an Insider. His eyes seemed to be telling Sonny that he would achieve revenge with this plan and that he was not a volunteer Outsider any longer. The severity and intensity of Michael's gaze signal his increasing involvement in the Corleone family.



The scene ends with the frame of Michael's stare, and with his word to Sonny that the revenge on the Turk and McCluskey is only business not personal. However the root of the revenge is on the contrary very personal--the Turk and McCluskey tried to kill their

father and McCluskey broke Michael's jaw. The bell tolling for Vito's near death, and the fear of his possible death, was still evidently ringing throughout this scene.

The root of revenge and motivation for moving to the Insiders was clear when Michael gets in the car with Sollozzo and McCluskey. He tells them "I don't want my father bothered anymore." This statement alone is evidence that the murderous plan is not only business, but is it is very personal. When the trio arrived at the restaurant, Michael had the same intense, locked gaze on his visage. His business is personal.



To settle their dispute, Sollozzo and Michael speak Italian to each other--they are closer to their heritage, roots, and their families when they speak Italian. Sollozzo talks about the attempt in Vito's life to Michael in Italian. A roaring of a nearby train begins to intensify each time Sollozzo looks into Michael's eyes and says the words "*tu padre.*" As Sollozzo continued to discuss about Vito to Michael the dialogue grew more tense. With a burst, Michael brought the conversation to English and told Sollozzo the only thing he

wanted from him, which happened to also to be the desire which brought him to the Insiders:

“What I want, what is most important to me, is that I have a guarantee: No more attempts on my father’s life.”

What Sollozzo said in response sealed his miserable fate. Sollozzo replied:

“What guarantees can I give you Mike?”

If Michael had gone into the restaurant with any doubt that he would not kill the other two men at the table, the response from Sollozzo clearly infuriated him and he asked immediately after to go to the bathroom where Clemenza had stored the gun.

The moment before Michael opens the door, his character had hit a point where there was no turning back from there. He has the gun in his hand, the fire of revenge fueling him, and only one direction to walk in: straight through the door to go back to the table and finish the plan. As Michael is standing by the door, only seconds go by, but these seconds have substantial weight because of the intensity of the roaring train in the background. At this point the roaring of the churning emotions in Michael’s mind symbolize the roaring of change. Change in the course of the family’s future, Michael’s future, and Kay’s future for not only the the entire rest of this film, but also for what happens to the family in the rest of the series. The roaring also signifies the finalization of Michael’s metamorphosis into a fully involved Insider. The Michael who returns to the dinner table with a gun is not the same Michael to whom the audience was first introduced when he arrived at Connie’s wedding. This is the new Insider Michael and he was seconds away from murdering a New York City policeman and the man who tried to kill his father. These two men with whom he sat back at the table, are the two men responsible for Michael’s transformation. When Michael comes back to the table, the

moment he sits down Sollozzo begins to speaking Italian to him again. Michael's eyes were fleeting back and forth and only to fixate on Sollozzo as he spoke. Sollozzo repeats multiple times the words "*tu padre*," enhancing the emotion within Michael at that moment. While Michael is sitting at the table, his mind is racing, his eyes are racing and the train is roaring in the background louder than ever. His eyes focus one final time on Sollozzo and then on McCluskey as the train is now screeching. The screeching train sounds as though it is preparing for a stop to pick up one more passenger who bought a one way ticket to the Insiders. Combined with the sound in the background, the camera once again uses the dolly in technique to intensify the significance of Michael's character transformation. The frame of the dolly in begins with a view of Michael over the shoulder of Sollozzo as he is speaking Italian to Michael about Vito. The camera then uses the dolly in, panning closer to Michael's face as his eyes frantically are shifting and as the audience waits for him to shoot his victims. The movement toward Michael stops when the train begins to break and the frame then settles on his face. From the point in which the dolly in stopped, a very significant five seconds had passed before Michael leaped to his feet. The five seconds in between the finalization of the dolly in, to the point in which Michael stood up to shoot are meaningful because they symbolically represent the five shots that Sollozzo's men had used to try and kill Vito. When Michael shot and killed Sollozzo, he was officially an involved Insider member of the Corleone family. Michael had gotten justice for Vito, the Corleone family, and for himself, and he had become closer to his family but paradoxically the only way he could achieve this was to become a criminal.

* * *

Moreover, there are additional scenes of paradox and irony in the film. A series of scenes throughout the film have the ironic theme of Christmas v. Crime. I argue that this theme is displaying a deeper message in the film, insinuating that the Corleone family has a set of morals that is important to them and yet they ironically are very immoral people. Every scene that incorporated Christmas, inevitably had an unfortunate crime which followed. Therefore the presence of Christmas was a signifier for crime. For example while Luca Brasi is preparing to meet with the Tattaglia family he is listening to Christmas music. The cheerful Christmas medley, "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," plays in the background as Luca puts on his bulletproof vest and assembles his hand gun. This would foreshadow a fatal crime: Sollozzo's and Tattaglia's strangulation murder of Luca Brasi. Another signifying clue the audience is given, to signify that Luca will not survive, happens when he is walking in toward the counter to Tattaglia. The camera frame peers through the glass door. Tattaglia can be seen behind the counter and Luca can be seen walking over to him. The significance can be noted with the decorations on the glass door that are seen in the frame of the camera's view. There are fish, giving us the hint that Luca Brasi's fate of this meeting will soon be that he is "swimming with the fishes." This is a Sicilian term that he will be killed, and later on in the film, the Corleone family learns of Luca's death when Sonny received a package delivery of a dead fish wrapped in Luca's bulletproof vest.



Furthermore, Vito called to Fredo to get the car, but Fredo told him that Paulie had called in sick, which was unusual. There are Christmas decorations including a Christmas tree in the scene. Vito was confused when Fredo told him that Paulie was sick and couldn't get the car, but Fredo in kind Christmas spirit defends Paulie by saying that he is a "good kid" and that he didn't mind getting the car himself. Fredo was vulnerable, innocent, and not a strong character, while Paulie was a devious, greedy, disloyal character who pretended to be sick because he knew that the Don would be attacked that day at that time. As an audience we assume that he either reached out to Sollozzo or that Sollozzo came to him--either way he sold out his *Pater Patriae*. Then after Fredo tells his father that he will get the car, the Don wishes the individuals they were leaving a "buon Natale," a Merry Christmas in Italian. He also wishes those he is buying fruit from a "Merry Christmas." Second later Sollozzo's men round a corner and shoot him.

Christmas v. Crime is also even present when the Corleone family gets their revenge on Paulie for being disloyal and traitorous to Vito. Sonny told Clemenza to

make it the first thing on his list to do away with Paulie. The next scene cuts to a view of Clemenza's house. His house was decorated with Christmas lights, Christmas images in the window, and a Santa Claus statue in the front yard. This Christmas decor would signify the disposal of Paulie. The moment when Paulie was killed also included irony in addition to the Christmas v. Crime. When the car stopped and Clemenza got out to urinate on the side of the road away from the car, the camera showed the murder of Paulie in a very symbolic way. The frame showed the car alongside a field of wheat. This field recalls of the ancient concept of the "Fields of Punishment" which derived from the Ancient Greeks and was transmitted to the Ancient Romans⁷. This Field of Punishment would be the place after death for those who committed crime in their time alive (Knight, 1970, 131). The paradox here is that Paulie committed a crime against the family by selling out Vito, but the Corleones were committing a crime in murdering him for justice. The Statue of Liberty also can be seen behind the fields in the distance, with her back turned. Her back is turned to the crime taking place as a symbolic prompt to the audience to ask themselves: is there such a thing as true justice in America? A ship can be heard blowing in the background, a loud ship's horn sounding like the ship that brought Vito over from Sicily as a young orphaned boy, and saving him from being killed. Ironically he had created a family that was meant to protect his community, against persecution he faced as a child, but this family was murderous.

⁷ *Elysion: On Ancient Greek and Roman Beliefs Concerning a Life After Death*, the concept of eternal punishment began with the Greeks, but as seen on page 131, the Roman writer, Vergil, wrote on his belief in eternal punishment for select individuals.



Christmas v. Crime was also noticeable when Michael arrived to the hospital to visit his father. When Michael's car rolled up to the outside of the hospital, the colorful, cheerful, Christmas lights decorated the archway of the entrance door. There was also a tree with colorful lights. Significantly, when Michael observed that the on-duty employee had recently left their post, there was the image of a decorated Christmas tree. It was not in clear focus, but its soft and subtle presence was strong and noticeable. Christmas in the hospital and decorations in the presence of the vacant desk, which was supposed to be occupied by a person who had the ability to protect Vito, both allude to the audience that a bad event will occur soon. Michael's intervention stopped Vito from being visited by Sollozzo's men, but his jaw was consequently broken by Captain McCluskey. And this sparked the motivation personal revenge as well as a revenge for his father that brought Michael into the world of involved Insiders.

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The common themes of devotion to family, display of power, leading a paradoxical lifestyle, and acting as a *Pater Patriae* have been shown to have been existent in the life of Augustus and in the *The Godfather* film. In further research, Michael's retreat to Sicily should be examined. Specifically how he got back to his roots, a very Roman concept, which then propelled his ultimate transformation to Don upon his arrival back to America. Also, from the second film the foundation story of Vito's power should be examined in contrast with demise of Michael's power. This can be compared to the glory of the Augustan era and the eventual fall of the Empire. Emphasis in future research on the entire trilogy should focus on the parallels between how a combination of a loss of morals, a decline in the importance of heritage, a decrease in the importance of family and an increased presence of Christianity played a major role in the fall of the Corleones and in the fall of the Roman Empire.

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