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Collective Memory and Blood Feud: The Case of Mountainous Crete

Tsantiropoulos, Aris

COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND BLOOD FEUD; THE CASE OF MOUNTAINOUS CRETE

Aris Tsantiropoulos*

University of Crete

Abstract:

Drawing upon ethnographic data from mountainous central Crete, a feuding society up to the present moment, this article will focus on cases of retaliatory crimes where men avenge a relative who was killed before they were born. In these cases, what is interesting is that there do not seem to be any factors in the present to fuel the fire of a past animosity between the two kinship groups. Instead, these men seek revenge looking either for the murderer himself or for one of his male relatives in the places where they were forced to emigrate after the commitment of crime in order to avoid the perpetuation of violent actions. Reflecting upon crime in a feuding society as a 'cultural trauma' for the identity of the victim's kinship group, and elaborating upon the ideas that Freud has exposed in his article 'Mourning and Melancholia', the ways by which a memory of a past crime triggers another crime are explored here.

Key words: Crete, feuding societies, collective memory, blood feud, kinship, cultural trauma, psychoanalytic anthropology.

Introduction: Crete as a Feuding Society

Ethnographers[1] have treated blood feud as a form of social conflict carried out between kinship groups. The crime transcends personal responsibility and involves

* Lecturer of Social Anthropology, Department of Philosophy and Social Studies, University of Crete.
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[1] For example see: Jacob Black-Michaud, *Cohesive Force*. *Feud in Mediterranean and the Middle East*, (Basil Blackwell, 1975); Christofer Boehm, *Blood Revenge: An Anthropology of Feuding in Montenegro and other tribal societies*, (University Press of Kansas, 1984); Joseph Ginat., *Blood Disputes among Bedouin and Rural Arabs in Israel. Revenge, Mediation, Outcasting and Family Honor*, (University of Pittsburg Press in cooperation with the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 1987); Margaret Hasluck, *The Unwritten Law of Albania*, (Cambridge University Press, 1954); Roger Gould, 'Revenge as sanction and solidarity display: An analysis of vendettas in nineteenth-century Corsica', *American Sociological Review,* 65:5 (2000) pp. 682-704. Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Sentiment of Honour in Kabyle Society,' trans. P. Sherrard in J. G. Peristiany (ed.) *Honor and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* (University of Chicago Press, 1966) pp. 191-241. More specifically, on revenge and values of symbolic capital in Greek society see: John Campbell, 'Honor and the Devil' in Peristiany (ed), *Honor and Shame*, pp. 141-

two groups of consanguinities who become either the perpetrators or the victims. The existence and the perpetuation of blood feuds in specific societies are associated with an ideology of kinship corporation and also with indigenous ideas about values of symbolic capital of a man (honour, prestige etc.) or a woman (chastity). In particular, an assault on the honour of a man or a woman, whether it is verbal or physical, is conceived of as an assault against the whole of his or her kinship group and every man of the kinsfolk feels responsible for the defence or the redress.

In the case of Crete, the main characteristics of feud can be summarised as follows. In the commission of a crime, the local acceptance is of a collective rather than a personal responsibility which stems from a commonly adopted ideology that people having the same surname 'share the same blood' (*ehoun to idio ema)*. Within these frames, vengeance is a form of social conflict between two kinship groups, each group being identified by the same surname shared by its members. Also, as a form of social conflict between groups it constitutes a 'total social fact', analogous to the Maussian notion of the 'gift'.[2] In other words, it is not only the original crime that is likely to begin a sequence of retaliatory crimes – an 'exchange of death' one could say – but the succeeding generations will also be involved, with the two kinship groups exchanging also the roles of perpetrator and victim. Above all, feud consists of a form of social conflict, which simultaneously has economic, legal, moral, religious, mythological and aesthetic consequences. Black-Michaud uses ethnographic data to make comparisons between blood feuds of different societies of the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Focusing on the economic and political dimensions of the phenomenon, he concludes that the feud

> may be regarded first and foremost as a relationship, that is, as a form of communicative behaviour uniting parts of society in alliance and locking opposed groups in hostile competition over shared values which are exchanged and intensified through such interaction. [3]

Ultimately, then, the feud 'can be regarded as a social system *per se*',[4] and thus coincides with a model of society, the 'feuding society'. From this point of view, the content of social notions about revenge encompasses not only a sequence of retaliatory crimes carried out between two sibling groups, but also the totality of local

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170; John Campbell, *Honour, Family and Patronage: A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a Greek Mountain Community* (Clarendon Press, 1970); Michael Herzfeld, *The Poetics of Manhood Contest and Identity in a Cretan Mountain Village,* (Princeton University Press, 1985).

[2] Marcell Mauss, *The Gift; Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies,* trans. Ian Cunnison, Introduction, E. E. Evans-Pritchard, (Free Press, 1954).

[3] Black-Michaud, *Cohesive Force,* p. 208.

[4] Ibid, p. 171.

society in varying degrees. At the heart of this, a past crime is transformed into a point of reference for the collective memory of succeeding generations, guiding their social actions in terms of the establishment of relationships of either solidarity or hostility between the corporate groups, at a social as well as a political level.[5] Even the potential for the committing of a crime in certain situations, for example out of fear of aggression, provides the means of inaugurating and maintaining a broader network of relationships of alliance or defiance in social frameworks of an egalitarian ideology that pervades feuding societies.[6]

Intermarriages between the two opposite kinship groups or inflicted emigrations of potential victims are usually adopted as strategies to settle the conflict. However, such conflicts never end up in total reconciliation; rather, they ease off for certain periods of time. During my fieldwork in the mountain villages of central Crete,[7] I concluded, in reconstructing cases of feud between families extending over four or five generations (from the end of the nineteenth century until the present), that in many cases, present social incidents or situations have the power to rekindle a past

[5] Many scholars have focused on aspects of the interconnections between the personal, social and political levels of Cretan revenge. During my fieldwork, I explored a contemporary case in detail, in which a revenge event inside the same wider kinship group (clan) resulted in the changing of the family name of the members of one of the two lineages involved and therefore in the creation of a new kinship group. At the political level, the support of the same political party (PASOK) by the two lineages was transformed to political opposition. Each lineage now vehemently supported different political parties: PASOK and Nea Dimokratia, Aris Tsantiropoulos, 'I Vendetta sti Sinchroni Orini kentriki Kriti', pp. 145-60. Also, Herzfeld pinpoints the interplay of 'interpatri-goup hostility' and political ideologies, making references to candidates from his fieldwork village during the national and local elections. Specifically, in exploring the political campaigns of two candidates for opposing political parties in the national elections he writes: 'Each expressed polite disagreement with the other's politics, but each also showed respect for the other's person. Every effort was made to avoid reviving the interpatri-group hostility of only a year earlier. Instead, the tension that could so easily erupted between the mutually suspicious groups represented by the two candidates was ostensibly transformed, thanks to their decorous sense of occasion, into a choice between blocs. The ideological debate was scarcely more explicit than the personal one, although both candidates made a few half-hearted remarks about the reasons for voting for their respective parties. But it was realised by all concerned that any actual confrontation on matters of ideological substance could very easily translate into a renewed feud between households or agnatic groups, with results that could only be disastrous for the village as a whole', Herzfeld, *Poetics of Manhood*, p. 113, see also Chapter Three: 'The Uses of Ideology', pp. 92-122. For a novelist's version of the above issues, see Rea Galanaki, *Amilita Vathia Nera. I Apagogi tis Tasoulas* (Kastaniotis editions, 2006). Galanaki's novel is based on archival research by the writer about the kidnapping of the daughter of a Cretan politician by the brother of his political opponent occurring in Crete in 1950, and the transformation of this event into a feud between the two families.

[6] Egalitarian does not mean equal and refers to institutions and not to whole societies. In Mediterranean societies, according to John Davis, the interest in egalitarian institutions is that, in the making of important political decisions, they exclude the differences in crude material wealth from consideration. That means: 'the reality of differentiation is socially destroyed instead of being construed to create a stratification', Davis John, *People of the Mediterranean. An Essay in Comparative Social Anthropology,* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 111, pp. 110-25). Boehm, in a cross-cultural survey of many egalitarian societies, argues that an apparent absence of hierarchy in these societies is the result of followers dominating their leaders rather than vice versa, creating a 'reverse dominance hierarchy', C. Boehm, 'Egalitarian Behaviour and Reverse Dominance Hierarchy', *Current Anthropology*, 34(3) pp. 227-54. Boehm's research indicates that another aspect of egalitarianism is the connection of the concept of power with a set of values of symbolic capital, as their existence in the identity of an individual is dependent on their recognition from the others.

[7] These villages lie around Mount Ida (Psiloritis) in the prefecture of Rethymno.

conflict between two kinship groups. Within local societies, such incidents as a sheep stealing, a wounding, a public verbal insult, or even a car accident where the victim is a member of the last victim's kinship group and the perceived culprit a member of the perpetrator group, can reignite a past hatred. This is because their motives acquire social significances which are related to the balances of political and social power of the involved kinship groups, something which is best understood within the context of an egalitarian ideology.

However, in this article, drawing upon my fieldwork, I will concentrate on cases of retaliatory killings where there is no present catalytic event to spark into life the dormant hatred that would motivate a man of the last victim's kinship group to commit the crime. Instead, for the victim's kinship group, the killing of a consanguine individual in an event occurring one or two generations previously, is likely to become integrated into a personal or a family history as a traumatic fact affecting present reality rather than as a distant historical incident. Correlating ethnographic data with archival material (affidavits, court proceedings etc.), the concentration is on two case studies of avengers who were not born when the previous crime was committed. The first case relates to a retaliatory crime committed in the Cretan city of Heraklio in 1987, when a 25-year-old shepherd killed the porter of Heraklio's public hospital while he was at work. The crime was committed in order to take revenge on the porter's uncle who was killed in 1958, that is, five years before the shepherd's own birth. The second case took place more recently. In 2005, a 24-year-old man left a village in the Mount Ida region to travel to an Aegean island in his attempt to locate the man who had killed his 17-year-old uncle in 1959 and then, after release from prison, had emigrated to the island in order to avoid the consequences of his act. The crime had taken place twenty-two years before the avenger's birth. The offender visited the man at work and shot him.

In addition, material is drawn on relating to a crime committed in 1987, where the victim was a 15-year-old boy who was avenged by his father two years later. It is argued here that certain aspects of this case are related to the main argument of this article. One significant indication of this is contained in a manuscript written by the father-avenger, which can be taken as a kind of 'conversation' with his dead son. The manuscript reveals a discourse about what he must do as father in order to honour his beloved son. The father wrote this text, approximately 10.000 words long, over the two years after the death of his son and then proceeded to his vengeance, fulfilling the expectations of the blood feud.

Social Significance of Crime and Memory

At the core of the feud is a crime that becomes associated with values of symbolic capital, namely a crime is, or has the potential to be, committed in circumstances that create a competition to preserve or improve symbolic capital. In mountainous Crete, the people use terms such as 'self-respect', 'honour', 'gravity', 'pride' (*egoismos*) or 'prestige' to refer to these values of symbolic capital.[8] It can be argued that two of Bourdieu's conceptualisations (a 'shared silence' about rationality and calculability in the economy of symbolic exchanges; and the social prerequisites for the existence of symbolic capital) are very useful in illuminating the social and cultural significances of crimes sustained over time, namely blood feuds. Bourdieu points out a 'shared silence' or an 'open secret' in the economy of symbolic exchanges (e.g. gifts, benevolences etc.) disguises the actual material interests with double, ambiguous and indefinite social meanings which, like a 'magical power', reinforce their imposition and at the same time ensures their reproduction.[9] In the Cretan blood feud, as an 'exchange of crimes' between two kinship groups, the symbolic aspects of the 'exchange' are emphasised by local people as they assign it discourses about the commitment of crimes motivated by a customary system of values about honour. These local discourses are elaborations of an understood system intended mainly for arguments in the public domain or for addressing outsiders. In addition, such elaborations appear publicly in fictional versions of revenge by some novelists, or more recently, in some popular Greek television serials in Greece. This results in a justifying, before the gaze of a wider society, of specific forms of crime – ones that are labelled 'crimes committed to protect personal or family honour'. It presents them as extreme but necessary value-driven actions.

However, from a different perspective, symbolic capital is an inseparable part of every society's material reality, and is not automatically associated with the necessity for criminal action. For example, taking into account that, in any society, one tangible proof of a man's symbolic capital is the extent of his network of social relationships, acting as supporters of his choices and actions. Thus, the shepherd who invests time and care in maintaining an extensive social network to ensure access to pasturage

[8] For more discussion about these values, see Campbell, *Honour, Family and Patronage*; Peristiany (ed), *Honor and Shame*; David Gilmore (ed.), *Honour and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean* (American Anthropological Association, Washington, 1987); Albera Dionigi, Anton Blok, *L'anthropologie de la Méditerranée/Anthropology of the Mediterranean* (Maisonneuve et Larose. Maison méditerranéenne des sciences de l'homme, 2001).

[9] Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason. On the Theory of Action,* (Polity Press, 1998), Chap. 5: 'The Economy of Symbolic Goods', pp. 92-123, especially p. 97.

and to protect against sheep stealing has the potential for ownership of significant capital through his 'ownership' of a substantial social personality. A principal precondition for success in modern occupations (trade, business etc.) is also the possession of an extended social network, which acts as a moral guide to the choices made by customers or clients to use the possessor of the capital. From this perspective, the actions of a man that can be conceived of as insulting to the social personality of another man has, additionally, the sense of being a challenge to his material resources.

Bourdieu also asserts that one (diffuse) aspect of symbolic capital rested 'solely on collective recognition'.[10] Alternatively, using Durkheimean terms, such symbolic capital or social personality can be considered as an element of collective representations, because they do not stem from an individual consciousness but instead are accepted and shared by all members of the local society. Solicitude for relatives, performative acts of munificence (e.g., treats in the coffeehouses, donations or charities etc.), protecting the chastity of daughters, reaction to every attempt at insult with words or actions against the insulter's person or his relatives are the main socially-acknowledged modes of action every man has to demonstrate at all times as evidence of his possession symbolic capital, and comprehension of its values.[11] The local notion of *kozi* (literally, prestige) encompasses this set of values. In the eyes of local society, men and kin groups are stratified according to their possession of high *kozi*, low *kozi* or little *kozi*. The evidence for the magnitude of a man or a kin group's *kozi* is the extent of the network of social relations, providing support or collaboration for social and political actions or decisions.[12] Such values of symbolic capital are also bound up in the notion of a person,[13] making it in this sense a concept which as it is 'relational rather than possessive'; consequently 'there is no clear divide between past and present or collective and individual'.[14] It is, for local people, a locus in which are reflected the family and baptismal names (as signs of the belonging to a specific clan, of the order of birth, of the resurrection of an

[10] Bourdieu, *Practical Reason.* p. 50.
[11] On the performative aspects of these values in mountainous Crete, see Herzfeld, *The Poetics of Manhood*, mainly chapter four, pp. 123-62.
[12] For a more detailed analysis of the notions of *kozi* and *kozali* men see Tsantiropoulos, *Vendetta*, pp. 173-80.
[13] According to Mauss, the concept of the person constitutes a social category. In particular, he argues, in primitive societies each member is conceived as a supra-individual, namely as a part of a cosmological order, and as such, is the embodiment of a set of past and present relationships. Marcell Mauss, 'A Category of the Human Mind: The Notion of Person; the Notion of Self' in M. Carrithers *et al* (eds), *The Category of the Person* (Cambridge University Press, 1985).
[14] Michael Lambek, 'Memory in a Maussian Universe', in S. Radstone and K. Hodgkin (eds), *Regimes of Memory*, (Routledge, 2003) p. 205.

ancestor in the person who shares the name, and of gender). Over and above, these, are reflected also expectations for the appropriation of rules, qualities, skills or actions commonly accepted by all members of society. The specific conjunction of notions of shared identity values reflected in naming practices may be noted in the case of the 25-year-old shepherd.[15] He avenged his uncle's death by killing the hospital porter who was, in turn, a very distant relative of the man who killed the shepherd's uncle but who happened to have the same name and family name. As the court proceedings reveal, the killing of a person with the same name and family name as the murderer of the shepherd's uncle was, for him, a matter of victim substitution, where the shepherd was wrought to the fever-pitch necessary to committing the crime because of the shared specific name.

In this perspective, every individual's social actions contribute significantly to the shared, common affairs of his kinship group, not only as a fact of a present, but also of a future, eventuality. As part of their existence, and continued reproduction, these values are publicly manifested. Consequently, everyone within the local community is aware of the process involved in keeping the balance sheet when allocating symbolic capital between individuals and kinship groups. It is within these ideas about complex and interwoven personal and kinship group values that the social and cultural implications of both a decision to commit a crime, and its consequences, are conceptualised. The perpetrator is impelled to commit the crime because he feels that another man does not acknowledge these values in his person or his family, whether the assault is verbal or actual. The choice of victim is not random: it is either the actual assailant or one of his close and beloved male kin. The killing of a woman or an old man is deemed to be a shameful and dastardly action because of the lower status of these member categories within the sibling group. By contrast, the killing of a young man constitutes an attack on the social power of his entire kin group, because his siblings are thereby deprived of a member who eventually would have reinforced that whole group via the capacities he demonstrated. After a crime has been committed, the victim's sibling group is placed in the position of possessing *the debt of blood* (*hrostoun aima*), to use the local term of reference for the obligation of avenging the insult. It is within the same value context as ideas linking personal and

[15] It is not accidental that when local people make initial contact with a stranger in Crete (mainly in villages), it is customary to address him through three questions. Firstly they ask for his baptismal name, secondly his place of origin, and thirdly his family name. The stranger, in answering each of these questions, reveals his personal identity in sequence which is perceived by the locals to be framed within a specific religion, a place of origin and a clan. For more on the social practice and strategy of giving a name to a specific individual, see Bernard Vernier, *I Koinoniki genesi ton esthimaton. Prototokoi ke Defterotokoi stin Karpatho H Κοινωνική Γένεση των Αισθημάτων* (Alexandria editions, 2001).

kinfolk worth that the victim's siblings conceive of the crime as an attack on the social power of the whole kinship group.

This deriving of personal worth from collective representations and the linkage of every kinship group's corporate achievements with the personal capacities of specific relatives to effect an improvement in their kin group's standing through their actions, strategies and choices denotes that these capacities can be attributed to persons even after their death.[16] This is especially so if death occurred at a young age where, based on social actions up to the time of death, the potential for adding prestige are acknowledged, mainly by the kin group.[17] The father of the 15-year-old boy was, in his manuscript, mourning for the elimination of a corporeality which epitomised in his foreshadowing of the potential loss key values:

> You are dead now, a man who was overflowing with humanity and pride, having qualities and abilities in your life that were very clear. [These were] empathy and solicitude for others, sociability but above all magnanimity.
> [To shoot at you and kill you] constitutes a terminal gunshot to the whole of our kinship group.
>
> Χάθηκες, ένας άνθρωπος γεμάτος πρώιμη ανθρωπιά φιλότιμο γραμμές και αρχές ξεκαθαρισμένες (συμπόνοια, προστασία, κοινωνικότητα) αλλά πριν απόλα μεγάλη ψυχή εκτελεστική βολή για το σπίτι μας [Original Greek text]

The father's defence, in court, of the 25-year old shepherd who killed the hospital porter also demonstrated an alignment with conceptions interweaving the group's potential for improvement in status with the virtues and abilities of specific kin group members. In this case, the killing of an individual is displayed as having a destructive collective impact. The defendant's father stated:

> I have a brother who is treated in a mental clinic. He was an officer in the army but after my brother's death in 1958, he became seriously ill. I also have a sister who is hospitalised in a mental clinic. My brother and sister became ill just after our brother's death.…When my brother was killed, he was twenty-five years old. His death was a great shock to all of us and because of that, our

[16] There is an extended discussion in anthropology on the concept of corporateness. In this article, I use the term to denote the transition from the grouping via kinship ties to a level of group formation in which solidarity in social, economic and political activities strengthens or reinstates the kin ties (see for example James Dow, 'On the Muddle Concept of Corporation in Anthropology', *American Anthropologist*, 1973, 75(3) pp. 904-08; George Appel, 'Methodological Problems with the Concepts of Corporation, Corporate Social Grouping and Cognatic Descent Group', *American Ethnologist*, 10(2) (1983) pp. 302-11, etc.. In the case of Crete, corporateness presupposes the existence of one or more persons in the kinship group with high social prestige in order to reinforce its unity.

[17] In my fieldwork, while investigating the retaliatory crimes I concluded that in cases where the victim was an old man, there were fewer possibilities for revenge and the reaction was towards the mitigation of hostility between groups through strategies of intermarriages. In contrast, if the deceased was a young and unmarried male, even if he was killed accidentally (for example because of a car accident or celebratory gun fires during a fiesta) there was a clear potential for revenge.

> brother and sister are kept in a mental clinic. I never talked to my children about my brother's death. It ripped us apart and our children must have heard about it.

In the court proceedings, his son, the defendant, also asserted that the primary incentives for his action were the murder of his uncle and the fact that another uncle and aunt had been committed to a mental clinic as a consequence of that loss.

In the narration, the crime can be viewed as a memory trace for the suffering kinship groups. It can further be argued that the crime acquires specific social and cultural significations that verge on the notion of 'cultural trauma'. Alexander sees this as occurring particularly 'when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories for ever, and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways'.[18]

The notion of cultural trauma in the case of revenge is different from that developed with reference to great historical events such as the Holocaust, slavery in Africa, civil and international wars,[19] or even the attack on the Twin Towers in New York on 11 September 2001.[20] Dominick LaCapra makes a distinction between *historical* trauma and *structural* trauma, where the former is specific and is 'related to particular events' while the latter is 'related to (or even correlated with) transhistorical absence (absence of/at the origin)'.[21] He defines characteristic structural trauma as the separation from the (m)other, the passage from nature to culture,[22] the eruption from pre-oedipal or pre-symbolic to the symbolic, the entry into language, the inevitable generation of aporia etc..[23] It can be argued that, for the victim's group, the revenge crime acquires connotations that approach the concept of 'structural trauma' for reasons derived from local notions about the integration of vengeance with certain aspects of social organization in feuding societies. In particular, one of the main

[18] Jeffrey Alexander, 'Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma' in Jeffrey Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka (eds.), *Cultural Trauma Theory and Applications*. (University of California Press 2004) p. 1.

[19] For an critical review of many works about memory mainly in its relation with historical facts, see Peter Fritzsche, 'Review Article: The Case of Modern Memory', *The Journal of Modern History,* 73 (2001), pp. 87-117; Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, 'Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24 (1998), pp. 105-40.

[20] See, for example, Alison Young, **'**Images in the Aftermath of Trauma: Responding to September 11th', *Crime, Media, Culture,* 3 (1) (2007) pp. 30-48.

[21] Dominick LaCapra, 'Trauma, Absence , Loss', *Critical Inquiry* 25 (4) (1999), pp. 696-727, especially pp. 724; 722.

[22] This trauma is elaborated in Freud's book *Civilization and its Discontents* in James Strachey (ed) *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (Hogarth Press, 1961) pp. 64–145.

[23] Dominick LaCapra, 'Trauma' p. 722.

characteristics of these structural traumas is that they are typical of myth and consist of a 'founding trauma' or in other words, a 'trauma that paradoxically becomes the basis for collective and/or personal identity'.[24]

In the case of the mountains of Crete, many local narratives about the origins of contemporary clans possess the following pattern. In a past, from around the middle of the eighteenth century onwards, one or more brothers migrated to the Mount Ida region to avoid retaliation as a consequence of crimes committed in their place of origin. There were no reports on female migration because, as it is dishonourable to avenge a crime by killing an individual woman, they were not chosen as victims. These migrants survived in their new locations, working for local people as farm labourers or shepherds. Usually they changed their family name or used a fictive one in the local community to avoid being found and killed by the victim's siblings.[25] They married local women and, through their offspring, increased their kinship group but creating a new group, because of the new family name. In these narratives about contemporary crime and forced migration, there is a familiar pattern apart from where there was reluctance on the part of bureaucratic state mechanisms to permit family name changes, and the expansion in new settlement locales. These include big Greek cities (Athens, Thessalonica) or locations outside Greece in Europe, the USA and Australia. The core of the memory of a crime, particularly those which occurred in a more distant past, is contextualised by the same cultural significations. Notably these are its circumstances, (in other words, its identification as an attack against the values of honour) and its consequences (essentially, the forced migration of key males, changes in family name and the creation of a new kinship group). By contrast, more detailed descriptions of the process of conflict or information about the perpetrator or victim are peripheral. Therefore, the past crime takes on the precise cultural connotations of a fact of absolute destruction in a previous place and, at the same time, a fact of resurgence in a new place. Ultimately, these ambiguous connotations of the crime become part of the structural components in the creation of the origin myth for a new kinship group.

Many scholars have also pointed out the cultural components of the crime element in blood feud from different perspectives. Black-Michaud defines feud as 'a ritual of social relations' because it is, just like ritual, a repeated and socially-accepted form of

[24] Ibid, p. 724.
[25] During this period Crete was under Ottoman occupation (1669-1898) and there was no organised bureaucratic state, which facilitated the changing of family names.

behaviour in which the symbolic predominates over the clearly-stated desire to achieve material goals and it also establishes the exact nature of relationship (affinity, dominance, submission) in social situations in which ambiguity exists.[26] However, in this logic of drawing parallels between blood feud and ritual there is a crucial difference. It is that in the case of revenge, no explicit local discourse exists which would make cohesive descriptions or justifications about this 'custom', as has been indicated to be so in the case of ritual by many anthropologists. Hannah Arendt refers to the 'chain reaction' of revenge as long as in a feuding society the crime reinscribes and reiterates the past, entering it into a potentially endless chain.[27] According to Rene Girard's argument of reconnection mimesis and desire, blood feud is the phenomenon of mimetic violence *par excellence* because it is a violence revealing that that desire arises through the imitation of another's desire; and finally, that the origins of desire are neither biological or instinctual nor simply a response to some desirable object.[28] The French thinker, studying the social dimensions of mimetic rivalry based mainly on literature and Hebrew Scriptures, identifies a desire that is subjected to mimesis as a fundamental one; one that defines the totality of human behaviour. In the blood feud, because the conflict is drawn out over time and succeeding generations are involved, the object of hostility dissolves in the heat of this conflict and mimetic rivalry degenerates into conflict for the sake of conflict. Finally, each rival becomes a mirror image of the other, returning tit-for-tat endlessly. They become what Girard calls 'mimetic doubles'.[29]

Drawing data from Crete, one can also detect how, through forms of local oral traditions or narrations, the cultural significances of retaliatory crime are transmitted to succeeding generations. In one tale uncovered in my fieldwork, where there was a revenge killing of a husband, the wife had a new-born boy. The husband's bloody clothes were preserved by the wife while her son grew up, asking constantly about his father, to be told that he would find out the truth when he was old enough. When the boy reached adulthood, his mother gave him his father's bloody clothes and the name of the killer. The son immediately put on his father's bloody clothes and took revenge for his father's death. Similarly in the case of the young man who avenged

[26] Black Michaud, *Cohesive Force*, pp. 235; 224-225.
[27] Hanna Arendt, *The Human Condition*, quoted in B. Lang, 'Holocaust, Memory and Revenge: The Presence of the Past', *Jewish Social Studies* 2 (1996), pp. 1–20.
[28] Rene Girard *et al*, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* (Stanford University Press, 1987).
[29] Ibid, pp. 12, 142.

his uncle's death, when arrested he immediately admitted that his responsibility, saying: 'I grew up looking at my uncle's grave and photograph'.[30]

Examining lamentation also adds insight into the cultural significances of revenge crime. According to Caraveli, lamentation is not a device for restriction and isolation but a woman's performance to a community, possessing aesthetic, ritual, and social elements and making it instead an 'avenue for social commentary on the larger world'.[31] In one Cretan lament recorded in folk literature, a pregnant wife mourns beside the corpse of her husband, killed for revenge, and hurls curses against the murderer and his kinsfolk.[32] Addressing her dead husband, she concludes her lament as follows:

> Don't worry / my beloved / the one who will take revenge on you / is now resting in my body.[33]
>
> Μα μη βαρυσκοτίζεσαι / νεκρό μου κυπαρίσσι / κι αυτός που θα σε γδικηθεί / στο σπλάχνο μου σταλίση (=αναπαύεται προσωρινά). (Original Greek text)

In another Cretan lament the mother, beside the corpse of her dead son, exclaims:

> My son Yannis, didn't I tell you, didn't I say,
> That bullets are on loan?[34]
>
> Γιάννη μου δε σου τώλεγα, Γιάννη μου δε σου τώπα
> πώς είναι οι μπάλες (=οι σφαίρες) δανεικές (Original Greek text)

In summary, in discussing the ethnographic paradigm of Cretan feuding society, it can be argued that, because of the encompassing nature of the blood feud as social phenomenon, it configures a habitus for local people. This can be defined as 'a mental structure which, having been inculcated into all minds socialised in a particular way, is both individual and collective'.[35] Furthermore, one can assume the formation of an embodied 'vengeance habitus' which constitutes a consensus – a *doxa* or a 'natural attitude' to use in Bourdieu's terminology – about the commitment of a revenge crime as a prescribed reaction in certain situations.

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[30] This statement is from the police record in the official court proceedings.
[31] Anna Caraveli, 'The Bitter Wounding: The Lament as Social Protest in Rural Greece' in Jill Dubisch (ed.), *Gender and Power in Rural Greece* (Princeton University Press, 1986) pp. 169-194, especially, p. 191.
[32] Nikos Aggelis, *Kritikos Laikos Thrinos. Mirologia kai Mirologistres* (Athens, 1966).
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Bourdieu, *Practical Reason*, p. 66.

The empathic consensus also drives the mechanism whereby this embodied habitus, so crucial to the transference of the memory of past crime, is assumed by succeeding generations, because of its decisive role in the transformation of the lived experience (or Experience I) that relates to the particular conditions of a crime's commission in perceived experience (or Experience II) of that crime.[36]

Past Crime and the Content of Collective Memory

The specific social and cultural significance of a crime in a feuding society affects the memory content of this extreme, but nevertheless condoned, deed. As a result, it therefore affects the manner of its transmission to succeeding generations. This raises paradigmatic questions, on a more abstract level, about interconnections between past and present. The totality of the social phenomenon of the feud which enables a shifting of local conceptions about a crime from an individual set of actions or events onto a grid of local significations affects the content of that memory. It becomes transformed into a generalised memory, enabling a past trace to persist into the present. The significance of a *blood debt* for the victim's group, and the socially-accepted forms of actions and strategies undertaken by a perpetrator's kinsfolk to defuse the conflict and prevent retaliatory crime, can be considered as paths that transcend the dichotomies between past and present. According to Pierre Norra's definition of memory (and its contradiction of history as the representation of the past), this process transforms the memory of a past crime into 'a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present'.[37] Halbwachs proposes that a particular past is preserved and persists into the present because it remains relevant for present cultural formations, highlighting an aspect of the blood feud which is most apparent when examining its political dimensions.[38] It is within these frameworks that the reasons given for his action by the young man who avenged a crime committed 22 years before his birth must be interpreted. Local people informed me that his fellow villagers had reminded him of his *blood debt* (*χρέος αίματος*) in appropriate social situations. His statements to the police immediately after his arrest confirm this; that because of his unpaid 'debt', his peers had called him names such as chicken, coward and had even avoided his company.[39]

[36] According to E. R. Thompson, 'The Politics of Theory' in R. Samuel (ed.), *People's History and Socialist Theory*, (Routledge Kegan Paul, 1981) pp. 396–409.
[37] Piere Norra, 'Between Memory and History: Les lieux de memoire', *Representations*, 26 (1989) p. 7-24.
[38] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, (University of Chicago Press, 1992).
[39] This is from the defendant's statement in the official court proceedings.

Focusing on the complex of intra-group relations, it can be argued that the social memory of a man killed (usually in the recent past) has the potential to take on the form of an imago in the collective memory of his blood relatives. In *The Language of Psycho-analysis*, Laplanche and Pontialis defined the concept of 'imago' as the 'unconscious prototypical figure which orientates the subject's way of apprehending others; it is built up on the basis of the first real and phantasied relationships within the family environment'.[40] Taking into account this definition of the concept of imago, I argue that it can, as an analytical tool, elucidate aspects of issues about the transference of the memory of past crime to a succeeding generation, with the result that it creates amongst that generation's members the motives for a prescribed, but extreme, counter-action: the retaliatory crime. The potential for this is there because the process involves an imago constructed from a set of values that derive less from an individual's real abilities or potentialities and more from socially-accepted ways of assessing that individual's possession of a set of values according to the community's notions of *kozi* (prestige) and the *kozali* man. These personal values are part of a collective representation, and consequently consist of a set of commonly shared values; and these accomplishments are accepted through specific interpretations of social actions. This means that, especially for his kinship group, the imago of a dead person opens channels for the construction of imaginary scenarios about the positive contribution to the wellbeing of his kinship group he would have made by the end of his natural life. More explicitly, in the case of Cretan feuding society, the imago of a dead person can take on a form where his potential is mediated by present social realities or by inter- or intra-kin group relations, because the imaginary residue of one or other of the participants in a interpersonal situation that the concept of the imago evokes is mainly constructed out of collective representations of what constitutes an individual.[41] From this perspective, it is not a matter of random chance that in all cases of retaliatory crimes examined in this article a man has taken revenge for a crime many years after its commitment – many years after his own birth too – with an intensity of emotion animated by the youth of the deceased relative. In other words, the victim had been killed at an age deemed crucial to enable their kinsfolk to make judgement about their potential value. It is worth noting that in all the cases examined here, the avenged victims were under 25.

[40] J. Laplanche and J-B. Pontalis, *The language of psycho-analysis,* (Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1983) p. 211).

[41] For this reason, the concept of imago is used as an analytical tool, rather than that of complex. They both deal with the relations between the child and its social and family environment. However, the notion of complex refers to the effects upon the subjects of interpersonal relations as a whole, whereas the notion of imago is closer to the subject's stereotypical view of other person. Laplanche and Pontalis, *Language of Psycho-analysis*, p. 211.

Freud makes a distinction between mourning and melancholia, where the first is defined as the common reaction to 'the loss of a loved person, or to a loss of some abstraction' (country, liberty, an ideal).[42] When loss is converted into absence, one faces the impasse of an endless melancholia where it is impossible to experience mourning, a process for the accepting of loss, and to transfer life energy from a focus on anything associated with the beloved object. Melancholia dominates in situations of a palpable but also generalised loss, as the libido (life energy) is transferred to the self that is equated with the lost figure. The result is to feel the Ego poorer (and not the world, as it is in the case of mourning). In other words, the very loss refers not just to the beloved object but also to the Ego.[43] In Green's definition, absence is a fruitless fatal negation whereas loss is a negative positiveness.[44] LaCapra argues that in melancholia, 'empathy with the victim seems to be an identity' and that in this post-traumatic situation, a situation that melancholic 'relives or acts out the past'.[45] Absence is plain in the following remarks from a diary belonging to a father whose son was killed at the age of 16:

> We will come (to your grave) to cheer your loneliness because you must know that you live in our memories. It is only that we can't see you any more and talk with you as we used to do in the past…I care less about my life and much more about saving your memory… But we try to see you amongst us, to speak with you though your absence is noticeable…My pure and unoffending son, how is it possible for me to remove you from my heart or from my mind? I have the right to hold your presence as I want and to keep it at the place I want for ever.
>
> Θα έρθουμε να ζεστάνουμε την μοναξιά σου με την παρουσία μας γιατί με την μνήμη μας είσαι κοντά μας μονάχα που δεν σε βλέπουμε να συζιτήσουμε όπως συζιτούσαμε διάφορα…λιγότερο σκέπτομαι τη ζωή μου και περισσότερο την μνήμη αυτού που αντί να προστατέψουν έφαγαν (εννοεί: σκότωσαν)….Κι όμως προσπαθούμε να σε δούμε ανάμεσά μας να μιλήσουμε μαζί σου και η απουσία σου είναι αισθητή.…Και εσύ αγνέ άκακε άνθρωπέ μου πώς θα φύγεις από την ψυχή μου ή την σκέψη μου; Έχω δικαίωμα να σε κρατώ όπως θέλω και να σεχω εκεί που θέλω για πάντα. (Original Greek text).

Two years later, the father took revenge for him, and so he ended up as the victim in a blood feud.

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[42] S. Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia', in James Strachey (ed. and transl.) *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. XIX (London and Hogarth Press, 1981) p. 243.
[43] Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia', pp. 243-60.
[44] Nikos Nikolaidis, *I Anaparastasi. Psychanalytiko Dokimio* (Rappa Editions, 1985) p. 18.
[45] LaCapra, 'Trauma, Absence, Loss', p. 699.

Apart from the predominance of concepts of the individual which permit the development of imaginary scenarios about the nature of the future contribution a murdered man would have made to his kinship group, the sense of absence and the underlying melancholia state is further strengthened by the specific content of the local discourse about revenge that contextualises the memory of a past crime as it is transmitted to succeeding generations. During fieldwork in the Cretan mountains, I ascertained that when men were speaking about a heroic and valorous historical past, trying to connect it to their contemporary collective identity,[46] the blood feud as an accepted customary reaction to an insult was not a constituent element in such narrations of heroic actions, as the following example reveals. In 1955, in a mountain village in central Crete, on saint's day for local saint and protector, St. Fanourio, the whole community was celebrating with food, drink and dancing. Two villagers quarrelled because one suspected the other of betraying his father to the Nazis during the German occupation of Crete (1941-1945). During the quarrel, the accuser drew his knife and killed the other and many fellow villagers then became involved in what became a local 'war'. As the conflict spread to encompass the whole community, six people were killed and twenty-two wounded. The 'war' was settled after the interference of the police and the army.

The reality of a traumatic event like this affects the current social life of the whole community, something emphasised by including a recent crime (2006) which was identified as being linked to the blood-feud ignited a half century previously. It is worth noting that after 1955, the community concerned stopped celebrating its local saint's day with magnificent devotional feasts. To date, worship of the local saint is confined to the liturgy in church, participated in by the congregation. A book on the recent history of the village by the local school teacher makes only a brief reference to the traumatic events of 1955.[47] The teacher comments:

> Trivial reasons, mainly linked to the sense of contempt experienced by the principal perpetrator felt, but also, as he personally told us, due to suspicious actions of his fellow villagers in their relations with him, fuelled the fire of the calamity – since evil had already prevailed, as so often happens in similar circumstances. Specifically, he stabbed and killed the man who he suspected was his enemy. Soon afterwards, the entire village was literally 'burning', being transformed into an inferno of shootings and explosions.

[46] On the values of manhood, mainly their performative aspects, see Herzfeld, *Poetics of Manhood.*
[47] Emmanouil Kontogianis, *Voriza* (Heraklion, 1987).

> Someone threw a hand grenade into the house of the first victim. Three people were killed and twenty-two wounded. Additionally, two kinsmen of the initial perpetrator were shot and killed. In total, six people lost their lives. The situation appeared to be out of control, and uncertainty made the state of affairs more even perilous due to the intensity of vindictive emotions at that time. Fortunately, a large police force along with military reinforcements, both recruited from almost all regions of Crete, arrived and gradually restored peace.[48]

What is noteworthy in this extract is the depiction of the recent history of the village. In contrast to the outbreaks of fighting occurring across the region such as the heroic struggles of villagers against Ottoman rule (1649-1898) or against the Germans (1941-45), this author describes, very thoroughly, the reasons why the igniting of a war-like conflict is confined to a generalised conception of what constitutes honour and personal insult. One has the sense that it is almost a taboo for him even to name the perpetrators, victims or families involved in the blood-feud. Instead, his style of writing seems to constitute an attempt to exorcise the event. Listening to local people narrating such revenge incidents, what is noticeable is that the motive and the logic of such events echo the quotation cited above.

The implications of local discourses about blood feud – the 'predominance of the law of silence' as mass media reports define them – are plausible when it is realised that there cannot be a discourse justifying a crime. The individual killed may be classified as a 'mimetic double' of the offender, according to the Girardean scheme, rather than as a differentiated Other (for instance, a conqueror or a warlike adversary). This is so that individual may be labelled an enemy, meaning that any violence against him can be justified. In contrast, in a blood feud the enemy is a fellow villager – a neighbour or even a relative – people so close that intermarriage can be considered as a strategy for settling the affair. Essentially, the core of a revenge crime is that it was perpetrated in defence of an ideal, as a response to the questioning of a man's Ego-Ideal by another man. In terms of the concept explored in this article, the Ego-Ideal (defined as 'a model to which the subject attempts to conform')[49] acquires the sum total of ideas of an individual's social persona. Uncomplicated by myths, the 'custom of revenge' has the potential to make evaluations about, or descriptions and justifications of, a criminal action, while the consequent 'verbal taboo' has significant implications for the traumatic dimensions of memories of past crimes.[50]

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[48] Emmanouil Kontogianis, *Voriza*, pp. 224-25, trans Agapi Amanatidis.
[49] Laplanche and Pontalis, *Language of Psycho-analysis,* p. 144.
[50] See also Aris Tsantiropoulos and Marina Koussouri, 'Le pouvoir du crime' in P.-L. Asssoun and M. Zafiropoulos (eds), *Des figures cliniques du pouvoir* **(**Anthropos Editions, forthcoming).

In terms of intra-group relations, the 'verbal taboo' dominates any tendency to explicitness in discourse about blood-feud. This taboo, which does not entail an explicit verbalization of the affair which would permit a distancing, demands an empathic, or even passionately intense, conformity with expectations of specific action (revenge). This enables more crucial, self-focused evaluations of obligations (the avenging of a murdered ancestor) which animates the past traumatic event. Using Hassoun, this means that because of the lacunae created by speech orphanhood, the transference of a fragmented family history prevents succeeding generations from reconciling their family's biographic narratives as a cohesive whole. In such situations characterised by the imposition of secrecy about precise knowledge of what is lost, melancholia results as an emotional attachment to an unmastered and ungrasped other.[51] Cathy Garuth also links knowledge of events with post-traumatic situations, defining them not as episodes within the event but as places in the structure of its experience: as 'a history that they [the traumatised] cannot entirely possess'.[52] Consequently 'to be traumatised is precisely to be possessed by an image or event'.[53]

In reference to the inter-group, the existence of a discourse fraught with implications about local conceptualisations of the forms taken by customary crime (thanks to equivocal meanings, ambivalences and ambiguities) gives space for the emergence of contradictory interpretations of the same crime. Different individuals or groups in local societies will take different stances, ranging from a complete justification of the motives for the crime as an action taken to protect personal or family ideals, to its condemnation as a hideous wrong. These contradictory interpretations of the same action reflect social stances that are not arbitrary. Instead, they consist of choices and strategies of social or political significance, implying a process of estimating how best to obtain symbolic and material benefits from supporting one or other of the opposing sides in a blood feud. Consequently, viewed in a diachronic perspective, evaluations of the same crime may differ, or change, over time in relation to the general distribution of social and political power between the corporate groups that exist in a community. From this perspective, the memory of a past crime acquires political significance for two reasons. The first concerns the definition of a concept of

[51] Jacques Hassoun, *Le Contrebandiers de la memoire* (Syros Editeur 1994); Jacques Hassoun, *The Cruelty of Depression: On Melancholy* (Perseus Books, 1997).
[52] Cathy Garuth, 'Introduction', in C. Garuth (ed), *Trauma. Explorations in Memory* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995) p. 5.
[53] Ibid, pp. 4-5.

the 'other' and the second is the 'opening' of the past to the present when making choices or decisions.

One can argue that, in this interrelation of past and present, they do not simply exist simultaneously if the model invoked by Norra and Holbwach is used. Instead, because of the specific significations of the crime for a group identity the past invades the present, and more specifically, the past lives in the present. The transhistoricality of totality of the social phenomenon of blood feud, supported by the implications of the local discourse, supplies the framework for experiencing a particular past crime as a matter of 'deferred action' (*nachtraglichkeit*) in the present. Laplanche and Pontalis define the Freudian concept of 'deferred action' as

> experiences, impressions, memory traces [that] may be revised at a later date to fit in with fresh experiences or with the attainment of a new stage of development. They may in that event be endowed not only with a new meaning but also with psychical effectiveness.[54]

This definition refers to a process of revision of what is experienced as an external reality; in other words, that which is registered by memory through manifold ways into a form that could be absorbed into an internal reality as a wish or a fantasy. Briefly, it argues for a past that can be revivified and recast in terms of current hopes for the future.[55] What is transferred to the next generations is less an elaborated narration of an event (a crime) that took place in certain situations and for specific reasons, and more the framing of such a crime by commonly-accepted values concerning honour and the need to defend it. This reality can be identified through the contradictions and omissions in local narratives about the same crime. It is obvious that this narrative format provides room for a perpetual revision of the same 'fact' to fit present situations. The use of the Freudian concept of 'deferred action' is helpful in comprehending why, in the examples under consideration here, the content of the memory of a past crime is so loaded with specific sentiments that, in shared situations, certain reactions are experienced by recipients of the memory in such a way that memory has the power to impel them to commit a responsive crime. In other words, it can be said that succeeding generations can potentially be in receipt of a past crime memory of a nature encapsulated in the following statement: 'our present family's situation would be very different if the killing of this particular [related] man had not taken place, because up to that point, his face and demeanour reflected that his kin would benefit from his life'.

[54] Laplanche and Pontalis, *Language of Psycho-analysis*, p. 111.
[55] Karl Figlio, 'Historical Imagination/Psychoanalytic Imagination', *History Workshop Journal*, 45, 1988, pp. 199-221.

Past crime memory, when transmitted to a succeeding generation, provides its recipients a shocking awakening where the perpetrator of a consequent retaliatory crime experiences what Benjamin describes as a flare-up of memory at 'a moment of danger'.[56] As can be deduced from the narratives here, the point of no return in committing a retaliatory crime is created by the spark that brings together past and present in one image. The shepherd who killed the hospital porter in 1987 asserted in court:

> I went and asked information from the porter about a doctor who was a relative of mine. The porter [after he gave information about the doctor] asked where I was from. Then the porter told me that one of his relatives had killed a man with the same surname as my own and immediately an image came to my mind, namely, that a man with the same name and surname as the man in front of me had killed my uncle …. I suddenly felt my blood running to my head, my mind became fogged and my only thought was to shoot him. Now I repent, but unfortunately it is not possible to make reparation in death. The only choice I had made was to surrender to the police and be taken to court …. The victim did not know who I was. The victim had the same name and surname as the murderer of my uncle and I supposed that he was a close relative of his. I couldn't control myself. It was something like a hidden force that urged me to do it. My father never told me to do such a thing [57].

The statements of the young man who travelled to the Aegean in 2005, to avenge a crime committed in 1958, provide similar echoes:

> When I saw the sign with his name and the map of Crete on it, I started wondering if he was the man who had killed my uncle or someone else who had the same name. At first I was scared because I was in a foreign place very close to my uncle's murderer. I cannot describe how I felt exactly but it was certain that I was very upset. I took the decision to meet him. I went into his shop and I asked to see the boss. He appeared from inside and told me that he and his sons were the bosses. I had never seen him until that time, not even in a photograph … [then the perpetrator continued to have a conversation with the victim so as to be sure about the identity of the murderer of his uncle, and after that he described the motives of his action]... The moment I saw him I became obsessed with the realisation that he was the murderer of my uncle. This meeting tormented me psychologically a great deal.[58]

A few hours later, the young man returned and shot his uncle's murderer.

Conclusions and Epilogue

Drawing upon data collected during fieldwork in Crete and concentrating on the social phenomenon of the blood feud, this article has elaborated upon the content of

[56] Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', *Iluminations: Essays and Reflections* Random House, New York, 1988, p.255.
[57] Defendant's statement, in the official court proceedings.
[58] Defendant's statement, in the official court proceedings.

a memory that becomes configured in reference to a crime. A resulting extreme reaction acting as a symbolic custom of the present is created by the transformation of a past crime into a presently-traumatic event, which then constitutes itself as a key influence within the group's identity. Based on case studies of avengers who were unborn when the previous crime took place, the main thesis was formulated by asking the following questions. For the men who had no experience or awareness of an actual vengeance killing, how (and in what form) did a memory of a previous crime against a kin group member form? In what ways was it transmitted to their generation, resulting in patterns of extreme reactions, specifically the commission of a fresh crime and resultant experience of the consequences, including imprisonment or the loss of more beloved kin group members, when/if they, in turn, became victims of retaliatory crime?

It has been shown that, at least in the context of Crete's feuding society, memory of a past crime constitutes a social memory, the content of which is characterised by a perpetual resurgence of the original accompanying emotions in the present and its consequent life within the framework of the blood feud. The fact that a taboo existed on explicating fully the situation of the original crime in local discourses about vengeance, allied to the dominance of the symbolic in the interpretation of the social meanings of the action of killing a man, are effective as they work unconsciously. They trigger intense emotions and identifications with the deceased, while inhibiting the development of any subsequent rationalisation of the past event. Although the avenger of a past crime might not have actually experienced the event, he can be so overwhelmed with strong emotions that he feels compelled to release them in a socially-accepted form, namely revenge. In the final analysis, the action of avenging a past crime is the result of experiencing an invasion of the past into the present. Focusing on the broader perspective of memory, its transference and awakening of emotions, this article has drawn upon concepts from psychoanalysis to elucidate issues of a specific social and cultural context that refer to an individual's impulse for the creation and reproduction of forms of actions such as crime, which could otherwise simply be characterised as deviant or morbid. As this article has demonstrated, the reality of the blood feud is much more complex.