PATTERNS OF VIOLENCE IN GREEK AND ROMANIAN RURAL SETTINGS

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Abstract: The following paper brings a contribution to researches carried out in the field of anthropology and social sciences on the issues of rural violence. The study focuses on the collective memory and imagery documents recorded and depicted in literature, seeking to uncover patterns of rural violence, taking as a case study two novellas representative for Greek and Romanian rural settings. The findings note the affinities and shared patterns between these two cultural settings and reveal the complexity of the Greek characters and the points of divergence between the patterns of violence of rural Greece and Romania.

Keywords: rural violence, Karagatsis, balkanism, patterns of violence, homo balcanicus

Introduction

Research reveals (e.g. Asay, DeFrain, Metzger, Moyer, 2014; NationMaster 2014) both Greece and Romania stand high in terms of violence and anthropologists (e.g. Du Boulay 1986) stress particularly on rural violence. To this we bring our contribution in the following paper, resorting to collective memory and imagery documents as recorded and depicted in literature, to point out some patterns of behaviour that bring these two settings together regarding rural violence. It is not to say other cultural settings cannot be fitted in this frame, but for practical purposes, rigueur, and close ties between these cultural spaces, we have selected Greece and Romanian rural settings. The endeavour is theoretically compelling as much has been argued on the resemblances between Greek and Romanian cultures under the frame of Balkanism. Following this line of inquiry we investigate this particular aspect as noted in works of Panait Istrati and Karagatsis, both representative authors for their cultural settings, displaying a particular interest in social environments. The study explores the patterns of rural violence as encountered in Romanian and Greek literature, working from *Codin* by Panait Istrati and *Whirlwind* by Karagatsis.

Literature as social and anthropological document

The idea of investigating and gaining insight in social phenomena taking into account literary resources can be traced back to the emergence of a branch of anthropology, literary anthropology, initiated by Fernando Poyatos (Poyatos, 1988) and also branch of comparative literature, imagology (Beller & Leerssen, 2007). Poyatos brings forward the idea that national literature contains undoubtedly significant information regarding the human lifestyle, habits, customs, concerns, values and ideas. Regardless of the fact literature bears fictitious character, literary anthropologists consider that writers bring out inherited cultural aspects to which they are invariably exposed. It has long been considered by them that art is the expression of the ethnic soul '*That specific national character of a particular literature is not owed necessarily*

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to the subject of the work of art – profoundly national – but as to the soul of the writer, to the way they observe life and frames it'(Ibrăileanu 1977: 93).

Lucian Boia puts it in a very simple but clear way a statement about the imagery: *all that one can learn about the society, economy, morals, must be filtrated from a conglomerate of real and fictional elements, of history and contemporary, of archetypes and innovations. This conjoint does not represent the world, but an image of the world.* (Boia 2006: 50). In other words, the imagery is essential to understanding social and cultural phenomena and, as he explains it, into account must be taken both the real facts (such as historical events) and also their representation, in a wide range of sources such as literature, and not only. An important source of documents is equally represented by oral tradition: myths, legends, historical remembrances, beliefs, superstitions, all passed down through generations, forming that which gets to be the contemporary folklore. Although, obviously, at the beginning these were the means of passing down the knowledge for societies that hadn't yet gotten to the phase of writing, nowadays the technology allows for the oral communication to still be a current practice – television, radio stations, phone conversations etc. All in all '*It is the literary text that reveals a social and cultural imagery. It is about focusing the reflections on the anthropological frontiers of the cultural and the social.*[…] *The literature stems out of the society and their cultures. It can offer a variety of ways to discover a foreign culture and its diversity at a certain moment and context. It opens new perspectives on ways of thinking, living, values, conflicts, myths, self images and images about the other, through fictional or real characters, in a story from a social and cultural context in which the author is anchored.*' (Iorga, 2009: 386)

In a dynamic modern understanding of literary text, the latter provides more and more for researchers from various fields: from Balzac onwards, author whose works translate the complex image of the social myth, the literary text exceeds the classic means and aims, and becomes a complex, as well as convenient support for social-anthropological researches. Of course, a 'file' of patterns of violence has begun and been registered since prehistoric times through many other means that have served to great a collective memory and imagery.

Our research will entail two novellas from 20th century literature from the modern-Greek and Romanian spaces. The two novellas under scrutiny offer two possible realities consistent with literary illusion which sublimates the naked reality from two areas: Larisa region and Braila region. Karagatsis is amongst the few modern-Greek writers that has gotten the attention of western translators through a type of prose which 'cosmo-politicizes' a flat and dull world as it appears to the West – the Greek village exiting Turkish patterns that have lasted for centuries. Panait Istrati is 'westernized' through life, language, culture and literary relations, being the first Romanian writer to have brought existential models translated into literature in the cosmopolite area of Braila. Both novellas configure environments defined by latent tensioned states, historically motivated, as well as socially, anthropologically and ethnically, through two characters representative for that: Nasos and Codin. Beyond the strong and vivid social-anthropologic imagery (which can generate a complex debate) our investigation leads and leans towards the way in which violence can become a way of life – a mode of existence.

For Codin, the evidence is deliberately imposed, and the act of erotic betrayal brings a vindictive behaviour according to the 'notoriety' of the character. For Nasos, the situation is by far more complex: the custom of 'obeying the earth' to which his father subdues, the issue of the woman sold as an object (the French woman), the rape of the sick girl (there is an entire naturalism in the description), the trial and the implication of corrupted justice, and of a powerless god. But, what Karagatsis speculates more, as opposed to Istrati, is the late ethnical, sexual- paternalist hatred awakened in Gundis, who learns his both children were in fact procreated by someone else, from the ottoman aristocracy. It is worthy to investigate the impact of the Turkish factors in a rural area, Thessalia, under centuries of ottoman occupation.

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A South-Eastern mentality?

The discussion on the distinction between different orientations in literature based on geographical and cultural areas is far from new, but the Balkan area has drawn the attention of scholars and often enough the views on cultural, social, historical issues which characterize it are divergent. The literary critic George Calinescu introduced a concept which he named literary balkanism, and distinguishes between types of prose and novelists. For Ovid Crohmalniceanu, the literary balkanism is *a particular image of south-eastern world.* (apud Antoneta Olteanu, 2004: 64).We consider the terms and concepts of balkanism – *homo balcanicus* – Balkan culture – in line with debates, discussions and consideration started with Iorga (1972) and Calinescu (1982) initially, followed by Mircea Muthu (1976) and Al. Dutu (1982) later on. Our observations about the new modes of violence in the two spheres concern convergences and divergence between these spaces, under the circumstances in which we can speak about balkanity in a framework, partially shared with the Romanian world as well, as a result of a byzantine inheritance, and literary balkanism, as a compromise of surviving through art, which again gives specificity to the area. The specific dimension of balkanism and *homo balcanicus* behaviour is placed under the mark of existential tragic that generates compromises as it is the case of Gundis from Karagatsis novella – Mircea Muthu (1999) discusses about homo duplex as a tragic result of space of interferences between cultures and civilizations.

The term of Balkan mentality was coined for the first time by Jovan Cvijic, Serbian geographer; in his work in which he takes into account the psychological, intellectual or moral characteristics of the populations that he conceived as a product of a complexity of factors with their origin in the nature of the geographical environment (Olteanu, 2004: 51). It is interesting and also important to note that this term, from its very beginnings, was placed on the side to those of orientalism and bizantinism. Balkanism is usually, incriminatory, infamous, duplicitious, due to its ethnical sworming, succession of imperial powers and fragility of the statal formation in the area. Still, both bizantinism and balkanism, and sometimes orientalism relates in multiple ways to Greece area. The attempt of finding the common aspects or grounds, such as the resemblances of literary motives and the roots from where they stem, ought to be anticipated by certain criteria.

Looking into ethnographic documents, literature, historical recordings, observations, myths, we can reveal traits and reciprocal borrowings from different regions from remote times, since culture in itself appears in a form that is not rigid or pre-planned. Olteanu (2004) states that despite the obvious positive role the Ottoman Empire had, its influence altered the national spirit, in the material and spiritual sphere also and had to be removed once the national identity was to be confirmed, but many of the cultural elements of ottoman origins were accepted as part of the cultural identity of these populations. It appears a powerful shaping of relations with the ottoman spirit in the Balkans. We emphasize that beyond the alteration of the national specificity or the willful acceptance of some elements that originate from the patterns of ottoman existence, there has been, since the Middle Ages, an influence and a fascination with the representation of the male and the chivalry coming from the Turks: in the West, the Crusades have brought the pattern of Saladin and of oriental non-vicious ‘chivalry’; in the Balkans, including in Romanian literature (e.g. Galaction) the image of the brave, redeeming, non-duplicitous Turk is to be found. In Karagatsis novella, the nodal anthropological point can be found in the confession made by the mother of the two siblings, Nasos and Zografo, who have as real fathers, in fact, two ottoman aristocrats.

We seek to look beyond the influences in culture in terms of gastronomy, music, dances, architecture, urban structure, institutions, and see patterns of behaviours (Benedict 1943), more specifically, to see how certain aspects from the behaviour in rural Greece resembles the rural behaviour in Romania, in particular the violent behaviour. The entire region shares a macro-

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social frame that has its root in the byzantine and ottoman legacy. If we take closer looks into these regions we can extend the list of similarities and draw links between the cultures of many of these regions. (Olteanu, 2004: 27) All in all, the Balkan area defined as it is, can be better understood as an area that shares, in general, certain traits that pervade even today the cultures, inherited from the ottoman legacy, but each of them exposed to other social and political circumstances adapted differently. Handman (1983:13) notes in her work on the fieldwork '*In Pouri, the war, be it Balkan, world war or civil, tortures, displaces and kills; the armed militia, as in all communities in Greece, is charged with enforcing the dominant order. The structural violence has created the frame of life*'.

Rural and traditional setting

As the present paper takes as case study patterns of behaviours in rural and traditional settings from both Greek and Romanian spaces, we aim to emphasize in this section on the frame and shared characteristics between these two cultural settings, looking at the gender roles division and rural social life customs. Embarking on the analysis of the rural and traditional setting of two Greek-Orthodox cultural and social contexts does not appear to be far-fetched. To the contrary, scholars point out on the affinities these two cultural spaces which share comprising norms and values that stem from a common religious tradition but of the ottoman influence as well, which has had its impact on both spaces.

Ortner (1981) and others have noted that in every known society we find women subordinated to man, a culturally determined phenomenon rather than biologically. Anthropologists have found that generally women's association with domestic sphere is strong in all cultures (Dubisch, 1986). Drawing from Levi-Strauss' opposition between nature and culture, Ortner suggests social facts derive from cultural interpretations of biology, which was held to be the reason for work division and others. Although views on cultural determinism diverge, at least two points are essential, but only the first one is relevant for the present study: that of the fact the role of the women arises from the way such roles are culturally defined. Mainly we are pointing out at the norms and values stemming from religion: the public shame and inner guilt as a result of sins, the importance of nuclear family, the inferior status of a woman in a society, and work division. In both settings the division between private and public life is set, mainly to respect with gender roles, linking men with public life and women with domestic realms. Traditionally, women are restricted to the house where they carry out their basic tasks, although in agriculturally-based communities as many Balkan areas were, these activities extend to working in the fields and caring the animals '*to start the endless miserable chores, the drudge which in the plains of Thessalia, was the only dowry women bring to men*' (Karagatsis 1994: 224), whereas the public realm is open to men; it is advisable for men to avoid spending too much time at home and pass leisure hours with other men in coffeehouses, places forbidden to women (Loizos 1981, Kennedy 1986, Dubisch 1986).

Sanday (1981) points out that the power relationship between sexes can be 'mythical' male dominance, where there is equal power for men and women and where men deny women's while asserting their own, and actual male dominance. The interesting part of such ideology is that it can appear in societies where women exercise significant control over resources which some argues that it is the case of Greece, where women play the role of the guardian of the family, husband, and household. Equally, the reverse situation is that in some societies women are valued and appreciated but cannot exercise power, which again it is still the case of Greece as women are indeed valued for their female purity and attributions such as motherhood. Herzfeld (1986) argues that Greece exhibits conflicting mixture of gender ideologies which is why in the case study that follows it is possible to trace significant differences between women's rural life in Greece and Romania. It appears nevertheless that the gender roles are

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essential in rural communities as they guide and organise social life and attribution in both public life and private life, creating cultural customs and expectations from its members. It will prove relevant in the study case how ethnographical studies conducted in Greece reveal women's images of the natural order '*Men are somehow superior. That's why they're men*', '*Men are other, ordained by God*', '*Men are intelligent, but women are gossips*', '*Men are said to sit on the woman's right-hand side, while women on the left, are 'from the devil*', '*Men are reliable, while women are naïve and fearful, men are pure while women are polluted by blood and the blood of childbirth*', '*Men are superior. It's from the first myth, God cursed Eve, that she should be subordinate* […] *subordinate in all things. Eve was cursed*' (Du Boulay 1986: 140). In Greek literature women are depicted in a higher religious manner whereas in Romanian literature the depiction seem to be less informed by religious mysticism although religious customs and beliefs still pervade it.

The hypothesis is that it appears that these traditional norms and values have informed a pattern in social behaviour that is consistent for both spaces which creates similar patterns of reaction to events. More precisely, the violent behaviour seems to be imagined and portrayed in similar linguistic expressions, the sameness some reactions seem to be triggered by same causes. Several reports reveal facts including that *the Greek society does not recognize the essential equality between men and women in everyday life* (Asay, DeFrain, Metzger, Moyer, 2014: 99) the relationships between genders are based on the idea of power and subordination and of high significance for the present study is the results of the data which show the fact violence against women is easily excused and the victim is responsible for provoking it. Many victims do not report the abuses: *women may convince themselves that the physical or psychological abuse they suffer is not really violence* […] *women themselves learn to be submissive*. The results also reveal that a *lower percentage of woman from rural areas consider as violent the restriction of social and the reduction of the economic independence of women* (Asay, DeFrain, Metzger, Moyer, 2014: 100) This idea will be explored in the following section.

Collective memory converted into literature: the case of *Codin* by Panait Istrati and *Whirlind* by Karagatsis

Reaching the standards of the 20th century, literature (the prose, in particular) has the strength to convert the convincing narrative patterns of social behaviour into images, sublimating those structures that had been imposed at the level of collective memory patterns. The two literary texts we investigate allow us to compare, by bringing them closer and by differentiation, two worlds that, meeting in the basin of a gushing balkanity, set themselves apart, both by the uniqueness of some elements selected by the authors, and the inherent artistic perception in describing a marginal world, Comorfoca, a known place for the 'knifers' who impose their own set of rules and thus become notorious at the level of collective memory of those times and of the later times.

The narrative device of the Romanian author that is configured at the level of affective memoirs of the child-character-narrator set on a dose of poeticism, can minimize a potential of violence that can and is always ready be activated, as it occurs in the last section of the novella. The Greek author, in an exemplary written text, reminding of the structures of ancient classicism of old Elada, renders the data of collective memory from and in several directions: the limited social existence through the description of an apparently and allegedly 'calm' family, from a village set in the region of Tessalia, recently united to Greece; the intrusion of the allogenous element, firstly through details that concern the life of the senior and his French mistress; through the rebellion of the mother that admits, as a vindication, that both children were not procreated by their current father, but by two Turkish bey; the description of a non-

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rural social interface: judges, prosecutors, jury, solicitor, and finally, the sour-bitter pseudo-scene of religious touch attempt at the scene of the execution. What particularizes this novella, in a broad discussion about the imagery of the rural violence in literature, is the gradual crescendo in two parallel frames: the murder of the 'guilty' mistress and the resulting death following the rape of the teenage sick girl who is already 'doomed' due the cultural customs, laws that minimizes the right to life of the poor, especially of the women. The reader becomes more disturbed the more it attempts to understand the behaviour resorts of a father with manifestations difficult to understand in a regular society.

The novella opens abruptly with the introduction of the cruel character of Dumitru. It makes the statement that his life was a continuous slavery due to the never-ending debs, lack of decent food and how all these reasons provided him with the motives to beat his wife '*For him any reason was good enough: if it seemed to him that his wife would lit the fire too slowly, the uncle, wearing boots would send them with her food into the ashes of the fireplace*' (Istrati 2009: 147). The reader can notice from this introduction the inferior position the women is held, by being placed in opposition with the authoritative figure of the man, who is revealed to be the one to get to express his contempt with life in a violent manner towards his wife. The novella frames very well the portrait of a rural family by creating characters with defining traits for their social roles. Women are blamed for it is in their nature to bear children and thus to become the 'burden' of the men. Dumitru advises his nephew, Adrian, not to ever get married because '*the woman is the devil's work*' and decries the nature's course as fate '*there is where we all end up. Sooner or later you realize then you have to work for two, for ten. Then you drink to forget and you beat to get relief...*'(Istrati 2009: 148). Women become the source of misery for man and for this reason they are supposed to endure their violence, since 'everything starts with marriage', which then leads to 'mouths to feed', burdens; they find their comfort in alcohol and feel relief when beating them. In Greek rural settings '*it was very common for men to use force as a means of correcting their wives* […] *it was bullying and grumbling and blows for the least thing*[…] *a little beating doesn't matter*' (Du Boulay 1986: 148-149). As it is understood, the man hold the burdens and responsibilities of the entire household hence he can become 'irritable' and it falls into the woman's job to provide relief by running efficiently the house, preparing warm meals right when he returns from the field tired and hungry, soothe his moods etc. while doing otherwise or failing to that would provoke his anger and madness. Thus it somehow appears that since women have brought the burdens it falls into their business to alleviate the outcomes and any reason appears to men as good enough for them to violently beat them. They are the ones who are supposed to intake the discontents of the men regardless of their nature or circumstances '*what business ad he got to do and beat up a stranger? If he gets drunk, let him come home and beat his wife or his child. They won't take him to court.*' (Du Boulay 1986) It is understandable how it is socially and culturally acceptable that the men 'owns' rights over his family that would and have to accept any behaviour: beating strangers is less socially accepted while beating the family appears as the natural course of life and cultural way for the man to get relief, which illustrates how men are placed in a position of power, strength and domination over their family.

Since women are the seen 'root of all evil', they are despised, disregarded, given an inferior position and treated like property. From Karagatsis' novella we observe how women are made 'useful' to the family and play a role in community's exchanges by being traded to men under various agreements be it marriage or as maids. Zografo's father is given as an in-house maid to Hatzithomas as he is relieved from paying the usual amount of money from the crops. Later on, she gets raped by him, act that is followed by her death. Her father, Gundis, wants to cover up the entire situation '*his first thought facing the corpse of her daughter was to protect the perpetrator. He would have nothing to win it this would get out*' (Karagatsis 1994: 235). The reader is bound to observe from this scene that the sense of justice and fatherly affection are

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not even in question since 'the rules' have been made from long before. Much like Istrati's character, Dumitru, Gundis considers that this is the fate in society '*life runs following universal laws, independent from people's will. In his view, fate is not the uncontrollable force that divides well from evil after its own taste. Everything that happens in this world is according to God's will. Since forever, the boyar sleeps with the wife and the daughter of the peasant. This is the unwritten law of God and of the people*' (234). It appears that fate has already decided the nature's course and it has been rooted in their social and cultural life that things happen in a certain way and one ought not to interfere. Affection and family love is preceded by public life, in the case of men. We see how Gundis tries to bring his son 'on the right track', *i.e.* to behave according to the prescribed unspoken social rules, to make him be the way he considers that Nasos should be – more proud and less of a dreamer – to the extent that he would beat him merciless with the belt (210). Gundis preserved from his ancestors the idea that the head of the family, the leader of the gentry has right over the life and death over those borne from his flesh, belief that entitles him to treat his off-springs as own property, reason for which he would easily sacrifice the daughter for preserving the good image in public. This is interestingly enough consistent with the ancient myths and practices where fathers would expose their sons (Bonnard 2005) and daughters (Leduc 2005) and no legal disposition prohibited or limited the Athenians from their right to expose the children (Ludovic Beauchet according to Bonnard 2005). The representations of a father exposing his children are related to the paternal powers in its religious, political and domestic dimensions (Bonnard 2005). Although we are not openly claiming Gundis is literally exposing his children, he does nevertheless hold the belief of all-powerful right over their lives and pretend to exert control over it, an idea he has inherited culturally.

In Greek villages women are perceived as by nature fallen and by destiny redeemed as they represent moral and physical weakness, but gain the spiritual role of the guardian of the house and family (Du Boulay 1986). In Orthodox Christian morality the women as mothers and wives has been a crucial influence on defining their lifestyles and interests (Lazaridis 2009). Thus, it rests on the woman's shoulders to ensure the harmony, cohesion and well-being of the family nucleus, meaning they have to accept and preserve the family formula no matter the costs. Generally, battered women in rural Greece are praised for enduring and for not dissolving the marriage, sacrificing themselves for the sake of the children, being seen as martyrs; whereas if they stand up for themselves they are stigmatized and considered self-centered for that would mean breaking up a family, preserving thus the 'harmony' (Lazaridis 2009). If we look at Panait Istrati's novella we notice how women see the violence inflicted on them '*women, even my mom, would speak about these tortures with such a calm tone that was disturbing: they had already gotten used to it. They were* [actually] *surprised to hear that the brutalized mother had slept a week in her room*' (Istrati 2009: 181). It seems that the social and cultural customs and norms have become internalized so that they are accepted as such in this context as well, just like Gundis accepts the fact that it had long before been established that the boyar can sleep with the wife and daughter of the peasant. Acceptance appears as a way of obeying to cultural customs and following them as such, which we can observe in both novellas '*You could have said that each of them had made out of it a daily chore; him of providing her the regular amount of beating and to throw her out; her, of being in the position of receiving, groaning, and sit on the ground. No words, no loud scream, no explanation. Each one knew what this was all about*' (Istrati 2009: 181). What draws the attention here is precisely the fact that no words are spoken and there is no screaming as it would be the case of an argument; instead it appears to be a part of a regular daily life in as much as greeting or other typical and usual social habits. Under this frame, the aspect of rural violence drew the attention of the present study as it appears that certain behaviours are accepted, internalized and normalized, becoming part of a cultural habit and routine. Although it seems that violence is a typical reality in rural areas, an every-day

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phenomenon to which individuals get used to, Istrati brings forth a dramatic situation, emphasizing on the alienation and disintegration individuals suffer, despite the so-perceived adaptation and appropriation of violence. By placing two exceptional characters together, Adrian, a young boy fascinated by books, possessing an inquisitive mind, and Codin, a murderer with a rotten soul by the dark past, Istrati creates an antagonism that invites to a reflection on the development of individuals in a given environment. Codin is surprised when Adrian does him a favour without expecting anything in return, but from the kindness of his heart, and Adrian is equally intrigued by the man who was deemed by others as pure evil. Codin expects that all individuals are self-interest driven while Adrian is surprised to see that an ex-convicted felt the need of a kind friendship when his entire past was marked by violence. The text reveals two sides of Codin, as being torn from two opposed directions: on the one hand, he is kind to the others and they love him for his good deeds, and on the other hand he is brutal and cruel to his parents, which be beats violently '*my friend would now beat his mother every night and then he would throw out on the road. As it was very hot she would stay there, bent, until dawn. In the morning, as he was leaving the port, Codin would find her sleeping and would kick her in the stomach, leaving her moaning*' (Istrati 2009: 181). His hatred towards his parents is to him justified by the fact that he was despised, beaten by them as a child, and mocked for his ugliness '*I am the son of two worms*! *My parents would beat me and send me to steal petty goods: some corn bag, or a chicken from a neighbour. Instead of thanking me they'd say I was so ugly I could make a woman abort* […] *until I turned fourteen and it was my turn to caress them in my way*! *Then it was that my blood was poisoned with the venom of all the snakes in the world*! *As soon as they'd start talking about my ugliness, I would break their ribs on the spot. I think my father died by own hand.*' (Istrati 2009: 187). It looks as a vicious circle – unloving parents and a child not only deprived by their love, but grown in a violent environment, learning on his own the hardships of life and initiated into that which appears to him as a ruthless world – which in its turn have made him ferocious and a murderer, avenging with impunity, not necessarily for what he had to endure, as a child but for what they has made out of him '[…]*but to tell you not to host such rotter into your home! She is not a mother, she's the plague* […] *She's hold her in her womb, Codin*! [...] *Do not remind me*! [...] *I'm ashamed*! [...] *She fed me venom*.' (Istrati, 2009: 183) We are revealed that Codin is suffering because of that which he has become, for that he cannot be otherwise, and that is likely he become attached to Adrian for his fortune of preserving his purity and genuine soul in a vicious and cruel environment.

We observe how Codin not only despises himself for the way he is – cruel, merciless and violent – but how he opposes Dumitru, who finds comfort in beating women and animals, because it soothes his own inner pain; but in both cases, these characters are practicing a violent behaviour from which they cannot break out: for one, it has become a way of coping to the world, of revenging his own misfortunes, in a psychologically compelled and uncontrolled way, and for the other it is the only way things are bound to work and he has made peace with it. In the middle, there is Adrian, a young boy who observes the social reality and wonders on the meanings of all these acts. The reader can question what is it going to be out of a pure soul such as his, in an environment, that regardless of the causes that drive cruelty and brutality seems to create same characters? Would that entail that there is a pattern in violent behaviour informed by the environment and cultural norms? It appears that Codin is the result of violent consequences that represented his environment, while Gandis and Hatzithomas are informed by cultural norms, according to which children are the property of the chief of the family, and respectively, women are the property of their master, or of that who acquires them. Thus, in both cases, violence seem to stems out of different, but still externally informed reasons, as environment and culture are intertwined and one informs the other and vice-versa. Thus, in both cases it can be assumed that violence, accepted and tolerated in an environment, such as the

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rural setting, and more specifically a family in a rural setting, is informed by cultural values of that particular setting and play a role in validating and legitimizing it.

In both novellas, it is striking and compelling another vivid type of violent behaviour: the one informed by vindication. We see in the case of Gandis, after he finds out that Nasos and Zografo were not his children, but which he had been raising as his own, feels no remorse or compassion in hurting Nasos' case at the trial for Odette's murder, seeking that his sentence be the capital one. In this sense, he shifts from being a father to that of a sworn enemy, seeing in Nasos the betrayal of his wife, and does not hesitate in playing the essential part in his death '*That's a life*! *A life*! *Father, is that you*? *Father*?! *Gundis began laughing sarcastically. His mouth with horrible teeth is terrifying. All of a sudden Nasos' anger moment ceased. That laughter…That devilish face…He is his father. His father – who he doesn't recognize him. That is sending him to death. The world becomes empty. Life loses all meaning*'(Karagatsis 1994: 247). The reader is however inclined to wonder if Gundis had done the same had Nasos been his actual son, considering he was willing to hide Zografo's rape and murder and protect the perpetrator. Equally, Hatzithomas, suspecting Odette's cheating goes after her and kills her, act that occurs right after he had been abusing Zografo. The reader is compelled to notice the sense of propriety and domination of the male, who owns and abuses women – the idea that a woman would be cheating on him is not ideologically accepted, hence his quest for vindication. In the case of Codin, his vindication against his parents is driven by what can be understood as a result of a psychological damage and inflicting pain has become the only way he can cope with the reality. By growing up he gained the necessary strength to fight back and gain control over his life, with the unfortunate damage to his emotional condition. Dumitru's violence is not as much vindication as it is a discharge against what he considers to be the root of all his misery. The striking difference between the revenge in Istrati's novella and Karagatsis text is that whereas the latter seems that vindication is completed after the act of murder and trail statement, in the former it appears that is never fulfilled – the characters seem to be leading a life of eternal misery in which violence is the only way of coping with it. Thus we can notice that whereas the violence is more evil driven in the case of Karagatsis, in Istrati's case it appears to be stemming from a profound contempt, misery and what is perceived by them as eternal damnation. It is not surprising to observe the evil violence and importance of revenge in Karagatsis novella, as Greek culture knows the concept of vendetta which remains even today a present practice in some regions in Crete and can be considered an important cultural understanding of the Greeks about the natural order of the things.

Conclusions

Unlike the means of manifestation of violence in urban areas, the rural violence stem from atavist inheritance, many times being merely an interface of some links, relations and customs almost forgotten. At both the Greeks and Romanians it is to be noted the hatred inherited from the clan lines or at levels dictated by social hierarchies. In the Greek space there are different forms that stem from a contextualization of cosmopolitism stronger than in Romanian rural villages. On the other hand, rural violence in Romanian settings is quickly consumed, being an explosion without a retort; for the Greeks, as we can understand from the novella, the violence determines successive images, elaborated as in a performance that includes the preparation of the event, its consumption, registering the reactions of other participants, the preparation of the trial, the death scene, and the collateral effects on the witness-actors. Panait Istrati is focused on bringing out a one dimension of the manifestation of violence, while Karagatsis officiates the tragic in a natural extension of the antique heroic, which is re-ordered in a world close to Olympos, a world in which gods have long been asleep, Jesus Christ has in vain given his blood

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to humans, and the tragic sacrifice is insinuated in the earth, that becomes the symbol of the eternal remembrance, beyond religions and myths, always alterable.

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