

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES OF THE FAMILY AND SOCIETY IN RENAISSANCE - EXTENDED VERSION

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyse the ways in which a marriage can be concluded in the case of rich and noble families, as well as in the case of the poor ones. Marriage habits are different, depending on the social and economic status, and most of these traditions prevail nowadays also. The institution of marriage will lead to a transformation of the sentimental imaginary, starting from the Middle Ages' *fin amor*, played by the troubadours, to the pragmatic, interested relationship, focused on procreation and the transfer of possession. At the mental level, we are observing the magic of the inside reflexion, inwardly, towards that inner feeling analysed by both literary and artistic specialists. The social status of the family cannot be provided by an individual. Affiliation to a family ensures social inclusion and human survival. The role of the family in society is a sum of the roles of each member, the man may have the archetypes of prince or warrior, artist or humanist, merchant or clergyman, scholar or adventurer; the woman, first of all mother or daughter, widow, virgin or prostitute, nun or witch; the child seen as a follower of the family's reputation, entrepreneur and supporter of the mother. The feminine condition in the family is a tragic one, as the woman gets to accept the premature disappearance of her beloved children, removed from inheritance in noble families through crime or natural causes. Examples of historical realities and artistic works will support the above statements and lead to conclusions.

Keywords: Renaissance, family, society, roles

INTRODUCTION

The Renaissance was one of the most complex phenomena of the world culture of the 14th - 17th centuries, which developed in the Italian-state cities, especially in Florence and Venice, as well as in Western Europe. It is a phenomenon of critical recovery of Greek-Latin antiquity, but also a beneficial factor for the development and diversification of the genres, species and themes already existing in culture.

The humanism characteristic of the Renaissance was also based on a political factor, the so-called freedom of the monarchies; if in the rest of Europe the monarchs were God's representatives on Earth, as in the Italian Papal State or Naples, in the rest of the Italian-state cities the power was shared among the citizens. Representative families in the Italian-state cities were in upper positions in society and tried to hold power by any means, from buying votes to assassinations (Drimba [1]).

The Italian-city leaders had learned from the *small enterprise* of the Roman Empire that any military, be it merely a mercenary winner in a war, could take over power if he was not removed immediately after the victory (e.g., Caesar, Hannibal), which favours volatility policy and an overnight change of rulers.

Unlike the Medieval world, Renaissance humanism does not seek the signs of a divine plan, but the practical and economic aspects of the art of governance, the plastic arts and the literature of their time. It was what we now call *an uncertain world* in which architects and artists wanted to impose their personality on society through exceptional artwork exhibited in the palaces of famous ruling families (e.g. Borgia, Medici, Pitti, Borghese).

The occasion that favoured *the new civic humanism* was primarily due to the richness of the leading cities of the city-states, used for the benefit of the community, without the Christian complex of morally condemned wealth. Compared to the situation in France or other Western European countries, where the noble phenomenon prohibits the exercise of commercial trades, in Italy, the wealth of the Medici family comes from the banking system invented by them.

The banking activity, the genius activity of the Italian merchants, especially of the Venetian and Florentine ones, was jeopardised not only by political violence (see the Pazzi conspiracy), but also by the influence of famous Catholic preachers (the Savonarola Dominican monk in Florence). The most obvious way of demonstrating the richness and social position of the leading families of the city-states consisted in investing in the art and building of impressive palaces (Palazzo Medici, Church of San Lorenzo), where one can

find famous works, numerous frescoes, like those at Santa Croce, commissioned by the Medici, Strozzi or Bardi families.

Italy dominated the Renaissance period, Italy created the Renaissance in Europe and created a new kind of humanism, a philosophy that placed man and not God at the center of the universe.

The end of the 100-year war between France and England and the conquest of Constantinople were historical events that marked the future of Europe. The first one, because peace allowed the flourishing civilizations to develop in the two countries (England and France) under Italian influence, and the second event, by renouncing the Roman Empire of the East, led to the recovery of the humanist civilization and culture that had developed more in the Byzantine Empire, because the cultural personality (e.g. Besarion) donated to the Vatican everything that we consider European cultural heritage.

Although the term "Renaissance" is sometimes disputed, we could agree with Jean Delumeau (Delumeau [2]) on the meaning of this term, in which we recognise a total promotion of the West at a time when Europe's civilisation has surpassed parallel civilisations. The miracle and dynamism of the European model will dominate for a thousand years a type of civilization, the Western one, which takes over but not in a servile way, the inheritance of the Greek-Roman civilization, leaves itself influenced by Christianity but glorifies the man facing the challenges of famine, epidemics, wars, etc. Nevertheless, Renaissance has always been inclined towards technical progress, pictorial and artistic innovations, a creative avant-garde not only by artists but also by engineers, business people and mathematicians, true geniuses of the entire European conti-

ment. The challenge of advancing the Turks was corrected by the cultural retaliation, the progress becoming a succession of growths stretched by temporary overturns.

Locally, there was a failure, but globally, humanity developed material and mental structures that allowed it to move forward. Contrasts of obscurantism with magicians, wizards and alchemists, or condottiers, with Savonarola's autodafes in Florence, have been overcome by genius artwork that impresses the whole of humanity, centuries later after their creation.

ARCHITECTURE AND SOCIAL STATUS

Renaissance society has increased the gap between the rich and the poor, both in rural and urban areas. Fashion forces artists to build their noble residences around inner courtyards (patio), but also to construct holiday castles and villas that have even removed them from the masses.

Not only the marriages and triumphal entrances of some princes in Flanders, France or Italy, Tuscany or Valois were occasions for public celebrations with opulent suites and town horsemanship, but also the banquets and performances in the courtyard of Valois with amusements in the garden castle, dances and enchantments on the water, to which the public did not have access.

The poor and the rich were also different in the way they were entertained. The poor crowd climbs on the rooftops to better see the spectacle offered to the rich (e.g. the birth of King Henry II's 2nd son).

In the 16th century Italy, the carriage had become an outward sign of wealth, although it was only used in the city, as the external roads were impracticable. Withdrawal outside of everyday life had be-

come a common phenomenon for the rich, and they were accompanied at their private party by wealthy prostitutes.

However, although the prostitutes were received in the homes of wealthy people, they were known and had a special status in their midst, they had no right to use the chariot. Following the Council of Trento (1543-1563), popes like Pius V, as well as St. Ignatius of Loyola, made efforts to isolate prostitutes in a separate neighbourhood in the city. In cities like Rome and Venice, the prostitutes were few (17 prostitutes per 1,000 women) and were pushed down on the social stage. Among the most prominent prostitutes of the time, we mention Fiammetta, Imperia, Tullia de Aragon, Isabella de Luna.

Prostitutes who lived/worked in the poor part of the cities were much more acceptable (they were called the candle courtesans, those in the lower room near the store). The extreme segregation of light-weight women speaks of a society whose mentalities were based on Christian religious morals and social space "cleansed" not only by prostitutes but also by other marginalised social strata.

That's how it came to the two-story city, imagined by Leonardo, according to the already existing spatial architecture that allows the architect to divide the area at the top and bottom of the city. In the upper part of the city there were no vehicles (car, chariot, carpentry) in the lower part of the town that would have allowed them access, so that the noise and dust raised by them would not disturb the riches, which at the top had their share of fresh air, light and quietness. In this sense, a century later than Leonardo's predictions, the popes developed the Dei Monti neighbourhood, between Santa Maria-Maggiore and the actual Piaz-

za di Spagna, because it was placed on a higher scale than Mars' overcrowded Camp, which in addition, presented the possibility of an imminent flood in case of natural disaster. Artistry and pontiffs have moved vertically, both architecturally and economically and socially.

It is essential to notice that this retreat of the aristocracy implies the disdain for the manual work that has been emphasised during this period of Renaissance, for some crafts considered to be sordid and unkind (such as a typographer, tailor, butcher, shoemaker). Moreover, there have been movements that excluded from electoral assemblies from the city and the municipal functions, the common people and those of poor condition. The workers, the commoners, were not among the "holy bread bearers", but they were also required to be modest in their outfits.

CLOTHING AND SOCIAL STATUS DIFFERENCES

Luxury clothing and fashion development emerged across Europe in the 14th century and helped to increase the gap between the rich and the poor. The Savonarola preacher in Florence has organised "vanities of vanity" and has promised indulgences to those who will shame women with eccentric hairstyles on the street, as well as those with a low-cut neck. Laws have been issued that the cost of clothing to be limited, the use of coats, the beak (tip) shoes and the long trains, and later the harness abuse, the gold and silver embroidery. The black colour began to dominate fashion at the end of the 16th century, under Spanish influence, Catholic reform, and Calvinistic austerity. Clothes became more rigid, but the price of cloths used, and the jewellery exhibited contrasted. The social difference was marked

not only by fabrics and cloths but also by the shape of the costume.

Except for priests and employees in the magistracy, who have kept the traditional costume of the profession, in the middle of the 14th century, women and men abandon the long and wide costume common to the two sexes, in favour of separating different clothing styles depending on the female or male gender. In both cases, the costume was adjusted. The male accessories were more fashion-oriented during the Renaissance. It is worth mentioning that the clothing of the court courtiers is similar to that of men, as they are attracted mainly by the extravagant jewellery carried by men.

Thus the way has opened for social prejudices and state rationality, which have begun to be expressed only by clothing. From the nobility, an emulation of the taste for luxury clothing, to the bourgeoisie and even to the lower classes was created. This is easily noticed in the paintings of the weather in which men are generally depicted, the body-worn in expensive clothes is more important than the figure of the character in question.

GASTRONOMY AND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RICH AND POOR

Besides clothing, the physical look of the Renaissance man underwent changes and constituted a criterion for differentiation between social classes. Although after 1350 more meat is consumed and Bruegel's characters seem to be great gourmets, it can be noticed that the vast majority of ordinary people were underweight, hunger was frequent, and high mortality due to inertia.

Simple people rarely manifested themselves in culinary exaggerations as the fi-

nancial problem was acute and did not allow, in opposition to the nobility and aristocracy presented in the artwork of Van Eyck, Botticelli or Cranach. After these works of art, Rubens's heavy and cellulosytic nuances showed up at the end of the Renaissance, the thickening of the female figure, the transition being made by Titian. The new taste to the feminine silhouette of prominent shapes started from Italy, not only because of the diet but also of the sedentary lifestyle, with copious meals and the use of carriages.

Greed prevails at copious meals, especially in Italy and later in France, with the arrival of Catherine de Medici, who brought with her the lavish Italian tastes for venison and poultry. Rabelais (Rabelais [3]) describes them thoroughly in the *Fourth Book*, in opposition to those of the Roman Empire, where Petronius (Petronius [4]) in *Cena Trimalchionis* describes an extremely refined feast with sparrow hearts and other such culinary delicacies.

In Europe, culinary refinement is not restored until the 18th century, under the influence of France. Renaissance foods were full of spices and sugars, even nowadays considered heavy for digestion.

In contrast to the opulence of the vibrant meals are the beggars, who are becoming more numerous and more hungry. They get to live in cities, being fugitive from villages and having no home or a place for stable work in the town, so they become from peasants - beggars in the cities. According to the writings of the time, around 1591, about 15% of the population was made up of beggars and their families. That's why, at the end of the 16th century, the popes decided to house all the infamous beggars in Rome in a hospice and to chase the rest without any vis-

ible results in the medium and long term. In 1613 the gimps, the blind and the estropian of Rome were authorised to group themselves in a guild, which forced them to a monthly subscription and gave them the right to beg. Physically beggar-bearers were forced by law to practice their profession; otherwise they were punished with death. Public assistance was granted only to those who did not work.

Under the influence of the Catholic Reform, wealthy people considered themselves morally obliged to do charities. By not investing in industry, research and development, people with hands-on choices chose to go along the path suggested by the Catholic Church, to help their fellows through charities, which already became mandatory. The social segregation caused by the division between the rich and the poor made it that even the actors of the Commedia dell'arte troops gave two different types of performances, one for the nobles and the other for the commoners. That is why, even if the works of art consider beauty to be the privilege of the rich, if found in the lower classes it is because it hides a noble.

FAMILY AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE RENAISSANCE PERIOD

The Renaissance family makes complex social life work and shapes the individual in the spirit of personal and civic values. Leon Batista Alberti (Batista [5]), in his work *De Familia*, presents a laic vision of life and society, makes the praise of money and wealth that must support honour, reputation and glory, the idea of success, organisation and order through the good creative management of prosperous businesses and social position. Thus, the gen- tile family order of Middle Ages continues

under the authority of the father over the family and the woman under the authority of her father or husband, a woman considered to be unfit for war. The woman was only defended as a virgin, with the guarantee that all the children she would bring into this world would be her husband's. In the Renaissance period, the man could be a prince or warrior, an artist or humanist, a merchant or clergyman, a scholar or an adventurer, roles almost forbidden to women.

The Renascent women's hypostases are of virgin, daughter, wife, mother, widow or witch and even prostitute, the feminine condition greatly depending on the social status. Poor women became child-raising spouses with the role to help families in the household and farm work, to ensure survival. They also had an active role in the household, which did not allow for an uninterrupted array of births, as it was the case for women in upper classes.

Women belonging to wealthy families gave birth to a baby every 24 to 30 months; the periods between two births were separated by short breastfeeding periods in order not to limit fertility. This fertility stemmed from the need to secure an heir and transmit the wealth and family name. For example, Alessandra Macinghi Strozzi, a descendant of the Alberti and Strozzi families, gave birth to eight children between the years 1426 and 1436. The maximum average fertility of 12 births frequently exceeded, especially when no surviving male heir (e.g. the Donate Venetian family has reached this average in every generation between the 14th -17th centuries).

The pregnant woman was privileged, adored and spoiled until the time of birth when, for a short period, she was at the centre of honours and gifts. Wealthy women loved their children, they would educate

their boys up to the age of seven, and girls up to marriage age, maternity being their only chance of creativity. Women even become authors of textbooks, diaries and letters, which they used to paradoxically guide their male sons even when they grew up (for example, the same Alessandra Macinghi Strozzi wrote 72 letters to her son Filippo, sending him medical advice, investment information - cheeses, linen, and news about the progress of smaller brothers and cousins).

However, the biblical perspective on birth is still preserved, as punishment for Eve and the ambiguity of the role she played in the garden of Eden. The sentence was, on the one hand, endless labour and pain of childbirth, and, on the other hand, depression and fear of the sudden death of the newborn child.

The aforementioned fear is justified, as midwives lack practical training, and a difficult birth or bacterial infection was a continuing threat to both the poor and the rich. Gregorio Dati's diptych, which records the disappearance of three of his four wives, is considered to be the first monument dedicated to women - mothers (Dati [6]).

INFANT MORTALITY

The Mothers of the Renaissance period considered the newborn as a transient being to whom they were devoted to a temporary affection. The high priests were warning the mothers about enjoying the birth of a child so that they would not be angry God, but on the contrary, would thank God if a child would have been taken from this world.

Child mortality threatened between 20% - 50% of Europe's children through the effects of plague, diarrhoea, flu, cataract, tuberculosis or inanition. 18% of newborns died between the first and the fourth year of life, another 11% between the age of 5-9 years old, 8% between the age of 10-14 years

old (the Pistoia village, in the 15th century); 5% of newborns died on their first day of life in Milan in the year 1470; according to the same journal of Gregorio Dati (Dati [6]), only 9 children out of 25 legitimate births survived. Another example is Alessandra Strozzi, who had 5 children, of whom only survived 2.

CHILD AND BREASTFEEDING

Beloved or not, the children were breastfed between 18 to 24 months by mothers, after which they were given away in the care of by nurses. Nobility women gave their babies to nurses, even though it was considered a deadly sin, but poor women were breastfeeding next to their own child, at least one of a wealthy woman.

Numerous humanists of the times have preached and written in their textbooks about the role and importance of baby breastfeeding by the biological mother, considering maternal milk to be essential in the development of the child, as doctors nowadays urge mothers to breastfeed their infants to increase their immunity.

The refusal of breastfeeding coming from noble families' mothers comes from the contraceptive effect of breastfeeding, their role in the family is to ensure the transmission of wealth, knowledge and power, being also encouraged by husbands in this endeavour. In low-income family environments, food and financial constraints led to a decrease in the number of births and an increase in the number of breastfed babies for purely financial purposes. Few families brought their nurses home, preferring to send the child a few days after the birth in the countryside, where they were cared for by nurses who buried their children or barely weighed, or were attracted by a double reward from the one received servant. The children entrusted to the nurses died from poverty, malnutrition and neglect, more than if they were in the care of their mothers.

Despite the lack and negligence, the surviving child could still die because of the evil

nurse's intentions. A classical method of infanticide involved suffocation, in the case of unwanted mothers, transferring the crime to the nurses; other ways were abandonment, starvation or drug addiction.

They reached the point of a selection of wanted children, kept and educated with parents, while the rest of the same mother's children were abandoned in rural areas, in low-income families. The nurse had the role of raising them up to older ages, up to even 14 years or causing them to die through abuses even from the biological family.

INFANTICIDE

Infanticide was a norm for all centuries, except for the one we live in. It was a form of standard demographic limitation that was accepted in antiquity but was fought against during the Christian era, even though it was practised. During the Renaissance period, infanticide is found among poor women, prostitutes, who have recorded illegitimate births. The same women became victims of their own deeds, as they were detained and sentenced to death by drowning or burning on the floor, then replaced by the guillotine. On the other hand, fathers condemned to death for infanticide ended up more gently by hanging. Along with witchcraft, infanticide was considered one of the most severe accusations made against the woman. However, the vast majority of women wanted to become a wife and mother, a privileged status, through which they publicly recognised their role and impact in society.

WEDDING CEREMONIES

Wedding and Renaissance wedding ceremonies are similar to Celtic ones, but they are much more refined and elaborate. A well-known ritual was that of *binding the hands* of the bride and groom with a piece of material or band, symbolising the unity for an eternity of the lives of the two. Variations of this ritual are the cutting of a strand of hair from the bride's hair and

that of the bride, which is put in a box to be preserved. Another variant that is common today is that the bride and groom drink from the same glass. And other wedding traditions have been taken from the Renaissance wedding ceremony: throwing rice or wheat as a symbol of fertility, wealth and good luck for the couple. The multi-tier wedding cake dates back to this period, when the guests brought small cakes, which they put on top of each other, and the bride and groom should kiss over the pile of cakes without breaking the cake to be lucky in marriage. As for the bridal accessories and clothing, she chose to wear a crown of wildflowers and herbs, symbolising luck and fertility. The throwing of the garter dates back to the Renaissance period, so if a man gave this to the beloved woman, it meant that she was faithful to her. The preferred colour for the bride's dress was blue, the colour was a symbol of purity, and if the bride had chosen to wear a different colour dress, it still had to wear something blue, a tradition that is still maintained today. Minstrels were hired to sing and play throughout the ceremony; the bride's march is dating back to these times.

Marriage itself was a form of union that was accepted by society and compulsory because, besides offering a social status to the unmarried woman, it legally transferred the bride's property to the groom. Regardless of the social status of the future couple, a matchmaker or marriage broker was involved in the marriage ceremony. For nobility, in general, and in particular for Florence, the one involved was Lorenzo de Medici, who took control of the city by arranging the most strategic marriages, often to perpetuate his interests and reward the loyal families. Marriages were usually made to put an end to disputes between families, but the wishes of the groom and his family had always been a priority.

The Renaissance wedding ceremony included four stages (*impalmamento*, *sponsalia*, *matrimonium*, *nozze*) and the duration could be spread over days, weeks, months and even years.

Impalmamento, or "hands-binding", occurs only after the matchmaker has concluded negotiations between the parties concerned. During this ceremony, the parents of each of the two parties first seen each other, except for the restricted Italian circles where they already knew each other. This stage was immortalised in Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Wedding* artwork. By this hand-gesture, the parents sealed the alliance and concluded the kinship. Only by the end of the Renaissance period were written contracts added to this stage of the ceremony, concluded between a notary and the male members of the two families. The completion of this first stage allowed potential spouses to speak through the windows, from the balcony (see *Romeo and Juliet*), to exchange souvenirs (scarves or flowers from the girl, jewellery from the boy).

Sponsalia includes the legal part of the marriage ceremony in which the prenuptial contract is signed by male members of both families, as well as by non-family witnesses, appointed *guarantors* or *arbitrators*, with the task of ensuring that each family fulfils the promises of the marriage contract. Also, specific values, due dates and payment terms were set. The "family movement" determined whether the future bride would advance on the social scale, then the dowry had to reflect the prestige of the groom's family. A document in this respect was drawn up and signed by the notary in order to observe all the promises. This part of the ceremony lasts most of the time, with complex negotiations, and it also has the intentions to let the bride and groom know each other better. The bride's father obtained the "consent" of the bride, who was not

allowed to have any other wishes other than those of her father, family or match-maker.

Matrimonium or “ring day” is a civil or religious ceremony, depending on the stage we are in the Renaissance; it includes the exchange of vows, promises between the two spouses, in front of a crowd of people, similar to the modern ceremony of our days. Questions addressed to the groom and bride differ, the bride promising to “obey and serve” her husband. After sharing gifts between families, the couple was considered legally married, and the public festivities began even though the marriage had not been consumed (see *Wedding Feast* of Tintoretto).

Nozze represents the final and most public stage of the Renaissance marriage, a public procession of the bride to the groom's house. The procession does not only advertise marriage between the two families, but it also leads to its consummation. The noble family bride is placed on a white horse and is escorted by her family to her new husband's family. The bride is beautiful, young, crowned; she becomes an emblem of the entire community that takes part in the ceremony. These wedding customs and rituals are described by Marco Antonio Altieri, in his treatise *Li nuptiali* (*Nuptials*) (1506-1513) (Altieri [7]).

LOVE AS ART IN THE RENAISSANCE

In Renaissance, it appears another type of feeling, named by Culianu (Culianu [8]) *inner feeling*, which was not the privilege of marriage, but which continues the kind of love of the troubadours and the spiritual teachings of Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. It was at the same time a continuation of the mystical Arab influences. This new form of consciousness did not go from the obedience of the woman to the man of the Medieval type but cultivated the mystical ecstasy achieved by an altered consciousness, in

which the loved one was trembling in the presence of his adored woman, and their souls touched at one glance only.

In Dante's *Divine Comedy* (Dante [9]), for the first time, there is an erotic-spiritual impulse that encompasses not only the love for Beatrice but extends to the whole universe. Amid his life, lost in a dark forest, he is met by Vergilius, a great initiate of the ancient world, who leads him to the entrance through a portal on which it is written: “give up any hope, you who enter here.” The world he meets is full of characters known throughout his life. The *Divine Comedy* is also a guide to the post-mortem world, a manual of initiation and a description of how the material life is influenced by stars and planets, like those in the after-death.

Stars and planets illuminate the entire Renaissance literature. Active imagination and intelligence are not now felt through esoteric schools, but a certain magic spirit, the spell of the imaginative act through which powerful spirits can enter into our being. This explains the predilection for Botticelli's minor tones and open colours, which suggest the etheric quality of some of the other bewildering, incompletely materialised beings. Botticelli's *Primavera* renders the creation of matter through the successive emanation of planetary spheres of the universal spirit. The real models of the Renaissance genius painters, such as Leonardo, Michelangelo, Botticelli, Rafael, Titian and many others, are part of the aristocratic society of the era and meet the requirement of posing with pride (e.g. Simonetta Vespucci, Lucrezia Borgia, Beatrice and Isabella d'Este).

The notion of *universal genius* that appeared in the Renaissance also targets Leonardo, Rafael or Michelangelo, not only Botticelli. Their visions differentiate them from the rest of the people through

greatness and clarity. An esoteric tradition of the times considers that Rafael was inspired directly by the archangel with the same name, even as a reincarnation of the one who was John the Baptist. This thinking is based on the fact that his works representing Madonna with the baby show up events just after the death of John the Baptist.

The most mysterious masterpiece of the Renaissance, *Monalisa*, is described by the esoteric critic Walter Pater (Pater [10]) as "the head upon which all the ends of the world have come," that's why her eyelids are a little tired; is a beauty made from inside on the material, with strange thoughts, fantastic reveries and sublime passions. "She is older than the rocks she sits on [...] was often dead and learned the secrets of the tomb and plunged into the deep and keeps to herself the day gone" (Walter Pater). For the first time, we see on the face of *Monalisa* a profound joy to explore the inner life, she is free and detaches from the world of the senses, which J.R.R. Tolkien (Tolkien [11]) called "an unobtrusive, mobile, detached interior look." It is a prefiguration of the type of intellectual woman initially developed by the princely figure of Marguerite de Navarra, who also appears in Boccaccio's *Decameron*.

The influence of the secret societies of the 16-17th centuries can be observed entirely in the inspiration of Western literature, Shakespeare in England, Rabelais in France, Cervantes in Spain, preparing for another era of the imaginary, a period of the spirit. An interesting aspect that Culiari (Culiari [8]) remarked in *Eros and magic in the Renaissance* is that the development of literature goes hand in hand with the development of the sciences, they influence each other, and they are

also influenced by the field of mathematics, physics and astronomy, which made registered exceptional progress during this period.

CONCLUSIONS

The Paradox of the Renaissance period consists of the fact that the woman is worshipped, appears in works of art and literature, even with a new sensation towards she had recorded before. In a society that privileges sciences and the arts and develops economic and banking activities, the woman registers, from a social point of view, a regression. Her role is reduced to replacing social material, to be workers and warriors, the workforce in her turn, transmitters of fortunes but without the legal, social right of possessing these fortunes. The woman receives great injustice in the social order, first of all inside the family, then in society. Towards the end of the Renaissance era, it appears the idea of the social revolt and the feminist fighter's physiognomy, which will evolve into the US-style suffragette and feminist, continuing until today, when the social balance could not be restored (Black [12]).

The family was a simple foundation on which the modern state was based, a small-scale republic run by the head of the family, who was no longer a king like in the Middle Ages, but a senior. The legislators considered the family to be sheltered by threats of irrationality, lack of accountability and inconsistency, which were attributes of femininity.

The hypostasis of femininity appear as the double nature: angelic and demonic, as spiritual elevation or moral perdition, at best as an enigma (see *Monalisa*). Associated with the devil, the woman was subjected to male authority and exiled in the domestic sphere, as Braudel (Braudel [13]) points it out.

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At the 5th International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on Social Sciences and Arts SGEM 2018 from Florence, Italy, during the presentation of our research entitled *Economic and Social Perspectives of the Family in Renaissance* (DOI: 10.5593/sgemsocialF2018/2.3), questions related to the difference between social classes have been raised, together with suggestions regarding an extended Introduction to the paper. Due to the complexity of suggestions, replies, comments, and

continuous conversations even after the conference ended, in the present paper we, the authors, are trying to extend and develop the original paper to the standards required.

As you can observe, the present extended article goes beyond the limits of family and family life, presenting economic and social aspects of the society, being inter-connected with the typical family life, the status of the mother, father, widow, child, or any role that a person could have in the social life during the Renaissance period.

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