

FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS; CONTEMPLATING FILIAL CONDUCT (AN OUTLINE)

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From the Greco-Roman world to Judaism and Christianity, patriarchal dominance has permeated Western culture, the father being the center of family dynamism. In the Judeo-Christian tradition the male authority is deposited in the person of the father, as the secular representative of God. The Bible provided the blueprint of proper conduct among parents and their children. The father's and subsequently the husband's power was codified in medieval societies and has remained so, even in face of modernism. As we know, the daughter's obedience is required primarily in her father's choice of whom she should marry. Traditional marriage is a ritual transfer: the bride is moved from her father's possession to her husband's. In a male dominated world, when a father was dead his son took over his role, even if his widow was still alive. Daughters were marginalized therefore any role they played becomes special.¹

In a number of medieval societies, a woman's oath did not count unless her father heard it and agreed to its content. Here, we have to remember that not only the Bible, but for millennia, secular literature, too, had been written by men, thus the same attitude permeates our entire culture and this is not limited to the written word but extends to every area of the arts that endeavors to mirror the world.

Standards of proper conduct had been addressed from the thirteenth century on by German and Italian authors, but the most important works that deal with women per se, are part of the Renaissance vision of manners and morals. We have a number of Conduct Books for men and women: but all were written by men. The best known of them were Juan Luis Vives's *The education of a Christian Woman* (1524) and Baldassare Castiglione's *Il libro del cortegiano* (1528).²

¹ Women (for reasons that are beyond the scope of this short contribution) have accepted that role and, until rather recently, have learned to live with it. Although this sounds as a simplified and strictly gender-oriented, feminist statement, even a cursory inquiry into our culture will prove this to be true.

² By the eighteenth century, moral advice, proverbs, from Vives to Castiglione to the later appearing conduct books became popular even with the burghers. The great heroines of world literature (with the exception of those of Jane Austin, George Eliot and a couple of more authors), have been the creation of men. Anna Karenina's or Emma Bovary's life and fate had been 'fathered' by Tolstoy, and Flaubert, and their ultimate tragedies, I submit, carries an aside from the authors: It 'serves her right.' They broke the thousand-year-old social contract that restricted their roles to wife and mother.

Having investigated a large number of texts in order to identify the types of relationships between fathers and daughters, it became clear that the most obvious and frequently found plots exemplify a binary choice: obedience or defiance. Renaissance drama is full of such stories and had been analyzed by a number of scholars. I shall return to this later albeit briefly, only when I have something to add to the discourse.

Being a male, or behaving as one, guaranteed more success. In order to find justice, Shakespeare's Cordelia develops traits that are considered masculine: honesty, bravery, power, etc. King Lear, in turn, by the end of the play loses his masculine traits and weeps in his daughter's arms like an old woman. When King Lear fails, he fails as a father and as a social construct.

However, I begin my inquiry into the subject with a much earlier date: i.e. the Judeo-Christian myth of Creation, because we find our first defiant daughter in the persona of Eve. Here we also have our opportunity to realize what it means that the Bible was written by men. There is an obvious role reversal already at this point: Although only women can give birth, it is not Eve who gives birth to Adam; she is taken from Adam's ribcage. Moreover, in her defiance, she is the one to spoil Paradise for all of their descendants. We may consider Eve the first rebellious daughter ever. She is going to be the model of rebellion and the object of just punishment.

In the following, I am hoping to show that, as in all good literature, in the Bible too, the stereotypes, befitting the cautionary tales, are built on individual conflicts, often displaying human frailty on both sides. It should be noted that frequently, fathers relinquish their role to the girl's brothers. When the daughter, the controllable female, breaks with her father, brother, or husband, in whichever fashion, she creates the plot. Few are capable to succeed. This trope operates from the Bible to Shakespeare. The girls are proven powerless in the Shakespearean tragedies (Ophelia, Juliet), however, stronger in the comedies. In the Shakespearean comedies women often don male clothing (frequently they are orphans, like Rosalind or Viola, thus liberated). Later, in the plays of Molière, the cuckolded husband, or a master, ridiculed by his servant, references the same social revolt that you already find in Shakespeare's comedies.

But back to the Bible: The Bible tells us that even after the Expulsion, God remains a loving father. He extends his care, especially to his chosen people, whom he frequently addresses in singular, as "daughter." Most frequently, Daughter Zion, as *pars pro toto* means the entire people: scores of examples can be found for the phrase in the *Book of Kings*, in Isaiah, in Jeremiah, in the *Psalms*, as well as in the *Lamentations*.

The biblical phrase: "Daughter Zion" may also refer to Jerusalem as in, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ... lo, your king comes to you" (Zechariah, 9. 9), or to Israel, as a whole, as, for example, in the *Book of Kings* (19:21). When the Assyrians threaten Israel, King

Hezekiah goes for help to the Lord who declares that any insult to “the virgin daughter of Zion” would be an insult against Himself. In the *Book of Prophets*, the Lord promises the restoration of Israel: “Say to Daughter Zion, see your savior cometh [...]” (Isaiah 62:11). Daughter Babylon (in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, Zechariah and in, for example, Psalm 137:8), the addressee is the entire people.

Matthew uses the same phrase in the New Testament: “Say to Daughter Zion, ‘See your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey’” (21:15). John, too, addresses his audience as, “Do not be afraid, Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt.”

The dichotomy between correct and incorrect behavior are firmly established in the biblical narrative. I shall support this contention with a number of examples but let me immediately admit that this is no uncharted territory either. Esther Fuchs convincingly demonstrates that biblical daughters have fathers who often rob them of power, status and even their lives.³ However, I shall state when my interpretation of the message differs from the standard reception.

Therefore, let us first broach some stories found in the Bible. Dinah’s is such a cautionary tale: Jacob’s daughter by Lea goes out to visit her lady friends in Sechem: i.e. – she leaves her assigned space in the family. According to the story, during the visit, Shechem, son of Hamor, “took her and lay with her and humbled her.” However, the sentence is preceded by the statement that Sechem’s “soul cleaved for Dina the daughter of Jacob and he loved the girl and he spoke to her soul.” This reads more as the story of star-crossed lovers than rape. She might have said that she was going to visit her friends, but she visited with Sechem instead!

Nonetheless, her punishment soon follows. Sechem wants to make their relationship legitimate and unite the two people. Jacob’s sons refuse and avenge her “rape” on Sechem’s males, by convincing them to convert and form an alliance with them. Conversion here means circumcision. Having developed fever after circumcision, the Sechemites are all incapacitated. Simeon and Levi, two sons of Jacob, easily butcher them all. It is worthy of note that Jacob, Dinah’s father, is not responsible for Dina’s fate. His opinion is not sought when the sons revenge her “straying.” The bloodbath, forbidden by Jewish laws, has been explained by a number of Jewish scholars by the argument that it had taken place before Moses received the Ten Commandments. The story contains several messages: it might also refer to the fight among those who were for exogamy and others who wanted to retain endogamy among the Israelites.

³ Esther Fuchs, “Sexual Politics in the Biblical Narrative: Reading the Hebrew Bible as a Woman,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement series* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academy Press, 2000). The story of Lot is on p. 208.

In an entirely different plot, Tamar, King David's daughter by Maacah, the princess of Geshur is raped by Amnon, her half-brother. Here, too, it is not David, but Absalom, Tamar's full brother who will revenge her sister's disgrace. Tamar's story is less ambiguous than Dinah's: she had been raped and Amnon refuses to marry her. Yet, Amnon is permitted to remain in the palace and Tamar, his victim, is expelled. Most biblical scholars assume that David did not punish Amnon, because he was his firstborn. Whereas Dinah displeases her family with her action, Tamar is an innocent victim. Dinah's fate remains undisclosed. Both fathers are kept out from the decision-making process. Why do Jacob and David remain passive regarding their daughters' destiny? Some scholars contemplate the possibility that owing to their stature in Jewish history, they were kept away from being identified with such bloodshed or obvious injustice. Yet, the Bible offers several examples of David not shunning bloodshed or injustice.

In addition to fathers, surrogate fathers may play important roles in the Biblical stories: one example is Queen Esther's narrative, the story of obedience to the Lord and to her uncle/cousin Mordecai, her surrogate father.⁴ Through Esther, Israel is saved: God's mission for her was to serve her people. The ending reminds us of hagiographical writings, with the exception that the heroine finds her happiness on this earth. Her story follows the passion of the saints: she is chosen for the task, first resists, but then follows her destiny. We may consider that the ending has been "contaminated" by properties of the fairy-tale. Esther remains one of the major heroines of Jewish history. Not only her feast day (*Purim*) has become an increasingly celebrated holiday in modern times: she was revered by crypto Jews during the centuries of Inquisition activities, as if she had been a saint. Her story was often staged in the Venice ghetto (in the presence of Christians in

⁴ Plot summary: Esther, a secret Jew, is chosen because of her beauty to become the wife of Ahasuerus, the Persian Emperor. She is an unwilling contestant to become one of the women of the emperor's court, but follows the command of Mordecai, her guardian, uncle/cousin, i.e. surrogate father. Esther does not reveal her nationality and descent, for Mordecai commanded her not to tell (*Megilla*, 2:10). With minor changes, this order is repeated twice in the text (*Ibid.*, 2:20), where it is also stated that Mordecai was known to be a Jew. Urged by Haman, his wicked minister, the emperor is ready to order the destruction of the Jews in his Empire (one of the earliest examples of planning a racially based genocide MDB). Mordecai urges Esther to seek an audience with the emperor and speak for her people. Knowing that such an audience could lead to her death, Esther hesitates. Mordecai tells her that she was chosen to become queen not by accident, but by God's plan that she can save her people. Due to her intervention, Haman's murderous ideas are defeated. Esther's power in the court is stabilized and increased. She is rewarded for her obedience to both her heavenly and earthly fathers. Haman ends up on the gallows, he had prepared for Mordecai and, in the end, Esther's uncle is appointed the chief minister of the emperor (*Book of Esther*).

the audience). I submit that Mordecai was made into a cousin/uncle instead of a father, because his ambiguous role would make him unseemly for a Jewish father.⁵

There is a large corpus relating to the Protestant discussion of the subject. Some Protestants revered the Biblical Esther, perhaps with the idea of conversion, considering her a true agent of God's will (instead of Mordecai's). Luther, however, condemned the story, seeing Esther as a Jewish manifestation of nationalism. Calvin, considering the story apocryphal, left it out from his compilation.

Here it should be mentioned that although in Biblical literature, fathers generally treat their daughters as their property, some are shown to care about their fate. Just to introduce a couple of examples: Although Laban cheated Jacob – and his own daughters – for many years, when he finally permits him to return with his wives to his own land, he warns Jacob not to mistreat them (*Genesis* 31:50). Zelophehad's daughters (in *Numbers* 27.3–4 and in *Judges* 1:15) are permitted to inherit their fathers' possessions.

Daughters are used to further the good fortune or salvation of their fathers. In *Jephtha's Daughter*, Jephtha sacrifices his daughter, "because of a vow about a person whom he sees first." She first appears in *Judges* 11.34, having no name, no brothers, or sisters. The message is about a fatal mistake made because of the vow, but she is idealized because of her obedience. The daughter asks for no mercy, not even pity, only for two months to mourn her virginity (it remains unclear whether she is sacrificed in the end.) A Greek variant of the same *topos* contains the wish to sacrifice the daughter for the sake of her father or his people. Iphigenia (in Tauris), whose story was launched by Euripides, but was also developed by Goethe and Gluck, was to be sacrificed by Agamemnon for the sake of helpful winds when attacking Troy.⁶

We should not shy away from investigating incest, the darkest corner of the father-daughter relationship. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, daughters are obviously untouchable, but Leviticus further clarifies the duties of the Jewish male within the family: "The nakedness of your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, their nakedness you shall not uncover; for their nakedness is yours" (*Leviticus* 18:10), and "You should not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law; she is your son's wife, you shall cover her nakedness... (i.e. even if she offers herself). "If there is a man who lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death; they have committed incest, their bloody guilt-

⁵ Salome (flourished in the 1st century) also has a storyline in which the uncle, i.e. the surrogate father plays an important role (albeit in some sources Herod Antipas appears as her real father as in Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities*). Although referring to her by name, Josephus calls Salome alternately the daughter and the stepdaughter of the king, (in Mark 6:14–19 and Matthew 14:1–12, he is mentioned as stepfather).

⁶ If one looks at the biblical topics as literature, one may claim that Isaac and Jesus were offered to be sacrificed, each to further the cause of mankind.

ness is upon them" (*Leviticus* 18:15 and reaffirmed in 20:12). Men are warned, "Do not profane your daughter by making her a harlot, so that the land will not fall to harlotry and become full of lewdness" (*Leviticus* 19:29). Yet, it is also stated that if a man sells his daughter as a female slave, she was not to go free like the male slaves whose freedom Jews were supposed to buy (*Leviticus* 21:7) The daughter has become spoiled goods!

In the visual arts depicting father/daughter incest stories, the daughters are usually shown as the seducing party. However, as we read in *Genesis* (19: 8), one of the favorite painterly models, Lot, Abraham's nephew, is described as a man affected by the immorality of Sodom. In order to save his guests (unknown to him that they are angels, there to rescue them), he cries out to the mob: "Now behold, I have two virgin daughters, please let them bring them out to you and do to them whatever you like, only do nothing to these men inasmuch as they have come under the shelter under my roof." This is not just overdoing hospitality but also proving that Lot viewed his daughters as property. As it is written in *Numbers* (30:3–5), Lot draws God's punishment because he offered his daughters to the mob.

Christian theology, however, defends the daughters' behavior when "They lay with him only once, in order to save their family line" (New International Version) or "our father's seed" (King James Version). In both versions it is stressed that the daughters became the *progenitresses* (*Stamm Mütter*) of the Moabites and the Ammonites. In the *Midrash*, too, Lot's daughters lie with him, thinking that the entire world was going to be destroyed. "They want to save mankind."

The Jewish tradition is more critical about Lot than the Christian. He is primarily reprimanded for behaving disrespectfully toward his uncle Abraham (Lot is the son of Haram, Abraham's brother). Yet, ultimately Abraham's intervention saves him and his daughters. The rabbis portray the daughters favorably and condemn Lot for offering his daughters to the townspeople. He is punished by God through his daughters.

However, there was wine found in the cave! Who put it there? Was that too a part of a greater plan? Among the number of early explications, Rashi (Salomon de Troyes, or Salomon ben Isaac, 1040–1105) in his commentaries claims that "Wine was available to them in the cave to make it possible for two nations to emerge from them." Does this mean that this was a deliberate act of God: Another divine plan? Some prominent modern Jewish scholars contend that Lot's behavior was probably not conceived as a sin among the Israelites who traced descent through the mother, and the father had "no relation" to the children.⁷

⁷ Today, some right-wing Israeli politicians claim that according to this genealogy, the Moabites and the Ammonites did not descend from Abraham, therefore had/have no claim to the "Promised Land".

In the Quran, Lot, named Lut ibn Haran, is a prophet who was sent to Sodom and Gomorrah to preach monotheism and fight against rape and homosexuality. In some exegeses the daughters are not considered literally his daughters ("being a prophet he was the father of them all"). Events taking place in Zoar and in the cave have been rejected as false.⁸

Secular literature also offers texts in which the daughter is the victim of incest. Such is *Pericles* (1608), a romance by George Wilkins who probably was Shakespeare's collaborator when the bard was writing his own *Pericles* (first performed in 1618) in which, after the death of his wife, King Antioche has an incestuous relationship with his daughter. This information is embedded in the riddle, used to keep away her suitors: "I am no viper, yet I feed /on mother's flesh which did me breed [...]" "Bad child, worse father to entice his own", comments Shakespeare on the situation (*Prologue*, 27). As his punishment, Antioche is "consumed by a fire from Heaven." But so is his daughter.⁹

Sigismunde, daughter of Tancrede of Salère, must fight off her father's intent of incest. (In Boccaccio, she takes poison and dies). In *Tancred and Gismund* (an English Elizabethan drama, first performed in 1591) Gismund, a widow, has a clandestine affair with one of her father's courtiers. Tancred kills the lover and gives Gismund a golden cup that contains his heart. The plot has been employed by John Dryden (1631–1700) in his *Sigismunda and Guiscardo* of 1699, and by a number of playwrights.

Here I would like to introduce the notion of "the unconsummated incest." Examining the properties of Shakespearean plays, we find that in a number of them the father is unwilling to give up his daughter. Cordelia is rejected because she is not ready to choose her father above anyone else. She will not promise "to love my father all" (l.i.106). Desde-

⁸ In Jewish tradition, not just the prophet but the community could play the role of the father. In one of the decisions of Rashi (Responsa n. 247), the community penalized a young man who retracted after he betrothed a young woman. The ordinances against him were so severe that he became reconciled to his fate and married her. Rashi agreed with the community's decision, because the "groom was putting to shame a daughter of Israel." (Quoted in Irving Abraham Agus, *Urban Civilization in Pre-Crusader Europe: A Study in Organized Town-life in Northwestern Europe During the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries Based on the Responsa Literature* (Leiden: J. Brill, 1965), 521 n). Rashi had no sons. His three daughters are known to have studied the *Talmud* with their father, at a time when most Jewish women could at best read the *Bible*. In a *Responsum*, Rashi says that because of his poor eyesight, he was dictating the letter to his daughter. It is worth mentioning that in a later redaction the phrase "my daughter," was changed to "my daughter's son".

⁹ Quoted by Loretta Tallent Lenker, *Fathers and Daughters in Shakespeare and Shaw* (London: Greenwood Press, 2001), 62. *Pericles* features three sets of fathers and daughters, demonstrating the proper and the improper behavior between fathers and daughters. Thaisa chooses the knight, thus she pleases Pericles.

mona too, claims: "I am hitherto your daughter: but here is my husband..." (I.iii.182). In their fathers' mind, the transfer should remain forever incomplete. In *Othello*, Brabantio is rudely woken from his sleep with the claim that he had been "robbed" of his daughter by the Moor.¹⁰ Brabantio, indeed, complains to the duke that Desdemona has been "abused, stol'n from me and corrupted [...]" (I.iii.60).

In *The Tempest*, father and daughter live in mutual respect and harmony until, finally, Miranda meets and marries her father's choice. But they live outside of society. This "perfect relationship", so epitomized by many a researcher, is based on the daughter's complete dependence on her father. Prospero declares... "for I / Have given you here a third of my own life / Or that for which I live; who once again / I tender to thy hand" (IV.i.2–5). And we must not forget his lamenting: "I have lost my daughter" (V.i.148).

Shakespeare's works abound with fathers who claim to have "lost" their daughters. In *The Merchant of Venice*, in addition to Shylock, there is Portia's father who hides her picture in a box to save her from an unbecoming suitor. Portia is quasi-independent because of the money she had inherited, but she, too, has to undertake a test. In *Romeo and Juliet*, the father claims: "And you be mine. I'll give you to my friend" (III.v.193). Let's remember that late in life, Shakespeare lived with his second daughter, Susanna Hall and her family, and left to her most of his estate.

I am not the first to claim that everlasting connection between father and daughter: Lenker, too, contends that between father and daughter, there is "never an innocent relationship."¹¹ But we may also ask whether there are any totally innocent human relationships?

As in life, in secular literature too, challenging the father's authority is challenging the norms of society.¹² Therefore, the daughter's most obvious defiance is her refusal to marry the man chosen by her father (like Juliet, refusing to marry Paris), or the daughter not devoting herself entirely to her father (*King Lear*). A daughter's renunciation of her father's power usually leads to a tragic end.

¹⁰ Iago calls: "[...] sir, you're robb'd; for shame, put on your gown; Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul; / Even now, now, very now, / An old black ram / Is topping your white ewe. Arise, arise;" William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice*, 1.1.78–85.

¹¹ Lenker, *Fathers and Daughters*, 141.

¹² Retaining a single authority is the crucial objective, such as the woman's brother, as mentioned above. In medieval French and also in Hungarian ballads, authority can be embodied in a widowed mother, reflecting the contemporary legal situation in those countries. (For more, see Marianna D. Birnbaum, "Rights and Restrictions of Women as Recorded in the Classical Hungarian Ballad," *Hungarian Studies Review* 9, no. 1 (1982): 3–17.)

Finally, I want to discuss a special form of disobedience: leaving the faith of the father. Let me first address the best-known literary examples: *The Jew of Malta* (first performed in 1592) and *The Merchant of Venice* (written around 1596, appeared in 1600). Marlowe's drama takes place on the Isle of Malta, governed by Farnese. As the plot unfolds, Selim-Calymath, the son of the Turkish sultan arrives in order to collect the tribute to the Sultanate that the Maltese had not paid for ten years. Farnese asks for a month of reprieve. He plans to collect that large sum from the Jews of the island, by forcing each Jew to surrender half of his estate. Barabas, the richest Jew protests, whereby Farnese punishes him by confiscating his entire wealth. Barabas uses his daughter to retrieve his fortune. Abigail, by pretending to become a nun, gains entrance to the nunnery that had been formerly Barabas' house and regains her father's treasures. However, as the plot develops, Abigail decides to enter the nunnery in earnest. Barabas, furious about his daughter's conversion and fearing that she would now betray him, plots to poison Abigail and the nuns with porridge rice, delivered by his servant, Ithamore. Abigail, the last to die, confesses her sins and her father's crime to Friar Bernardine.

Marlowe uses Barabas as a literary device, to express his loathing a world ruled by money. Barabas is a usurer, a despised Jewish occupation, but the moneylenders of the Church and all the merchants are in the same league (see also Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice*). With the exception of Abigail, Marlowe has contempt for all his characters. The drama displays hypocrisy and a world in which power and exploitation rule and go around.¹³ Also, we must remember that in Barabas's mind, Abigail is no longer his daughter. According to Jewish customs, when a Jew converts, he/she becomes dead for his family and has to be mourned.

Shylock too, has been analyzed by hundreds of scholars for his being the archetype of the Jew. Be it as it may, the contemporary English theatergoer experienced a reversal: instead of the stage imitating life, he saw on the stage the Jew he was not supposed to have seen in the street ever since Edward I expelled the Jews in 1290.

To all intents and purposes, Jessica is not just a defiant daughter who marries secretly, outside her faith, but she is also of questionable morals since when eloping with Lorenzo, she takes along a large part of her father's wealth including a precious ring, a gift of her father to her mother. Also, it is worthy of remembering that "the pound of flesh" demanded by Shylock might also be viewed in the light of his plea, "I say my daughter is my flesh and blood" (2.3.28, 30).

¹³ The Turks exact money from the Christians, the Christians fleece the Jews, the nuns profit from Barabas' losing his house, the friars compete for the Jew's wealth, Ithamore cheats whoever he can, the prostitutes exploit their clients and are exploited in turn. The knights are not honorable, they trade in human lives; they are no less greedy than Barabas.

Thus, here I would like to offer a “Jewish reading” to Shylock’s claim, because it may provide an additional interpretation. In Shylock’s mind it is not enough that the Gentile suitor or his friend pay up his debts in money. Shylock demands that he pay with his flesh and blood for having robbed Shylock of his own “flesh and blood”, of his Jewish daughter. I submit that here two social norms – two different conceptions of the world – collide. In this reading, love would not be the central topic: it would be –implicitly – the “eye for an eye” tenet, taken from the difference between the Jewish (Oriental) and the Christian (Occidental) teachings of the Bible. Shylock has lost his flesh and blood, in his eyes his daughter is dead and for that Antonio should pay in kind.

Abigail converts because she truly embraces Christianity. Jessica converts for love. Yet, each conversion is Ecclesia’s victory over Synagogue.

Women’s conversion finds approval in the literature of the time. This is not limited to Jews: the Church also promoted female conversion from Islam to Christianity. Both the Roman and the Orthodox Church venerate St. Casilda of Toledo (d.1050), the daughter of the Muslim King (Almacrin or Almamun) whose feast day is on April 9. Already as a young girl, Casilda showed great love and compassion for the Christian prisoners at her father’s court and secretly fed them, hiding the bread in her garment. When stopped by a soldier who insisted that she show what she carried under her clothing, the bread miraculously turned into a bunch of roses. When Casilda became ill, she sought out the healing waters of the north and against her father’s wishes traveled to Burgos where she was baptized and lived in penance until her death.¹⁴

Saint Christine, the daughter of Urbain (her feast day is July 24) who refused to marry (at age 11) and got persecuted because of her Christian faith, was tortured by the henchmen of her “adoring” father. Her mother could not change her trust in Jesus either. She denied her parents, having one master only. Many paintings tell her, most probably, apocryphal story.

Saint Barbara (saint of the Coptic Church) lived in the 3rd century in Heliopolis, Syria (her feast day is December 4). Although brought up in a tower, away from the world, she became a secret Christian and refused to marry her father’s choice for her. Her father Dioscurus, a rich pagan, finally killed her. For his heinous deed, he was immediately struck by lightning. Her story appears in the *Legenda Aurea*. Her cult is widely spread.

¹⁴ The miracle of the roses, as is known, became a topos in hagiographic literature: We find it in the legend of Elizabeth of Hungary (1207–1231) who, defying her husband, Ludwig of Thuringia, fed the poor. Elizabeth of Portugal (Elizabeth of Aragon, 1271–1336) a great niece of Elizabeth of Hungary was also saved by the same miracle of the bread turning into roses, when she too was caught by her husband, Denis of Portugal, while secretly feeding the poor. The Church looked benignly upon defying authority (here their husbands), for the sake of leading a pious Christian life.

A piece in which a Muslim daughter defies her father, came down to us from secular literature. Cervantes, who in Algiers experienced captivity by the "inferior enemy", tells about a Muslim girl turning Christian. The "Captive's Tale" (XL–XLI in *Don Quixote*) is about a Christian Captive (Ruy Pérez de Viedma) who frees himself with the help of Zoraida, a Muslim maiden. With her money he buys a boat and arranges also for Zoraida's escape from her father's house. The father wakes up and hears the couple in the garden. They forcibly take him along, dropping him later at a deserted spot. The couple's plan is to get to Spain where the Captive's father baptizes Zoraida and the couple gets married.¹⁵

In another Renaissance drama, Philip Massinger's *Renegado* (1630), Vitelli, a Venetian nobleman falls in love with Donusa, the pious Muslim princess, niece of Amurath the Ottoman emperor. When Vitelli first sees her, he is struck by her beauty, her virtue, her power, and her father's wealth. But instead of falling for her charms and becoming a Muslim, Vitelli resists temptation, and even succeeds in converting Donusa, although her uncle orders her execution because she had committed the crime of loving a Christian. In the end all Christians successfully escape.¹⁶ Whereas Christianity was tolerated, it was a capital crime for a Muslim to turn Christian. A Christian was not permitted to marry a Muslim woman, unless he converted to Islam, whereas a Muslim man could marry a Christian woman even if she did not give up her faith.¹⁷

¹⁵ At least one scholar believes that in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), Zoraida and the Captive were the models. There, Safie retains the wealth stolen from her Muslim father and becomes a rich wife. No criticism is leveled against such behavior in either of the work. Erin Webster Garrett contends that it becomes clear from her journal that while Mary was working on *Frankenstein*, both Shelleys were reading Cervantes, and a number of changes in her manuscript appeared after she had read that particular episode. Its impact would, according to Garrett, move Shelley to change the role of Safie from a marginal to a central figure in the book. The changes were inserted into an almost ready manuscript. For more on this, see Erin Webster Garrett, "The Muslim Heroine of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*," *Cervantes: Bulletin of the Cervantes Society of America* 20, no. 1 (2000): 133–53. The Captive first sees Moorish Zoraida's "white hand" penetrating the lacings of Felix's prison, the first physical sign of her extending the cross. When Safie (in Shelley's work) arrives in the cottage and drops her veil, those present behold hair of a shining raven black, eyes dark, but gentle, and "her complexion wondrously fair". (Ibid., 149). The light skin color of the two women designates them to properly enter the Christian world!

¹⁶ Daniel J. Vitcus, ed., *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England: Selinus, A Christian Turned Turk and the Renegado* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000). In *A Christian Turned Turk*, Voada, portrays the negative characteristics of Muslim women, whereas Donusa, a modest and pious Muslim woman is redeemed by the love of Vitelli, a virtuous Christian.

¹⁷ The successful Ottoman invasion of the Balkans initiated a wave of male conversions. Christian men hoped that with their conversion to Islam they would have more opportunities open to them in the Empire. Indeed, there were many who have made spectacular careers and rose even to the rank of Grand Vizier. The sultans often chose Asian Turks for the rank and file and European converts as the leaders of the army. Christian women, however, did not convert unless they were forced to.

As we have seen, there is one instance when the disobedience of the daughter is not punished, but even encouraged: when she decides to become a Christian. For this purpose, let's turn to the New Testament to reconfirm that Jesus changed life's focus from the small biological family to the large spiritual family.

We learn that what Jesus was doing "spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee" (Mk. 1:28). After it reached his family at Nazareth, they became concerned and traveled about 50 km (30 miles) to reach him at Capernaum. The reason for their visit is given as "When His family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, 'He is out of His mind'" (Mk. 3:21).¹⁸ His mother and brothers were outside the house where he was teaching but they weren't able to get near him because of the crowd (Lk. 8:19). So, they sent a message saying they wanted to speak with Him. "... Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call Him. A crowd was sitting around Him, and they told Him, 'Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you. 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' He asked. Then He looked at those seated in a circle around Him and said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother'" (Mk. 3:31–35NIV).

In addition to the dichotomy of obedience versus defiance, the examples in the New Testament and secular examples led me to identify a third category according to which, going against the tenets of the Fifth Commandment does not always constitute deplorable conduct. *Au contraire*: in hagiographic literature as well as in examples of belles-lettres, we are to understand that abandoning or defying your father or family for the sake of Christianity is a readily accepted and approved behavior. The New Testament does not have a clear guideline regarding the Fifth Commandment. Yet, its message is clear: relationships forged by conviction are more important than blood relationships. Families are broken up because of faith, and that is acceptable, since Jesus himself rejects his "earthly family." The New Testament trumps the Jewish Bible: Jesus takes all.

¹⁸ The Greek word translates: "out of His mind" is *exeste*. When they heard about the crowds that gathered around Jesus, they thought he was insane. As the brothers didn't believe that Jesus was the Son of God (John 7:5), they may have thought he was a religious fanatic, or deluded or had a mental illness.