A page of her own: Women’s sections in late nineteenth-century American and Italian press

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, newspaper publishers in the U.S. and Europe started to feminize their content in order to appeal to women readers as well as to prospective advertisers (Golia 2016). As Golia has shown, the woman’s page in daily American newspapers underwent a dynamic evolution between 1895 and 1930 (2016: 606). Contemporaneously, albeit under different political and social conditions, a similar development took place in Italy (Franchini and Soldani 2004, Arslan 2013). This paper analyses the content, rhetorical patterns and discourse strategies in a sample of woman’s pages in English and Italian published in the last decade of the nineteenth century in the U.S. and Italy respectively. Special attention is given to advice columns that emerged in the 1890s as “unprecedented forums where readers could debate the most resonant cultural crises of the day” (Golia 2021: 2). The analytical framework in this qualitative study draws on recent research on communication in women’s magazines (Temmerman 2014), as well as advice columns on the Internet (Locher 2006, 2013).

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