

The portrayal of women in Maltese print media by two female contributors

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Dissertation presented to the Institute of Maltese Studies, University of Malta,
in part fulfilment of the requirements for the Master's degree in Maltese Studies

June 2025



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Abstract

The main objectives of this dissertation were to examine whether Carmen Carbonaro and Pauline Miceli, as two female producers of knowledge in the 1950s and the 1980s respectively, sought to challenge the norms and instigate change driven by feminist values of emancipation, or to perpetuate the status quo through their messages. Both women presented radio programmes targeted at female audiences, and both produced written content aimed at female readers. This study focuses on the latter, aiming to analyze the messages that were conveyed to women by the two writers in their respective time periods and to examine how these messages differed from each other in terms of topic and approach. This dissertation therefore explores the media's role in reinforcing gender stereotypes or critically examining them. The aims of this research were achieved through a feminist epistemology and the adoption of a mixed method approach. The results of this study manifest that both Carbonaro and Miceli redefined the perception of knowledge production in their time – from something that only men did to something that women could do too. However, while Carbonaro's writing reinforced the gender role expectations of the time, Miceli used her articles to agitate for change, defying the Church's teachings in the process. Despite this stark contrast between the two writers, and despite the fact that Pauline Miceli stands out as the obvious nonconformist in terms of content, Carmen Carbonaro was also a trailblazer in her own way.

Keywords: women writers, knowledge producers, feminism, emancipation

To my sister,
for being her feisty, unapologetic self

Acknowledgements

A word of thanks, first and foremost, to my supervisor, Prof. JosAnn Cutajar, for her incredible insight and wise guidance, and above all her infinite patience with a student who had never ventured into the world of feminist ideologies.

I am also indebted to Pauline Miceli, for allowing me to delve into a past long gone. Her calm and gentle demeanour belie the fierceness and audacity of her writings, which partly inspired this dissertation.

My gratitude extends to the lecturers and staff at the Institute of Maltese Studies, who enabled a fascinating three-year study journey culminating in this dissertation. And to my colleagues at Heritage Malta, for believing in my abilities and for spurring me on in times when balancing studies with full-time employment became particularly challenging.

I leave for last those who are most deserving of my appreciation: my sister, for her advice and encouragement along a path already well trodden by her; my son, a keen supporter unfazed by the thousands of miles separating us; and mostly my husband, for being the opposite of what Carmen Carbonaro described and the model to which Pauline Miceli drove her readers to aspire.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The advent of the Rediffusion in Malta in the beginning of the 1950s made way for the first radio programmes transmitted locally. One of these was aimed specifically at female listeners and was hosted by Carmen Carbonaro, who remained on the air waves for more than twenty years (Farrugia, 2015). This made her a household name, to such an extent that she was asked (Sant, 2016) to publish a series of booklets in Maltese, aimed at female readers, the content of which largely mirrored that of her radio programmes. They sold out in a short time and are today very rare books (Sant, 2016). Their content generally comprised advice about keeping husbands happy, child rearing, and good housekeeping (Martin, 2015). At a time when married women were legally prohibited from working outside the home (Darmanin, 1992), her content extolled women's role in the home.

During the 1970s and 80s, Pauline Miceli took over the 'woman's hour' on the radio and 'shocked' listeners by speaking about women's emancipation, financial independence, and sexuality (Abela, 2021). In the 1980s, Miceli also wrote the weekly women's column 'Mill-Orizzont tal-Mara' in a local newspaper, under the pseudonym 'Carmen', where she frequently tackled topics deemed to be controversial at the time.

As a woman and an ex-journalist involved in the media for more than twenty years, I find the stark contrast between the messages that Carbonaro and Miceli conveyed to other women via print media fascinating and deserving of exploration. My main objectives in this dissertation will be to examine whether Carbonaro and Miceli, as producers of knowledge, sought to challenge the norms and instigate change driven by feminist values of emancipation, or to perpetuate the status quo through their messages. This will be achieved through the analysis of the topics they

focused on in their printed contributions and the messages they relayed to their readers. To this end, the research questions for this study are:

- i) What kind of messages were conveyed to women by the two writers under investigation, through their publications and newspaper articles in their respective time periods?
- ii) In what ways did these messages differ from each other in terms of topics and approach?

My investigation of these questions will be informed by feminist perspectives on women as producers of knowledge. Feminist theory emphasizes that knowledge is contextual, embodied, and situated. Women's lived experiences – shaped by their gender, class, race, time and space – produce unique insights that have been overlooked in dominant academic and scientific discourses (McCann and Kim, 2017). Both Carbonaro and Miceli produced content by women, about women, and for women. Their writing depended on their own lived experiences. Through their writing, Carbonaro and Miceli gave women credibility as knowers. This dissertation is also about legitimizing non-traditional and non-academic ways of knowing since the content which will be analysed was not academic or literary in nature.

A feminist epistemology and a mixed method approach will be adopted in conducting research for this dissertation. These mixed methods will consist of a semi-structured interview with Pauline Miceli, the only writer of the two being studied still alive at the time of the research; a qualitative analysis of the content which was produced by Carmen Carbonaro in the 1950s and by Pauline Miceli in the 1980s; and a qualitative analysis of the content of the pastoral letters issued by the Maltese bishops from the early 1950s till the early 1990s that mentioned issues related to women.

The organisation of this dissertation will continue as follows: a subsection of this introduction will be devoted to setting the background and context; a second chapter will comprise a literature review; a third chapter will explain the research methodology chosen to conduct this study; a fourth chapter will present the findings obtained and discuss them. The concluding chapter will focus on the implications of my findings, scope for further research, and the limitations of my study.

Background and context

When analysing the writings of Carmen Carbonaro and Pauline Miceli, it is crucial to keep in mind the local social context of the respective periods they were writing in, namely the 1950s and the 1980s. Carbonaro, born in 1905 and an active member of the Catholic Action Movement (Farrugia, 2015), was writing at a time when primary compulsory education for all had only been introduced just a few years earlier, women's participation in the labour force was still very low, and the Catholic Church in Malta was highly influential (Camilleri, 1997). Miceli, on the other hand, was writing in the wake of the global North's second wave of feminism, at a time when Maltese women had greater access to tertiary education and female participation rates in gainful occupation in the formal economy were substantially higher (Camilleri, 1997).

Cutajar et al. (2023) state that education plays a crucial role in challenging gender stereotypes, as individuals with higher education levels are generally more likely to adopt progressive views on gender roles. Cassar et al. (2022) say that even after school attendance in Malta was made compulsory, parents still tended to keep their daughters at home to help with household chores and farmstead tasks. Sammut (2017, p. 9) concurs that women's education in

Malta in the first half of the 20th century “was not given much importance outside restricted elite circles and even here its breadth and scope were limited.”

The fact that Carbonaro and Miceli wrote articles – albeit in booklets and newspapers – demonstrates that they were lucky enough to have received an education. It also means that they were producing ‘knowledge’ when other women were still learning how to write. Both showed proficiency in a traditionally masculine domain. Carbonaro’s era, in particular, was one where Maltese published writers were predominantly male – except for a negligible number that included women like poetess Mary Meylak and storywriters Ondina Tayar and Mary Caruana (Sharples, 2018) – yet Carbonaro managed to have her work published.

According to Cassar et al. (2002), in Malta the female school attendance rate increased after 1956, when primary and secondary schools became free of charge. Camilleri (1997) states that primary education was made compulsory for all in 1946, while secondary education became obligatory in 1970. Vocational schools at secondary school level were established in 1972, and the school leaving age was raised to sixteen in 1974.

Furthermore, according to Mayo (2012), access to tertiary education was boosted by the student-worker scheme announced in November 1977, whereby university students alternated five and a half months of work with five and a half months of study and received a basic wage throughout the year, paid monthly during both work and study phases and even in the remaining one month of vacation. This system, states Mayo (2012), helped to increase the number of students from families of a low socio-economic status, who were thus able to access tertiary education without being a financial burden on their parents.

Collectively, these reforms in the local education system in the second half of the 20th century improved female school attendance rates, especially at tertiary level. While in 1960 there were only 19 female students attending tertiary level education at the Royal University of Malta, the number rose to 109 in 1965 and increased to 165 in 1970, writes Camilleri (1997). Darmanin (1992) states that the numbers of female university graduates rose steadily from the 29 referred to in 1964, to 641 (38% of all students) in 1988.

Cassar et al. (2002) concur that the pupil-worker and student-worker schemes introduced from the 1970s onwards facilitated girls' access to post-secondary and tertiary education. Moreover, the revocation, in the 1980s, of the 1948 law which had decreed that women employed within the Public Service had to resign from their job upon marriage, enabled married women to take up employment, add Cassar et al. (2002). Carbonaro and Miceli, although married, managed to work – on the rediffusion or radio and as authors of booklets or newspaper articles.

The power of the Roman Catholic Church in Maltese society should also be taken into consideration. Camilleri (1997) states that in the 1950s, the Catholic Church in Malta regularly voiced its concern about the 'negative effects' of offering both males and females similar educational opportunities. According to Camilleri (1997), the Church deemed these educational opportunities to be 'unnatural', since men and women were destined to play different roles in life and hence fulfil separate obligations.

Sammut (2017) reiterates that the Church in Malta considered women's liberation to be part of a strategy to secularize the islands and linked it with the erosion of traditional family values. It was therefore natural for the Church to also strongly oppose women's participation in

the labour market. As Camilleri (1997) states, the Church, which in the 1950s was still greatly influential in Maltese society, preached that a woman's place was at home:

Married women, and mothers in particular, were strongly warned of the perils looming outside in the labour market. It was constantly emphasized that paid employment away from home went against God's law. Such economic activity would hamper their duties as wives and mothers, and generally compel them to live in sin. (Camilleri, 1997, p. 12)

Darmanin (1992) states that in the 1950s, the dominant patriarchal ideology promoted by the Church in Malta was further strengthened by the dire economic conditions left in the wake of World War II. At the time, according to Darmanin, the problem of unemployment in Malta was so extensive that mass emigration was promoted by the British who ruled over Malta until 1964. In this situation, "the entry of women to the workforce was considered a threat that could legitimately be feared" (Darmanin, 1992, p. 108). Legislation that restricted women's participation in the labour force was therefore enacted. Women could not fill a post previously occupied by a man, and women were paid much less than men for the same work. These and others, according to Darmanin (1992), were strategies which ensured that Maltese women had very limited access to the labour market and which served the interests of a patriarchal Maltese society.

In the course of my own research at the Malta Diocesan Archive, I read several pastoral letters issued by Malta's bishops from the beginning of the 1950s till the start of the 1990s. The predominant message concerning women remained largely unchanged across this considerable timespan, namely that women shouldn't venture outside the home to earn a living, in order to safeguard family unity. For instance, a pastoral letter issued on the 25th of January 1970 (no. 359) warns about an increase in separations among married couples and lists some mothers' "habit" of

working outside the home as one of the causes, along with gambling and drinking alcohol during parties lasting all night long. In another pastoral letter, issued on 10th August 1991, the bishops declare (p. 3) that a woman has her own proper vocation, and any idea or vision contrary to this vocation is a false notion of feminism. They praise the “large number of women” who have not let themselves be “enticed by the tendency which is increasing among us to go out and work”, and declare that such a mentality is a danger both to the married couple and the education of their offspring (p. 4). “A woman, like a man, has the right to work, but a woman must take care that her absence from home should not cause damage to the family’s unity or the education of her children”, the bishops state in their letter (p. 5).

Camilleri (1997) quotes a 1956 memorandum, drawn up by the Social Action Movement (a Catholic lay association) on the topic of women’s participation in the labour force and their role in society as saying that married women should avoid all kinds of employment: “The consequences of the employment of married women on married life may be generally classified as adverse effects, such as the refusal to bear children or neglect the children’s education” (Camilleri, 1997, p. 13).

The 1956 memorandum, says Camilleri (1997), reflects the prevalent social norms in Malta and the government’s policy at the time. According to Camilleri (1997), census data indicates that in 1957 female participation rates in the labour market were only marginally higher than those in 1948 and still well under the potential female labour force. In 1957 there were 18,961 female workers, or 20 per cent of the total number of people in gainful employment – just 2,317 more than in 1948. Camilleri (1997) points out that one must also keep in mind the heavy male emigration of the mid-1950s, and that the women in paid employment in 1957 largely consisted of young, unmarried women. According to Camilleri (1997), the highest levels of

women in the workforce in Malta were reached in the late seventies, at 26 per cent of the total labour supply, remaining roughly equivalent to one fourth of the total labour supply in the next 20 years.

It is in this respective social milieu that the writings of Carmen Carbonaro and Pauline Miceli will be analysed in this dissertation. In the next chapter I shall be presenting an overview of existing literature pertaining to my area of research, in order to establish the theoretical roots of this study and lay the foundation for my findings.

Chapter 2: Literature review

In this chapter I shall be presenting an overview of literature related to women as producers of knowledge; theoretical background related to this topic, particularly with regard to the writings of Michel Foucault about knowledge and power; and the portrayal of women in the second half of the 20th century, spanning the period in which Carmen Carbonaro and Pauline Miceli were producing knowledge in local print media.

Women's exclusion as producers of knowledge

According to Carotenuto et al. (2014, p. 5), women were excluded for a very long time from public and academic life, and this is why feminists are highly sensitized to “the production of knowledge/power, to strategies of empowerment and exclusion, as well as to ways of connecting pedagogy, activism, artistic practices, and nonformal education.” This exclusion deprived the world of a wealth of wisdom, since “women’s knowledge is an important resource not only for studying the dynamics of transnational processes but also for understanding neoliberal practices of discriminations, seclusions, dislocations, and the overall deterioration of social citizenship rights of vulnerable social groups” (Carotenuto et al., 2014, p. 5).

Pilcher and Whelehan (2004) state that most societies, both past and present, exhibit androcentric traits, as their cultural norms, systems of knowledge, and institutions are shaped by and perpetuate male dominance and authority. The consequences of this male standpoint, according to Pilcher and Whelehan (2004, pp. 1-2) are that “findings from men-only research studies have been generalized to women, and that areas of enquiry have focused on issues

important to men's interests and experiences, while those important to women have been overlooked.”

Women's absence as knowledge producers is reiterated by Harp et al. (2014, p. 290) who claim that historically women were discouraged from expressing their opinions and from participating in public discourse because any display of knowledge on their part “indicated unladylike qualities, such as aggression and conceit”. Consequently, for centuries, women “played a role as objects of study rather than as reflective subjects concerned with knowledge creation” (Tancred-Sheriff, 1985, p. 111).

British novelist Mary Anne Evans, for example, chose to publish her works under the male pseudonym ‘George Eliot’ in the mid-19th century. This, according to Barrett (2012), ensured that her novels were taken seriously and was a means to escape the expectation that women's writing should be limited to lighthearted romances. In the 16th century, St Teresa of Avila wrote several theological works, including an autobiography which, according to Wojciechowski (2022), the Inquisition tried to keep from the public but which eventually was widely read and became a classic for those who follow the Catholic faith. Long before both Eliot and St Teresa, in the late 7th and early 6th century BC, Sappho was a prolific poetess who, according to Hallett (1979), wrote about private passions. Hallett (1979) states that the ancient Greeks were unaccustomed to witnessing such exceptional lyrical talent in a woman, to the extent that they did not rank her alongside the foremost male poets of the era, but rather honoured her as the tenth Muse among the female Greek deities of inspiration.

Knowledge creation was therefore predominantly a male domain for several centuries, both in Malta and abroad. Tuchman (2000, p. 151) notes that prior to the rise of the modern

women's movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, disciplines such as psychology, sociology, economics, and history were predominantly produced "by men, about men, and for men".

This situation was far from ideal. As Brooks (2007, p. 56) states, according to some feminist standpoint scholars, women's marginalized position in society offers them a unique and often advantageous perspective for producing knowledge and they are therefore more capable of producing "an accurate, comprehensive and objective interpretation of social reality than men are." Brooks (2007, p. 67) argues that the reason for this is that while men, as members of the ruling class, "are satisfied with the status quo and have no cause to question the prevailing interpretation of reality, [...] women, as members of an oppressed group, have no cause or motivation to misconstrue reality."

This view is reiterated by Hartsock (2017), who argues that knowledge generated from the viewpoint of dominant groups often presents a skewed or distorted version of reality:

On the surface, the dominant group's description of the way the world works appears to be sensible and true. It takes concerted effort to get below the surface reality because it requires one to think 'against the grain' of dominant culture. Subordinated group members caught in the contradictions between the rules of the dominant culture and the realities of human need are in a unique position to develop knowledge from the perspective of underlying domination. (Hartsock, 2017, p. 354)

According to Tancred-Sheriff (1985), knowledge produced by men about women's experiences do not accurately reflect women's lived experience. Moreover, knowledge which is mainly created by one gender is limited in applicability and scope. The author argues that women who remain on the periphery of knowledge production are only able to affect marginally the

creation that is taking place: “It is not only the ability to participate in the creation of knowledge, but also the power to define the significance of the knowledge created that is at issue” (Tancred-Sheriff, 1985, p. 108).

Kafer and Perez (2024) state that women have long played a role in the social processes of knowledge creation – both as contributors and as active producers of knowledge – yet historical accounts of intellectual activity have typically emphasized the achievements of men. Women also faced greater difficulty when trying to gain publicity for the knowledge they produced. Kafer and Perez (2024) argue that it was only in recent decades that this began to change and women’s practices of knowledge production started to receive more attention.

While women’s knowledge – especially practical knowledge dedicated to everyday situations – was perceived as necessary, valuable, and commendable, it mostly circulated in contained networks marked by interfamilial, local, and domestic dynamics. When women’s intellectual work reached a wider audience via print, it usually depended on a combination of their status, connections, and how well their ideas fit into expected norms and scholarly traditions. Women’s publications raised conflicting reactions, from negative stereotypes of ‘public women’ to praise and exemplarity. Women were commended for their self-effacement, and their avoidance of public attention was often praised. Having their knowledge recognized and respected depended on women carefully navigating the complex rules of decorum of their social environments. (Kafer & Perez, 2024, p. 3)

According to McCann and Kim (2017), several feminist theorists have opined that women’s identity as a distinct and specific social group starts with their ‘lived experiences’ as women. A critical exploration of these ‘lived experiences’ laid the foundation for a field of

knowledge that centers on understanding women's lives from their own perspectives – interpreting their experiences from within rather than through an external lens.

Subsequent to this, claims that women share a common experience were strongly opposed. As McCann and Kim (2017) state, women who stood outside dominant feminist circles argued that the vast differences in social positions and cultural contexts among women made it impossible to speak of a single, shared female experience. They further contended that power hierarchies intersecting with gender allowed the perspectives of white, middle-class, heterosexual women in urban centres to overshadow and define the broader feminist discourse.

Krijnen (2017) quotes Sandra Harding, one of the key figures in feminist standpoint theory, as stating that all knowledge is rooted in human experience, and the unique lived realities of particular groups produce insights and understandings that are inaccessible to those outside those groups. Since marginalized groups have a strong incentive to understand how power operates, their perspectives tend to produce more objective insights than those of dominant groups. As such, these standpoints should serve as the foundation for generating truly objective knowledge in research.

According to Krijnen (2017, p. 3), postmodern feminists disagree with this opinion, stating that “situating all attempts to know as valid runs the risk of epistemological relativism, in which every viewpoint is treated equally but none is ‘true.’” Inspired by Michel Foucault's thoughts on knowledge and power, feminist postmodernists argue that “research should pay particular attention to the discursive and social processes that attribute the status of truth to particular forms of knowledge” (Krijnen, 2017, pp. 3-4).

Foucault's thoughts on knowledge and power

Leavy (2007) describes Foucault as having largely influenced feminist thought and having radically changed the way many scholars consider the concept of power by theorizing that power and knowledge are very closely associated. According to Ritzer (2008, p. 607), in Foucault's point of view, knowledge and power are inextricably intertwined through genealogy, which is "a way of analyzing multiple, open-ended, heterogeneous trajectories of discourses, practices, and events, and of establishing their patterned relationships, without recourse to regimes of truth that claim pseudo-naturalistic laws of global necessities." Ritzer (2008) says that in his genealogy of power, Foucault explores how individuals govern both themselves and others through the creation of knowledge. He highlights how knowledge produces power by shaping individuals into subjects and then regulating those subjects through that very knowledge. "Foucault is interested in techniques, the technologies that are derived from knowledge (especially scientific knowledge), and how they are used by various institutions to exert power over people" (Ritzer, 2008, p. 610).

Read (2024) states that in Foucault's view, there is no objective 'truth'; instead, at any given moment or place, multiple discourses about what is considered 'true' are in circulation. Some of these discourses hold greater power to shape people's understanding of truth, and the most dominant and widely accepted among them form what Foucault refers to as 'regimes of truth'. According to Read:

There are, and will always be, a multiplicity of discourses – some more powerful than others – concerning who can act as knowledge producers and what are legitimate conditions and techniques for producing and disseminating knowledge. Foucault's theorisation emphasises that alternative knowledges – including marginalised, or in

Foucault's terms, 'subjugated' knowledges, also have certain degrees of power in certain contexts, and can therefore potentially challenge and change those discourses that are currently dominant. (Read, 2024, p. 2)

Ramazanoglu (1997) notes that since Foucault defines power as being constituted through discourses, his concept of power contrasts sharply with that of many feminist theories. She says that while feminists often view male power as repressive and unjust, Foucault redefined power as fundamentally productive – shaping knowledge rather than simply enforcing repression. This perspective, says Ramazanoglu (1997), presents significant challenges for feminist analyses of women's subordination under patriarchal systems.

Phelan (1990) states that for centuries, women have been expected to prove their worthiness for inclusion in the adult population by demonstrating proficiency in traditionally 'masculine' domains – yet they have simultaneously been barred from the very institutions where such skills are cultivated. According to Phelan, this exclusion has led feminists to challenge the legitimacy of these standards and to assert that women possess unique forms of knowledge and capability that men do not. These distinct competences, feminists argue, can form the basis for human communities that surpass those rooted in masculine norms and perspectives. According to Phelan, this is an example of what Foucault labelled as "the insurrection of subjugated knowledges".

Foucault would argue that the adoption of these subjugated knowledges of the claims and criteria of the dominant knowledge amounts to self-destruction rather than liberation. In claiming superiority and special knowledge, such simple feminism in fact reverses the claims of masculine culture without questioning the hierarchical opposition of men and women. A truly new, nonhegemonic discourse must speak its truth without simply

reversing the valuations of its opponent. The difficulty with conceptualizing this shift accounts for much of the hostility evoked by Foucault's work. (Phelan, 1990, p. 433)

Hesse-Biber (2012) states that it is the mission of feminist scholars to conduct research that advocates for women as a marginalized group, with the aim of revealing subjugated knowledge and promoting social transformation and justice. Hesse-Biber (2012, p. 2) describes subjugated knowledge as being "oppressed groups' voices and ways of thinking that have been devalued by dominant, patriarchal, forms of knowledge."

Women's subjugated knowledge in print media

Figueira-McDonough et al. (2001) state that the term 'subjugated knowledge' refers to knowledge that is dismissed, overlooked, or regarded as insignificant by those who hold the power to define what counts as legitimate or 'acceptable' knowledge. Women's opinions in print media could therefore be described as having been considered as subjugated knowledge. In her famous essay 'The Symbolic Annihilation of Women by the Mass Media', first published in 1978, Gaye Tuchman states that historically, newspapers have aimed to draw in female readers by designating them as a distinct audience, often addressing them through separate women's pages. This treatment, according to Tuchman (2000), reflects a longstanding view in journalism that women's concerns differ from men's and are not considered genuine news. Moreover, says Tuchman (2000), this approach symbolically erases women by overlooking their professional achievements and by reducing their representation to domestic roles, thereby marginalizing their broader societal presence.

Women's pages published in newspapers and magazines have, nonetheless, provided an outlet for women to voice their thoughts and act as knowledge producers. The media has therefore acted as an influential tool in the hands of female columnists, since "the media text is a form of power" (Cutajar, 1998, p. 126). Women's opinions in print media in the 20th century were crucial because, according to Carter (2012, Chapter 22), the media failed to accurately portray the social and economic shifts occurring in women's lives throughout the century. Its symbolic depictions of women did not align with their lived realities, and therefore it may be assumed that the media may have contributed to constraining women's opportunities and potential, says Carter (2012, Chapter 22).

According to Vallina (2023), any division of media content along gender lines inherently reflects sexism, and dedicating a section of a newspaper specifically to news for or about women highlights the stark divide between what is perceived as male and female domains. Vallina (2023) argues that while news aimed at men – or simply referred to as 'the news' – covers politics, economics, and major global affairs, the existence of women's sections reveals that newspaper publishers held, or still hold, a narrow and often simplistic understanding of women's interests. Nevertheless, although these sections frequently mirrored the traditional gender roles of their era, they represented a significant step toward the inclusion of more women-focused content in the media landscape (Vallina, 2023).

According to Thornham (2007, p. 23), female representation has been a main concern of feminist media criticism since the 1960s, when Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1965) examined how post-war American media – particularly women's magazines and advertisements – shaped the dominant ideal of femininity. These portrayals became early subjects of feminist critique and activism, where much of the concern centered on how such media representations

promoted harmful stereotypes that distorted women's self-image and restricted their roles in society.

Betty Friedan (1963, p. 29) states that from the end of the 1940s and throughout the 50s, the American woman's occupation was portrayed as being that of a housewife. This, according to Friedan, was reflected in the pages of women's magazines of the time, which published articles with such titles as 'Have Babies While You're Young', 'Should I Stop Work When We Marry?', 'Are You Training Your Daughter to be a Wife?', 'Careers at Home', and 'Do Women Have to Talk so Much?'

Friedan (1963, p. 29) goes on to say that by the end of 1949, only one out of three heroines in women's magazines was a career woman, "and she was shown in the act of renouncing her career and discovering that what she really wanted to be was a housewife." Friedan (1963) says that in 1958 and again in 1959, she read several issues of the three major American women's magazines without finding a single heroine who had a career or who was committed to any mission other than that of being a housewife.

Cutajar (1998, p. 112) argues that media texts, whether televised or printed in books and magazines, play a role in setting the parameters within which gender subjectivities can be built. Cutajar (1998, p. 114) also states that, according to Marxist feminist cultural theorists, ideology shapes content and that the ideology of femininity determines which topics are supposed to be of interest to women.

Braden (2009) writes that women columnists traditionally tackled topics related to homemaking and family concerns. Later, as the women's liberation movement gained strength, "women's sections were transformed, and traditional limitations on women's writing began to

dissolve” (Braden, 2009, p. vii). Women began contributing writings on politics, government, finance, and global affairs, in addition to covering family and personal topics. Some female columnists pushed the limits of traditional formats by blending personal experiences with political commentary. As Braden (2009) notes, these writers varied greatly in their backgrounds, voices, styles, and areas of focus. By the 1970s, says the author, women’s columns addressing traditional housekeeping topics had become a thing of the past. “Society was changing, and so were many women’s lives, as more began combining careers with raising families” (Braden, 2009, p. 8).

Krijnen (2017, p. 1) states that the second feminist wave, which started in the 1960s in the United States and spread across Europe in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, increased interest in the media and its relation to gender. On one hand, the media’s role in reinforcing gender stereotypes and upholding patriarchal norms came under scrutiny. On the other, feminist scholars began to critically examine the nature and foundations of academic knowledge itself.:

The androcentric character of Western understandings of knowledge was criticized, resulting in three feminist epistemologies: feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint theory, and feminist postmodernism. These three traditions share one important view that Western understandings of knowledge are androcentric and prioritize rationality. However, their ideas on how to change the androcentric character of knowledge and how to come to alternative conceptions of knowledge differ tremendously. Androcentric epistemologies emphasize a strict separation of fact and value, hence prioritizing rationality over the realm of emotions, to which values belong. Feminist epistemologies start from a reverse observation, namely that academic knowledge is saturated with male values (androcentrism) that masquerade as objective truths. (Krijnen, 2017, p. 1)

Carter (2012) asserts that media representations of women have reinforced their subordinate position in society, restricting both their participation in broader democratic discourse and their personal opportunities. She emphasizes that depictions portraying women as less capable than men – intellectually or physically – or that prioritize their appearance, sexuality or domestic roles, serve to hinder their individual advancement.

According to Carter (2012), from the 1980s onwards, theoretical developments prompted a shift away from the transmission model of media, which viewed messages as simply delivering stereotypical or ideological notions of femininity. Instead, new theories “provided feminist communication scholars with a conceptual framework that would allow them to go beyond calls for the media to reflect more realistic images of women [...] to embrace a position that argued that the media play an important role in *constructing* reality” (Carter, 2012, Chapter 22, par. 22).

Tuchman (2000) poses a number of questions about the portrayal of women in the media, such as: What message does this representation convey about gendered expectations regarding behaviour? Does it restrict how women perceive themselves and their life possibilities? What types of lifestyles does the media present as being the most desirable for women? These are the same questions that I shall seek to answer in this dissertation, with reference to the writings of Carmen Carbonaro and Pauline Miceli, guided by this theoretical background.

In this chapter I have sought to lay the groundwork for the theoretical concepts and existing literature that will be useful in the analysis of my findings. In the next chapter I shall describe the methodology entailed in gathering the data for my findings.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter I shall discuss the research design, the methods as well as the sampling process used in the collection and analysis of the data pertaining to my research, providing a rationale for the suitability of my approach in answering the research questions guiding this study, namely:

- i) What kind of messages were conveyed to women by the two writers under investigation, through their publications and newspaper articles in their respective time periods?
- ii) In what ways did these messages differ from each other in terms of topics and approach?

This chapter will also explain my positionality, identify the potential limitations of this study, discuss the verifiability and dependability of the study, and examine the ethical considerations involved.

A feminist epistemology

For the purpose of this research, a feminist epistemology was adopted since the focus of my research were two female writers, namely Carmen Carbonaro and Pauline Miceli, and the messages they conveyed to other women and society in general through the knowledge they produced in print media. According to Anderson (2024, par. 1), feminist epistemology explores how gender shapes our understanding of knowledge, the identity of those who produce it, and the methods used for investigation and validation. More precisely, this epistemology “identifies how

dominant conceptions and practices of knowledge attribution, acquisition, and justification disadvantage women [...] and strives to reform them.”

Kumar (2014, p. 160) states that feminist research departs from traditional approaches in three key ways: it centers on women’s experiences and perspectives; it seeks to minimize power imbalances between the researcher and participants; and it aims to challenge and transform gender-based social inequalities. In fact, Kumar (2014, p. 160) argues that feminine research may be classified as action research in the field of gender inequality, “using research techniques to create awareness of women’s issues and concerns, and to foster action promoting equality between sexes.”

Anderson (2024, par. 1) says that the importance of a feminist epistemology stems from the fact that dominant knowledge practices place women in a disadvantage by “excluding them from inquiry, denying them epistemic authority, and denigrating ‘feminine’ cognitive styles.” Furthermore, according to Anderson (2024, par. 1) women are disadvantaged because these dominant knowledge practices produce theories that represent women as inferior “or significant only in the ways they serve male interests”, as well as theories that render women’s activities and interests invisible. Dominant knowledge practices also produce knowledge that “reinforces gender and other social hierarchies”, states Anderson (2024, par. 1).

As producers of knowledge, the two female writers whose work will be analysed were vastly different in the messages they conveyed. Carmen Carbonaro disseminated texts that did not question or challenge the patriarchal nature of Maltese society at the time. Pauline Miceli, on the other hand, used her positionality as a woman writing for and about women, to undermine the prevalent discourse about women and question what was taken for granted. This will be demonstrated in detail in the following chapter.

Although feminist epistemology has been criticized for censoring “truths inconvenient to a feminist perspective” (Anderson, 2024, par. 95) and for promoting false views simply because they support the feminist cause (Anderson, 2024, par. 95), defenders of feminist epistemology argue that this criticism constitutes “gross misreadings of the feminist research programme” (Anderson, 2024, par. 96). Moreover, they affirm that “feminists do not reject objectivity and science but rather seek to improve it by correcting sexist and androcentric biases in scientific inquiry, and by promoting criticism of research from all points of view” (Anderson, 2024, par. 96).

In this respect, Pauline Miceli stands out as a feminist writer who produced knowledge which resisted the prevalent discourse. Some of the issues she wrote about were previously aired on the radio, and the backlash she received from some of her listeners pushed her to use a pseudonym later, when writing her weekly page in a local newspaper. On the contrary, Carmen Carbonaro seems to have internalized the prevalent misogynistic discourse of her time and produced knowledge that helped replicate the prevalent views about women.

A mixed method approach

A mixed method approach was adopted in conducting this research. These mixed methods consisted of a semi-structured interview conducted with Pauline Miceli, the only writer of the two being studied who was still alive at the time of the research; a qualitative analysis of the content which was produced by Carmen Carbonaro in the 1950s and by Pauline Miceli in the 1980s; and a qualitative analysis of the content of the pastoral letters issued by the Maltese bishops from the early 1950s till the early 1990s that mentioned issues related to women. The

latter were analyzed since their content epitomized the prevalent discourse regarding women in Malta, a discourse which had and still has an impact on some of the policies and laws enacted and implemented in Malta, although to a lesser extent than in the past (Montebollo, 2009).

According to Kumar (2014, p. 19), using a mixed methods approach strengthens the reliability and depth of a study's conclusions by allowing the researcher to gain a more comprehensive understanding and validate results. This approach may involve a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, or multiple techniques within a single research paradigm, states Kumar (2014). Since my research methods are all qualitative in nature, this study falls in the latter category described by Kumar (2014).

Kumar (2014) says that while many scholars define mixed-method studies as those that combine both qualitative and quantitative approaches, others argue that an approach can still be considered mixed even if it utilizes methods from just one paradigm. The latter writers, according to Kumar (2014, p. 20), "suggest that those studies that even use two different quantitative or qualitative methods can be said to be using a mixed method approach."

I found this approach to be most suited for my research. As Kumar (2014, p. 28) underlines, the key benefits of a mixed-method approach include expanding research opportunities, offering greater flexibility, and enriching data by allowing the collection of supplementary evidence that can either support or challenge the researcher's conclusions.

The data collection process

Data for the purpose of this research was collected via four sources across a time span of 18 months:

- i) In July 2023, I visited the library of the National Ethnography Museum in Birgu, which houses books written by Carmen Carbonaro in the 1950s. These books consist of tips and advice for women to be good wives and housekeepers. I opted for this library since I work with Heritage Malta, and therefore access to this library was more convenient for me. I scrutinized and wrote notes about the articles found in four of Carbonaro's books published in the 1950s, which I deemed to be a good representation considering the fact that Pauline Miceli did not write whole books but single weekly articles in a newspaper. In all, there were 36 articles written by Carbonaro, a sample of which may be viewed in Appendix 1 of this dissertation.
- ii) In August 2024, I visited the library of Union Press in Valletta, which houses all past editions of the daily Maltese newspaper "l-orizzont". I analyzed and wrote notes about all the weekly articles written by Pauline Miceli and published in this newspaper as the "women's page" from 1982 till 1985. There were 32 articles in all, a sample of which may be viewed in Appendix 2 of this dissertation.
- iii) In August 2024 I also visited the Malta Diocesan Archive at the Curia in Floriana, where I analyzed and wrote notes about all the pastoral letters issued by the Maltese bishops from the early 1950s till the early 1990s that mentioned issues related to women. Although these were not strictly related to my study of the topics tackled by Carbonaro and Miceli, they helped me understand the respective socio-religious context at the time.
- iv) On Tuesday 7th January 2025 I conducted a semi-structured interview with Pauline Miceli at her home, in order to elaborate on some of the themes explored

in her writings. The questions that were prepared beforehand are listed in Appendix 3 of this dissertation but since this was a semi-structured interview, the questions were not always asked in the order listed and the conversation flowed freely depending on Miceli's answers. A small part of the transcribed interview, conducted in Maltese, is reproduced in Appendix 4.

The semi-structured interview as a tool for data collection

According to Bryman (2008, p. 196), the semi-structured interview is a term that covers a wide range of instances and "typically refers to a context in which the interviewer has a series of questions that are in the general form of an interview schedule but is able to vary the sequence of questions." Bryman (2008) also notes that in this type of interview, the interviewer can ask further questions in response to the interviewee's replies.

Furthermore, according to Bryman (2008), semi-structured interviewing has emerged as a widely used data collection method within feminist research, in part because it helps achieve many of the core objectives of feminist inquiry. Bryman (2008) states that this does not mean that semi-structured interviewing is more in tune with feminist values, but rather that it is preferred because it is usually less invasive. Bryman (2008) adds that in feminist research, unstructured or semi-structured interviews are often preferred over structured ones because they foster a stronger rapport between the interviewer and interviewee, encourage reciprocity from the interviewer, highlight the perspectives of the women being interviewed, and promote a non-hierarchical dynamic.

The semi-structured interview was therefore deemed to be most suited for asking Pauline Miceli about her weekly women's page in the 1980s.

Content analysis

According to Bryman (2008, p. 275), content analysis is “an approach to the analysis of documents and texts that seeks to quantify content in terms of predetermined categories and in a systematic and replicable manner.” Bryman (2008, p. 275) also states that “the main use of content analysis has been in the examination of printed texts and documents and of mass media items in particular.”

Bryman (2008, pp. 288-289) lists several advantages linked with content analysis, including transparency and objectivity. It also allows researchers to conduct longitudinal analysis of texts with ease, “for instance an analysis of women’s magazines over two different time periods” (Bryman, 2008, pp. 288-289). This method was therefore deemed to be optimal for the research in question, which aims to analyse the writings of two women in two different eras. According to Bryman (2008, p. 275) content analysis “can be usefully contrasted with two other approaches to the analysis of the content of communication: Semiotics and Ethnographic Content Analysis.” For the purposes of this research, I will be opting for the latter.

Ethnographic content analysis

Ho and Limpaecher (2024, par. 1) describe ethnographic content analysis as being “a qualitative research method that blends the in-depth, contextual insights of ethnography with the systematic approach of content analysis.” According to Ho and Limpaecher (2024), ethnographic content analysis examines not only the content of what is said, but also the manner in which it is expressed, the reasons behind it, and the cultural or social context in which it takes place. It

therefore “fills in the gaps with cultural understanding and context, reading between the lines of the data” (Ho and Limpaecher, 2024, par. 5).

Ho and Limpaecher (2024) state that ethnographic content analysis is unique in that it examines the elements involved in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data from an ethnographic perspective, while also taking into account the wider cultural and social context. According to Ho and Limpaecher (2024), when analysing media and document content, ethnographic content analysis seeks to explore how meanings are conveyed through these formats. Therefore, ethnographic content analysis provides “a comprehensive understanding that includes both the explicit content and its implicit cultural and social meanings” (Ho and Limpaecher, 2024, par. 20-23). The advantages of ethnographic content analysis, according to Ho and Limpaecher (2024, par. 26), include that it offers a deeper understanding of data by moving past superficial analysis to reveal the underlying meanings within communication, making this method versatile for various types of data and research questions.

Bryman (2008) goes a step further and asks if there can be a feminist ethnography. Bryman (2008) quotes Reinharz (1992) as saying that feminist ethnography holds great importance in feminist research as it chronicles women’s lives and actions that were once regarded as secondary to those of men. It challenges the tendency to downplay women’s activities and perspectives or to view them through a male lens, while also placing women within their specific context. Bryman (2008) states that similarly, Skeggs (2001) observes that many feminist researchers consider ethnography to be highly aligned with the objectives of feminism.

Having taken all this into consideration, I used ethnographic content analysis as one of the tools of my research methods, applying it to analyse the writings of Carmen Carbonaro and Pauline Miceli. This research method enabled me to find out which themes and words occur

repeatedly in the writings of both Carbonaro and Miceli. The objective of this ethnographic content analysis was to enable me to understand the manifest and latent meanings found in these texts within the context of the social values and norms which prevailed in the respective periods. Ho and Limpaecher (2022) state that in manifest content analysis, context is understood from the explicit and literal meaning of words, whereas in latent content analysis, a more interpretive approach is used to uncover the deeper significance of the words or phrases being examined.

A thematic analysis

A thematic method of analysis was deemed to be the most suitable approach to analyze all the data gathered in this research. According to Bryman (2008, p. 700), “thematic analysis is a term used in connection with the analysis of qualitative data to refer to the extraction of key themes in one’s data.” Bryman (2008) also states that when searching for themes, Ryan and Bernard (2003) suggest identifying recurring topics and examining texts by considering how they are alike or differ from one another.

In the thematic analysis of the data collected for this research I followed the steps recommended by Naeem et al. (2023). This method “enhances the consistency and replicability of the findings, [...] enables clear connections between the data, interpretation, and final conclusions, [...] ensures thoroughness and limits potential bias” (Naeem et al., 2023, p. 2). The steps involved were: transcription of the semi-structured interview and familiarization with all data collected; selection of keywords that capture the data’s core message or theme; developing themes that link the research questions with the data; and defining the concepts emerging from the data through the interpretation of keywords and themes.

The main themes that emerged from the analysis of the texts written by Carmen

Carbonaro and Pauline Miceli were as follows:

Carmen Carbonaro		Pauline Miceli	
Themes	Sub-themes	Themes	Sub-themes
Women as wives and mothers	Obedience; keeping the peace; finding happiness in ‘the little things’	Women as wives and mothers	Equality between spouses; law reform; men’s active role in child rearing
The importance of faith and religion	Female virtues; adopting ‘proper’ behaviour if working outside the home	A religion based on fear	Contraception; divorce
Good housekeeping	Economizing; cleaning and maintenance of the home	Women’s work outside the home	Childcare centres; women in non-traditional employment
Food and cooking	Economy in the kitchen; recipes	Food and cooking	The farmer as a food source; healthier options; the use of pesticides

In my analysis of these themes and sub-themes, I focused mainly on the theme of women as wives and mothers. I chose this particular theme for three reasons: both Carbonaro and Miceli wrote extensively about it; it allowed me to also delve into how the two writers tackled the role of religion in women’s lives, since religion is also linked to the theme of women as wives and mothers; I found the stark contrast between the two writers’ thoughts when tackling this theme to be truly worthy of in-depth exploration.

Ethical considerations

In conducting this research, I sought and obtained the approval of the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Malta. The documents submitted to the

committee included the letter informing Pauline Miceli about the aims of this research study and what her involvement would entail; the form whereby Pauline Miceli gave her consent to be interviewed for this study; and a data management plan. A copy of the approval email received from the Research Ethics Committee may be found in Appendix 5 of this dissertation. A copy of Pauline Miceli's consent form may be found in Appendix 6 of this dissertation.

Pauline Miceli consented, both in writing and on tape, to have her identity disclosed in this research study. This was crucial since her weekly articles were written under the pseudonym 'Carmen' – for reasons which she explained during the interview. Miceli also consented to be audio recorded during the interview. After the interview, the audio recording was transcribed and the transcript was sent to Pauline Miceli by email for her approval on 19th January 2025. In the email Miceli was also asked whether she wanted to add, omit, or change anything in the transcript. Miceli replied on 21st January 2025, stating that the transcript was faithful to the interview and asking if she could later be shown how the interview was presented in the context of this study's findings. This request was accommodated via email on 2nd May, 2025.

Limitations and trustworthiness of this research study

The main limitation of this research study was the fact that Carmen Carbonaro died in 1997 and therefore I was unable to interview her and could only rely on her published writings.

Some disadvantages of ethnographic content analysis might also be regarded as limitations. Bryman (2008, p. 291) states that “a content analysis can only be as good as the documents on which the practitioner works” and that “content analytic studies are sometimes accused of being atheoretical.”

Ahmed (2024) states that a key limitation of qualitative research is its inherent subjectivity. “Although researchers strive to mitigate biases and uphold impartiality by employing reflexivity and triangulation, the inherent interpretative character of qualitative research implies that the researcher’s perspective might still impact the findings,” argues Ahmed (2004, p. 3). According to Anderson (2024), even the adoption of a feminist epistemology may be viewed as a limitation, as feminist research has been critiqued for potentially exhibiting gender bias by its very nature. However, Anderson (2024) states that bias is not necessarily incorrect if it steers clear of obvious mistakes and is therefore considered valid.

In the course of this study I have striven to control personal bias and maintain objectivity in terms of both the research process and the conclusions drawn, but also keeping in mind that according to feminist epistemology, research is said to provide researchers with a partial perspective since, according to feminists, objectivity “is about limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object. It allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see” (Haraway, 1988, p. 583).

Ahmed (2004, p. 2) lists the strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research as being: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. According to Ahmed (2004), credibility is established through triangulation, where the researcher utilizes various data sources or methods; transferability is accomplished by offering comprehensive contextual details that allow readers to assess the relevance of the findings to similar contexts; dependability is ensured by maintaining thorough documentation of the research methods, data collection techniques, and analytical procedures, ensuring the findings remain consistent over time; and confirmability relates to the neutrality and objectivity of the results, ensuring they are free from the researcher’s biases or personal preferences.

In my research study I have adhered to these four pillars of trustworthiness by: embracing a mixed-method approach, where one method complements or expands on the other, validating the results through the mutual confirmation of diverse data types gathered during the research; providing detailed contextual information with regard to the writings of Carmen Carbonaro and Pauline Miceli; documenting my approaches and techniques in collecting data; and confirming correctness and objectivity by sharing my results with Pauline Miceli herself.

In this chapter I have discussed the methods entailed in the collection and analysis of the data pertaining to my research, providing a rationale for the suitability of my approach to answering the research questions guiding this study. In the next chapter I shall be presenting the findings resulting from my research.

Chapter 4: Findings

In this chapter I shall be giving a detailed description of a recurrent theme that comes up in a sample of the texts written by both Carmen Carbonaro and Pauline Miceli. This was elicited from texts published in the 1950s in the case of Carbonaro and in the 1980s with regard to Miceli. To carry this out, I shall be conducting an ethnographic analysis of this content, while keeping in mind and referring to concepts and debates raised in the literature review. As mentioned in the previous chapter, I shall focus mainly on how both writers tackle the theme of women as wives and mothers and the sub-theme/s emanating from this. Since all the analysed and quoted content is in Maltese, I shall be providing translations in English.

The theme of women as wives and mothers in the writings of Carmen Carbonaro

The images on the front cover of the book ‘Il-Mara Maltija’ (The Maltese Woman), written by Carmen Carbonaro and published by Lux Press in 1957, epitomizes the book’s main content. One image shows a woman in an apron, preparing food; the other one shows a man in a suit and tie sitting on a sofa reading a newspaper while a woman is sewing on an armchair placed beside him with two children sitting peacefully nearby. Indeed, the images also summarize the content of the other three books written by Carbonaro that were analysed in the course of this dissertation and that were part of a series with the common title ‘Tagħrif meħtieġ għall-mara Maltija’ (‘Useful information needed by the Maltese woman’).

In the first book of this series, Carbonaro declared that every Maltese woman should strive towards the goal of being a “mara ta’ dari, mara ddedikata biss għal żewġi u għal uliedi” [a woman who stays at home, dedicated solely to her husband and children] (Carbonaro, 1951, p. 9). Except for two instances where she wrote briefly about women who work outside the home,

Carbonaro's writings focused only on women whose sole ambition in life was that of being housewives and mothers.

In the only chapter – two and a half pages long – where she wrote about women who work outside the home, Carbonaro focused mostly on the importance of women's proper behaviour at the workplace, underlining that boundaries should be respected so that she protects her reputation and honour, while at the same time ensuring that no married male colleague is to be led astray:

Il-mara fuq ix-xogħol għandha mhux biss tibza' għaliha nfisha imma anki għal dawk li jaħdmu magħha, jiġifieri għandha toqgħod attenta mhux għall-unur tagħha biss imma anki għal dawk l-irġiel u l-familja tagħhom. Toqgħod attenta x-xebba li, bl-imġiba tagħha ħażina, hija ma tkunx kaġun ta' xi sfrattu tal-familja [...] Tgħidux 'għax huwa ttantani' imma għidu 'għax jiena inkoraġġejtu, għax jiena tajtu l-wiċċ'. Kieku ma kienx jasal.

[At the workplace, a woman should not only take care only of herself but also of others, meaning that she should protect her own honour while looking out for the interests of her male colleagues and their families. A girl should be careful not to cause any trouble that might lead men to stray from their families with her bad behaviour [...] Don't say 'it's his fault for tempting me' but say 'I was the one to encourage him and accept his advances'. Otherwise, he wouldn't have done it.] (Carbonaro, n.d., p. 12)

In the other instance where she wrote about women who work outside the home, Carbonaro warned that: "Id-dinja moderna qed tistieden lill-mara miżżewġa biex tħalli d-dar u 'l uliedha, biex tmur taħdem, 'il bogħod mis-santwarju tal-familja fejn hija għandha tkun ir-regina, il-gwida, il-ħabiba, il-confidante ta' wliedha. U meta jiġu u ma jsibuhiex id-dar, kif ma jirrenjix il-kaos, id-diżordni?" [The modern world is inviting married women to leave their home and

children and go to work, far away from the sanctuary of the family where a mother should be the queen, the guide, the friend and confidante of her children. And when they come home and do not find her there, how can chaos and disorder not ensue?] (Carbonaro, 1957, p. 3)

In various instances, Carbonaro placed the responsibility of a happy marriage squarely on the wife's shoulder. She stated that all men are boys and as such need to be taken care of:

Darba qrajt [...] li “all men are boys” u dana mhux f'sens li rridu ngħidu li mhumiex irġiel, anzi, għall-kuntrarju, għax huma veri rġiel, li jhossu ruħhom hekk, qishom tfal, u bhat-tfal iridu min jieħu kura tagħhom u jurihom dik il-kura, dak ir-rispett u dik l-imħabba li jixtiequ. Meta l-mara ma turi l-ebda interess f'żewġha, ma tagħtix kas tiegħu, ma ssaqsihx x'inkwiet għandu jekk tarah ħosbien, u allura tipprova tikkonslah, jekk hija ma tagħtix daqqa ta' għajn lejn surtu, biex tara jekk għandux bżonn ta' xi ħaġa tal-ħwejjeġ, jew żarbun jew libsa, jew kappell, nafu aħna li ħafna drabi l-missier jibqa' nieqes biex jilbsu t-tfal u l-mara l-ewwel.

[Once I read that “all men are boys”, not in the sense that they are not men, on the contrary it is because they are true men that they feel they are like children, and like children they need someone to take care of them and to show them the care, respect and love they wish for. When a woman takes no interest in her husband, does not ask him what's wrong if he looks worried, does not console him, does not check if he needs new clothes or shoes or a new suit or hat, when we know that a father refrains from getting what he needs because he puts his wife and children first.] (Carbonaro, 1952, p. 8)

Carbonaro's advice to wives was therefore: “Mela pprova ifhem lil żewġek iżjed, ipprova kkumpatixxi iżjed, ittrattah bis-simpatija, u b'dik il-ħniena vera ta' omm” [Try to understand your husband more, try to empathise better, treat him with sympathy and with the true kindness

of a mother] (Carbonaro, 1952, p. 9). In this case, Carbonaro describes the wife carrying out the same services as a mother. She has two sets of children – her husband, whom she married, and the children she begot from him.

Carbonaro (1951) placed great importance on a wife's housekeeping skills, describing them as the key to a successful marriage: “Hafna xebbiet jitgħallmu, pereżempju, il-pjanu u ma jhawdux rashom biex jitgħallmu daqsxejn kif jixtru, kif isajru, kif jagħmlu ekonomija fit-tisjir, kif iraqgħu [...] U minn hekk imbagħad jiġi l-inkwiet kollu. Huwa *assolutament* neċessarju illi x-xebba titgħallem dawn l-affarijiet, għax minn dawn jiddependi jekk iż-żwieġ tagħha jkunx suċċess jew le” [Many girls learn how to play the piano but do not bother to learn how to do the shopping, how to cook and be frugal, how to mend clothes [...] And that's where trouble starts. It is *absolutely* necessary for girls to learn these things, because a successful marriage depends on them] (Carbonaro, 1951, p. 23). So caretaking of the needs of the husband it seems, more than that of the children, is defined as the main prerogative of a wife for Carbonaro.

The author stated that a man gets married not only to have someone who cleans and cooks for him, but he “irid is-simpatija tal-mara wkoll, jiġifieri li hija tikkonfortah fid-dwejjaq li jkollu [...] Huwa jistenna mill-mara tiegħu s-simpatija, il-konfort, il-kuraġġ, u r-rispett. Huwa jrid mara li tgħinu fil-battalji tal-ħajja, li ttiħ parir tajjeb, li tispiralu kuraġġ” [also wants his wife's sympathy, meaning that she comforts him when he is sad [...] From his wife he expects sympathy, solace, courage, and respect. He wants a wife who helps him deal with life's battles, who gives him good advice, who inspires courage] (Carbonaro, 1951, p. 24). So apart from a caretaker, he also needs a companion at arms to help him win his battles.

In her eighth (undated) book of the series ‘Tagħrif meħtieġ għall-mara Maltija’, Carbonaro also stated unequivocally that wives should allow husbands to be the heads of the

household: “Halli lil żewġek ikun dak li huwa l-kap tal-familja” (p. 8). The husband is always presented as the sole breadwinner who spends long hours working away from home, while the wife’s fulfilment is found entirely in pleasing her husband and children through her household chores: “Il-mara tkun trid li t-tfal u r-raġel juruha li qed jieħdu gost jieklu dak li hija ħadet tant paċenzja li ssajrilhom, għax il-kuntentizza tal-mara u tal-omm [...] qiegħda f’hekk, filli tipprova togħgob lilhom u taqdihom f’kollox” [A wife’s wish is that her children and husband show her that they enjoy eating the food she has patiently prepared, because the happiness of a wife and mother [...] lies there, in trying to please them and to satisfy all their needs] (Carbonaro, 1952, p. 16). Once again, the husband is given prerogative over the children in this quote.

According to Carbonaro, a wife’s true contentment and satisfaction derive from knowing, at the end of each day, that she has done all she can to keep her husband and children happy: “F’hekk qiegħda l-kuntentizza vera. Inti filgħaxija tkun tista’ tgħid, ‘Kemmi inhossni sodisfatta! Illum jien għamilt dak kollu li stajt biex nirrendihom henjin” (Carbonaro, 1952, p. 17) (That’s where true happiness lies. At the end of the day you can say I am satisfied. Today I did all I could to render them happy). So self-abnegation with the primary objective of pleasing others, is the message that Carbonaro links with the role of wife and mother (in that order) time and time again.

The sub-theme of obedience and keeping the peace

One of the virtues that Carbonaro often attributed to the ideal wife was that of obedience and keeping the peace. As she stated in the first book of the series: “Il-mara trid tkun mansweta, kwjeta u thobb il-kwiet, u li żżomm il-kwiet fil-familja akkost li tissagrifika ruhha. Hija għandha tkun ir-regina tal-paċi tad-dar” [A wife should be meek, quiet, and always ready to protect the

family's peace, even if that means that she sacrifices herself. She should be the queen of peace in the home] (Carbonaro, 1951, p. 21). Therefore, according to Carbonaro, being self-effacing leads to peace and quiet since a wife's and a mother's primary prerogative is to put the needs of her husband and children first. This helps her reign supreme, according to the author.

Carbonaro declared that the key to peace and happiness in the home is in the wife's hands: "F'idejna qieghda c-cavetta tal-paci tad-dar, f'idejna l-muftieh tal-kuntentizza tal-familja" (Carbonaro, 1951, p. 25). She urged women not to insist on having the last word, as this is a 'defect' in a woman's character: "[...] dik il-famuza kelma tal-ahhar, li sfortunatament jghidu li ahna n-nisa ma nhalluhiex ghaddejja [...] Jien naf li mhux in-nisa kollha ghandhom dan id-difett; naf hafna nisa kwieti u fommhom sieket li jcedu l-ahhar kelma biex izommu l-paci" [that famous last word, that women are unfortunately known to not let it pass [...] I know that not all women have this flaw; I know many quiet women who stay silent and don't have the last word so as to keep the peace](Carbonaro, 1952, p. 11). Another attribute being promoted here apart from self-abnegation, self-affacement, is refraining from having their say when there is a family dispute.

The author stressed that a woman's tongue should be dripping with honey, writing the word 'honey' in bold for emphasis: "Niftakru ahna n-nisa li lsienna jrid ikun miksi **bil-ghasel**. Ghalhekk tahluna lsienna Alla, appuntu ghax Alla halaqha l-mara biex tkun mansweta u pacifika, dik li zzomm il-paci tal-familja u tghozzha daqs l-aqwa tezor li jista' jkollha" [Let's keep in mind that as women, our tongue should be coated with **honey**. This is why God gave us our tongues, because God created women to be meek and to keep the family peace as if it were the greatest treasure they could possess] (Carbonaro, 1952, p. 12). Carbonaro mentions religion to validate her claim that women should only speak to extoll others, but not themselves.

Carbonaro attributed family troubles to women's shortcomings: "Il-ġlidiet tal-familja mhumix xi aċċident, jiġifieri xi haġa li jiġu waħedhom; [...] aħna stess inkunu l-kawża ta' dan il-ġlied. In-nuqqas ta' għaqal jew tal-paċenzja jew tas-sottomissjoni tagħna" [Family squabbles don't occur on their own; [...] we are the cause of this trouble. Our lack of good sense, patience or submission] (Carbonaro, 1952, p. 12). She encouraged wives not to 'light the fuse' but to extinguish it in order to avoid arguments, because women should be peacemakers and peacekeepers: "Jekk hi ma tixgħelx il-fuse imma titfih, allura tevita l-ġlieda [...] Il-mara għandha tkun il-'peacemaker' u l-'keeper' tal-paċi tal-familja" (Carbonaro, 1952, p. 13). Once again, the issue of self-abnegation, keeping silent and keeping the peace is underlined.

The aim of all these efforts, Carbonaro declared, was to make the husband feel that there is no place better than home to return to every evening. Otherwise, he might seek entertainment elsewhere, in some club, and that would only be the wife's fault:

Għandek iġġiegħel ir-raġel iħoss illi ma hemmx post bħad-dar, jew aqwa mid-dar; [...] għandek toqgħod attenta illi ma tilqgħux bil-buli u bil-geddum u bit-tgergir. Ftakar li matul il-ġurnata huwa forsi jkun iltaqa' ma' ħafna inkwiet u tfixkil, u għall-bżonn jirritorna d-dar imdejjaq u inkwetat. U allura x'jiġri jekk jara li inti bil-buli wkoll? Tinqala' xi ġlieda bejnietkom, u hu allura ma jibdiex jieħu gost meta jispiċċa mix-xogħol jiġi d-dar, u jibda forsi jfittex xi każin jew xi klabb; [...] U ta' min ikun it-tort? Mhux tal-mara li ma għarfitx iġġib ruħha sewwa miegħu?

[You should make your husband feel that there's no place like home, or better than home; [...] you should not be in a bad mood or start complaining when he gets home.

Remember that his day could have been full of troubles and obstacles and when he arrives he may be sad and worried. And what happens if he sees that you're in a bad

mood too? You'll both start quarrelling, and after a day's work he won't look forward to coming home but he'll start going to some club; [...] And whose fault would that be? Wouldn't that be the wife's fault for not behaving as she should?] (Carbonaro, 1951, pp. 23-24)

Self-effacement, self-abnegation, and keeping silent are therefore the ingredients that Carbonaro proposes to prevent husbands from going astray.

The importance of faith and religion in Carmen Carbonaro's writings

As explained in the Methodology chapter, although the topic of faith and religion may be considered as a theme in itself, I have chosen to treat it as a sub-theme that is closely related to the theme of women as wives and mothers in the writings of both authors under study.

In the case of Carmen Carbonaro, faith and religion could be described as a constant undercurrent, a beacon guiding the housewife in her daily duties. In two of the books written by Carbonaro, the foreword was even written by a priest – Mons. Michele Azzopardi in the first book of the series (1951), and Father Feliċjan from the Capuchin Order in the third one (1952). Mons. Azzopardi concurred with Carbonaro that the family is what the wife makes it. He expressed his hope that the book would enable Maltese women to learn how to fulfil the mission entrusted to them by God. Father Feliċjan, on the other hand, described Carmen Carbonaro as 'a true apostle'. This is not strange since Carbonaro adopts the rhetoric used by priests when they are sermonizing.

In her third book in the series 'Tagħrif meħtieġ għall-mara Maltija', Carbonaro urged women to look at life optimistically in order to please God: "Ejja lkoll nilbsu n-nuċċali roża, in-nuċċali li jgēgħelna naraw il-ħajja mill-punto di vista tal-filosofi u mhux mill-punto di vista tal-

injuranti u tal-pessimisti! [...] b’hekk inkunu qed nuru r-rikonoxxenza lejn Alla li ħalaqna [...] fl-omnipotenza tiegħu. B’hekk inkunu qed niringrazzjawh, b’hekk inkunu qed nogħġbuh, b’hekk inkunu qed inhobbuh” [let’s all put on our rose-tinted glasses, which make us see life from a philosophical point of view, and not from the perspective of ignorant, pessimistic people! [...] In doing so, we show gratitude to God, our creator [...] in his omnipotence. This is how we thank him, please him, and love him] (Carbonaro, 1952, p. 19).

In the eighth (undated) book in the series, Carbonaro (p. 10) urged women to follow Jesus’ example whenever they speak, because he spoke sweetly and simply: “Kif kien ikellem lin-nies Ġesù [...] Kien ikellimhom bil-ħlewwa kollha, bis-sempliċità.” She said that speech is a gift that should be used wisely, particularly by women: “X’don sabiħ huwa l-kliem! U kemm għandna nagħmlu ħilitna kollha biex aħna nużawh tajjeb dan id-don, speċjalment aħna n-nisa, li Alla għoġbu jagħtina poter kbir, li b’kelma ġejja mill-qalb nistgħu nkunu ta’ faraġ u ta’ konsolazzjoni lil kulhadd” [Words are such a beautiful gift! We should do our best to use this gift well, particularly us women, because God gave us the great power of being able to offer solace to everyone with our words] (Carbonaro, n.d., p. 10). When allowed to speak, women were instructed to use language to console others.

Carbonaro stated that there is only one way for women to protect the family from ‘the enemy’: “Għandna ngħozzuha d-dar, u nħobbuha, u nħarsuha mit-taqbid tal-għedewwa kollha tagħha. U biex nagħmlu dan, hemm rimedju wiehed. Li ngħixu r-religjon tagħna, li nobdu l-liġijiet t’Alla, u tal-Knisja” [We should cherish our home and protect it from all its enemies. And there is only one way to succeed in this. We must put our religion in practice and abide by the laws of God and the Church] (Carbonaro, 1957, p. 3). What is interesting is that in previously

cited quotes, women were defined as enticers, temptresses, but here they are referred to as protectors against a common evil.

In one instance, Carbonaro reproduced a whole psalm when addressing young Christian mothers ('Is-Salm taż-Żgħażaġh Ommijiet Insara'), which she said was sent to her by the parish priest of Imġarr, Malta. The psalm compares young mothers to nuns in a convent, with limited access to the outside world and with the specific task of taking care of their children: "Darna saret il-kunvent tagħna [...] Hemm tant x'taġhmel ġewwa d-dar, ma nistgħux inħallu waħedhom liż-żgħar tagħna. Bil-qies nisirqu xi żjara meħtieġa. Aħna jkollna nikinsu, insajru, naħslu l-platti, noborxu l-karrotti għall-minestra, inħejju n-nejna u l-purea għaċ-ċkejknin, u hekk dejjem sejrin" [Our house has become our convent [...] There's so much to do at home that we cannot leave our children alone. We go out fleetingly to enact necessary errands. We have to sweep, cook, wash the dishes, peel carrots for the soup, prepare the babies' food, and so life goes on] (Carbonaro, 1957, p. 47). The imperative tone adopted here was never used by Carbonaro. And while the priest addresses mothers, Carbonaro was more likely to refer to wives.

In the next section, the focus will be on the content written by Pauline Miceli, which deals with women as wives and mothers in a completely different manner.

Pauline Miceli's weekly page: The intention behind it

Before discussing the content written by Pauline Miceli, it is appropriate to point out that Miceli did not intend her weekly page in the newspaper "l-orizzont" to be a typical women's page. In her page published on 17th April 1984 she declared that it was simply meant to be a means for women to discuss different topics from their own point of view. Such topics, she said,

were also of interest to men and in fact the page was written “min-nisa imma mhux biss għan-nisa” [by women but not just for women] (l-orizzont, 17th April 1984, p. 7).

Miceli stressed this point during the interview I conducted with her (quotes by Miceli cited in this chapter without a reference derive from the semi-structured interview mentioned in the Methodology chapter). She told me that her intention was to discuss some of the socio-political issues which prevailed at the time from a female point of view, because she felt that this was missing and everything was discussed from a male perspective. She also knew that, contrary to the radio programme she had hosted a few years before which targeted women, the newspaper’s readership mainly comprised men. “Lanqas kienet a women’s page, actually. Ma ridthiex tkun haġa tan-nisa traditional, għaliex naħseb hemmhekk kont tindirizza iktar l-irġiel hemmhekk, fil-gazzetta, mhux nisa biss bħar-radju” [It wasn’t a women’s page, actually. I didn’t want it to be a traditional women’s piece, because I think there, in the paper, I mostly used to address men, not just women as in radio’s case]. So while Carbonaro wanted women to be there for their husbands and children, but be silent, Miceli wanted to give voice to women so that men realize that those who have been silenced via cultural expectations, have their own take on issues.

Miceli decided not to use her real name when writing the newspaper page. As she underlined in the interview, she used the name ‘Carmen’ instead because she wanted to escape the backlash she had received when she had conducted her radio programmes. These negative comments had a bad impact on her daughter. She was also aware that “l-orizzont” was quite liberal and she could be more direct in her writing. “Għedt l-aħjar nuża nom de plume, ħalli qisek qed tibda xi haġa ġdida, persuna differenti. Dik kienet ir-raġuni. Stajt ngħid hafna aktar affarijiet. Mhux jien qed ngħidhom, imma Carmen” [I reasoned that it would be better to use a

nom de plume, so that it felt that I was starting afresh, as a different person. That was the reason. I could say so much more. It's not me who's saying it, but Carmen].

The theme of women as wives and mothers in the writings of Pauline Miceli

The housewife in Miceli's writing emerged as a caged and controlled human being, unable to live independently of her husband. The message that Miceli wanted to convey to housewives was that there was much more to life than doing household chores and taking care of children – i.e. the message promoted by Carbonaro. “Il-messaġġ ewlieni kien [...] li isma' jiena nimxi waħdi, jiena rrid iktar mill-ħajja, ma rridx li jkolli l-għażla ristretta – jew il-familja u d-dar jew il-karriera” [The main message was [...] that hey I can walk alone, I want more from life, I don't want my choices to be restricted to that of either having a family, a home or a career].

On one occasion, Miceli drew inspiration from a play by Henrik Ibsen and compared housewives to dolls living in dolls' houses. They had beautiful houses, healthy children, and husbands who worked hard to keep them comfortable. One would think they had everything and lived happily, but reality was different. “Imma jhossu l-vojt. Mhux kapaċi jispjegaw x'inhu [...] Ġieli jduru għar-religjon biex jifarrġu. Imma dan xejn ma jservi. Iservi iktar biex huma jibqgħu pupi. Il-pupi tar-raġel li jkunu żżewġu” [But they feel an emptiness. They can't quite explain it [...] Sometimes they turn to religion for comfort. But this is useless. It only makes them turn into dolls. The dolls of the men they married] (l-orizzont, 2nd November 1982, p. 7).

In another instance, Miceli wrote about the ‘contradiction’ of the Maltese married woman, living in a country where the institution of the family always came first. “Biex tiżżewweġ trid tinsa li int bniedma, li int għandek moħħ li tista' tużah. Int mistennija tinsa l-karriera jew ix-xogħol li jagħtik dik l-indipendenza, li jagħtik valur. Kif tista' qatt tkun ugwali

meta int sottomessa għar-rieda ta' haddieħor?" [In order to get married, you need to forget that you're a human being, that you have brains you can use. You're expected to give up your dreams of having a career or a job that gives you independence and worth. How can you ever be equal when you're submitted to someone else's will?] (l-orizzont, 13th September 1983, p. 12). As one can see, Miceli's viewpoint was totally opposed to that of Carabonaro.

Miceli (l-orizzont, 19th February 1985, p. 4) stated that housewives could only do as they pleased in the morning or early afternoon because once their husbands and children were back home, the housewife's place was at home with the family. It was difficult, she said, to find women participating in cultural activities, educational classes or discussions in the evening because children, and husbands even more, expected women to be at home when they were there. Women's freedom of movement was therefore linked to whether the husband and/or their children were at work or school. In the case of Carbonaro, they had no freedom, because even running errands was defined as aberrant.

Miceli, however, never underestimated the value of housewives. She said that they were as worthy as women who worked outside the home. "Izda d-dipendenza tagħhom fuq haddieħor biex imantnihom tpoġġihom fi żvantagġ. Għax permezz tax-xogħol imħallas int tkun tista' tieqaf fuq saqajk waħdek u tikkontrolla hajtek aħjar" [But their dependence on someone else for their livelihood places them at a disadvantage. Because through paid work you can stand on your own two feet and control your life better] (l-orizzont, 16th July 1985, p. 4).

The sub-theme of equality

In her written work, Miceli focused mainly on equality between the spouses, because "hija ħrafa li tgħid li vapur b'żewġ kaptani ma jimxix" [it is a myth to say that a ship with two

captains won't move forward (a Maltese proverb)] (l-orizzont, 17th May 1983, p. 7). Equality, in Miceli's opinion, could only be achieved through law reform and a fundamental change in the nation's mentality.

When asked about this during our interview, Miceli said that Maltese laws at the time regarded women as their husbands' property, not as persons in their own right, and this led to great suffering, particularly when it came to financial matters. "Inti la jkollok bank account tiegħek [...] ma jkollokx autonomy biex tmexxi anke flusek. U konna nisimgħu stejjer ta' nisa li kienu wirtu ħafna affarijiet u kienu sinjuri huma *di famiglia*, u r-raġel sparpalja kollox u hallihom vera b'xejn. Jew inkella mbagħad telaq u ħadilhom kollox" [You didn't have your own bank account [...] you had no autonomy, you couldn't even to manage your finances. And we used to hear stories of women who inherited wealth from their rich families, and whose husbands spent all their money and left them with nothing. Or the husbands left and took all their inheritance].

In her newspaper articles, Miceli stressed repeatedly that men and women are equal citizens and that authority in all family matters should be shared equally between them. "Biex issir ġustizzja hemm bżonn li l-mara taqşam din l-awtorità mar-raġel. Hemm bżonn li titrawwem tiegħu r-responsabbiltà fl-affarijiet li soltu dejjem thallew f'idejn ir-raġel. Ir-raġel mill-banda l-oħra jrid jaqşam ukoll ir-responsabbiltà tax-xogħol ta' kuljum fid-dar u mal-ulied" [For justice to be served, women must share power equally with men. Women need to get used to assuming responsibility in matters which have always been left in men's hands. Men, on the other hand, must share responsibility in everyday household chores and child rearing] (l-orizzont, 17th September 1985, p. 7).

Miceli observed that women made up 51% of the Maltese population, yet they were only to be found at home, cleaning, cooking, and taking care of their husbands and children. She said

that women were criticised of being unaware of what was happening around them, and of being unable to discuss the laws passed in Parliament. However, “Dawk l-affarijiet li int tithalla barra għalkollox minnhom ma tista’ qatt tkun taf kif jahdmu [...] Il-borma tiegħek hija importanti daqs il-ftehim li jkun sar minn xi delegazzjoni għolja li żaret pajjiżna. Xi drabi hija aktar importanti” [You can never know how things work if you’re being excluded from the sphere where these things are discussed. [...] Your cooking is as important as the agreement reached with some high-powered delegation visiting our country. Sometimes it’s even more important] (l-orizzont, 26th April 1983, p. 7). Here she echoes Phelan (1990, p. 433) who states that women have, for centuries, been challenged to qualify themselves for membership in the adult population by demonstrating their competence in ‘masculine’ fields, while at the same time being excluded from the institutions in which this competence is produced.

Miceli emphasised the need for law reforms as she pointed out that it was ironic that while mothers were burdened with the full responsibility of raising children, they had no legal power over them. “Hekk pereżempju l-omm ma tistax taqbad u tniżżel lil uliedha minuri fuq il-passaport tagħha mingħajr il-permess tar-raġel, u l-passaport lest jingħata biss lil żewġha u mhux lilha. Żewġha iżda ma jehtiglux il-kunsens tagħha meta jrid jagħmel l-istess biċċa xogħol” [For example a mother cannot list her minor children on her own passport without her husband’s permission, and once ready, the passport is handed to her husband and not to her. Her husband, however, does not need her consent on the same issue] (l-orizzont, 21st August 1984, p. 4).

In another instance, Miceli wrote about the injustice faced by women who needed surgical interventions in hospital but could not be operated upon without their husband’s consent. In an article titled “Kelli bżonn ta’ operazzjoni, imma żewġi ma riedx” [I needed an operation, but my husband didn’t allow to have it done] (l-orizzont, 31st January 1984, p. 7), Miceli quoted

from a letter she had received from a reader – a married mother of four – whose husband had refused to give his consent for her operation, maintaining that it was frivolous. Again, Miceli stressed the need for law reform so that married women can decide for themselves on every aspect of their lives.

She also pointed out that it was nearly impossible for a woman with small children to hold down a full-time job, saying that she would have to be a superwoman to cope. The reason, according to Miceli, was that the 40-hour week was not designed to enable both spouses to work outside the home, but enabled men who had wives or mothers to take care of their basic needs. “U jekk ahna n-nisa nibqgħu ma nitolbux li dan jitbiddel filwaqt li nagħmlu pressjoni biex ningħataw opportunitajiet indaqs bħal sħabna l-irġiel, nispiċċaw skjavi iktar milli konna qabel” [And if we, as women, don’t push for change by putting pressure on our male partners to ensure that we can access the same opportunities, we will end up even more enslaved than before] (l-orizzont, 25th October 1983, p. 7).

Miceli repeatedly advocated for the equal sharing of household chores and child rearing between spouses, while insisting that women should work in order to have access to an income like their husbands. “Jekk allura nemmnu tabilħaqq fl-ugwaljanza tas-sessi, dawn iż-żewġ roles iridu jithalltu flimkien u kull persuna, mara jew raġel, tagħmel u taqsam iż-żewġ roles mal-parti l-oħra” [If we truly believe in equality between the sexes, these two roles need to be shared by both partners, female or male] (l-orizzont, 10th January 1984, p. 7).

She was also in favour of childcare facilities, not just for working mothers but also to enable mothers to go shopping or attend hospital appointments. She pointed out, however, that “it-tfal huma tal-omm u tal-missier, u jekk jitwaqqfu n-nurseries, dawn mhumiex biss xi servizz

soċjali għalina n-nisa” [children belong to both the mother and the father, and if nurseries are set up, they wouldn’t only be of service to women] (l-orizzont, 7th June 1983, p. 12).

Interestingly, in the interview, Miceli was of the opinion that one of the main obstacles that prevented change from happening was the mentality of women themselves. “Inti ma tilbisx il-qalziet tar-raġel. Dik kienet il-general idea. Il-bičča l-kbira tan-nisa kienu jaċċettawha din [...] Kienu jaħsbu li issa ma tibqax tal-ġabra, tittraskura t-tfal, titlaq ir-raġel, dawn l-affarijiet. U jekk inti qed taħdem, il-mentalità kienet li la inti qed taħdem mela r-raġel ma jistax iżommok” [You shouldn’t wear your husband’s pants. That was the general idea. Most women accepted this [...] They thought that you wouldn’t be a good housewife, that you would neglect your kids, leave your husband, and all that. And if you went out to work, the mentality was that this meant that your husband didn’t earn enough to support you].

Miceli often referred to this stumbling block in her writing too. In one instance, she wrote: “Aħna n-nisa tgħallimna nċedu, niskużaw, nissottomettu ruħna għall-fehma ta’ haddieħor. U sakemm naslu biex niżżewġu ħafna minna n-nisa jaċċettawha. Anzi jqisuha bħala xi ħaġa ġusta, xi ħaġa naturali, li kienet minn dejjem” [As women, we have learned to surrender, to excuse others, to submit ourselves to the opinion of others. By the time we get married, most of us accept it. We even consider it as something fair, natural, that has always existed] (l-orizzont, 12th February 1985, p. 7). This indicates that the rhetoric espoused by Carbonaro found fertile ground.

On another occasion (l-orizzont, 7th June 1983, p. 12) Miceli stated that unfortunately women still thought that a job outside the home was some sort of punishment, and they expected their husbands to support them and provide their livelihood. Their resistance to going out to work, she added, was still very strong, even if they absolutely needed to work to support

themselves and their families. Therefore, while Carbonaro regarded women working outside the home as a frivolity, Miceli felt that it helped emancipate women.

A religion based on fear: Contraception and divorce

The Catholic religion was presented by Pauline Miceli as a major obstacle in women's emancipation. She described it as an ideology based on fear. In one of her articles she insisted that change could only be possible if the Catholic religion were removed from the Constitution as the official religion of Malta (l-orizzont, 5th June 1984, p. 7). To Miceli's way of thinking, Catholicism is based on "dak li m'għandekx tagħmel. Xejn dwar is-sbuħija tan-natura, xejn pożittiv. Reliġjon astratta, immirata biss biex tilluppjahom" [what one shouldn't do. Nothing about the beauty of nature, nothing positive. An abstract religion, aimed only at anaesthetizing people] (l-orizzont, 9th November 1982, p. 7). In another article (l-orizzont, 26th July 1983, p. 7), she described the Catholic Church as promoting a medieval mentality. Once free from these 'cobwebs', the Maltese people would become a nation that tolerates different opinions, a kind nation, and a nation that respects its own individuality and freedom as well as that of others – something that Carbonaro was adamantly against where women were concerned.

Miceli sustained that, "Ir-reliġjon ukoll hija mezz ta' kif aħna n-nisa spiċċajna nibku xortina. Huwa fatt li ħafna nisa tant isiru devoti u reliġjużi li jaslu biex jemmnu li r-reliġjon biss, jew aħjar il-ħajja ta' wara din id-dinja, għandha mnejn toffrilhom f'it tat-tgawdija" [Religion is also a means which enables women to accept our destiny in life, one based on suffering. It's a fact that many women become so devout and religious that they come to believe that only religion, or rather life after death, could lead to gratification] (l-orizzont, 8th February 1983, p. 7).

In direct conflict with the Church's teachings, Miceli – who, when interviewed, said that she and her husband were non-practising Catholics and that, despite her criticism, she recalls no direct clashes with the Church resulting from her articles – wrote passionately in favour of contraception and divorce. Speaking about this topic in the interview, she said that contraceptives were still a taboo in the 1980s. “Allaħares issemihom! Kienu jixtru l-condoms minn under the counter hekk, imma ma tistax, ma titkellimx hekk dwar kontraċezzjoni” [God forbid that anyone mentions them! They used to buy condoms from under the counter, but you just couldn't speak about contraception].

In her weekly articles, Miceli often reminded women of their right to choose how many children they had and when to have them, if at all. She accused the Church and the Cana Movement (a local Catholic organisation that gives advice to couples before and during marriage) of refraining from teaching the general public about contraception: “Għalkemm jinsistu li kulhadd għandu l-jedd li jagħżel, ma jagħtux informazzjoni oħra dwar il-metodi li l-Knisja ma tapprovax. Imma fuq il-mezzi tax-xandir iktar tisma' lil dawn u l-opinjoni tagħhom milli tisma' lil persuni oħra jitkellmu dwar il-mezzi l-oħrajn kollha li jeżistu” [Although they insist that everyone has the right to choose, they don't provide information about the methods that the Church does not approve of. But in the media, their opinions are aired more than that of people speaking about the other means of contraception that exist] (l-orizzont, 14th June 1983, p. 7).

Divorce was an issue Miceli wrote about frequently. As she explained in the interview, at the time when she was writing in the newspaper, she became involved with a group that was in favour of divorce. In those days, women who had left their husband and were now cohabiting were not entitled to anything when their partner died: “Fl-eighties il-kelma 'divorzju' kienet xi

ħaġa kbira; affarijiet li kellna bżonn nagħmluhom” [‘Divorce’ was a nasty word in the eighties; these were things that needed to be dealt with].

Miceli criticised the Church for ignoring the reality of broken families and for being insensitive to the suffering of partners in a failed relationship. In one instance, she mentioned a slide show organised on the occasion of Marian Week, where a couple going through a rough patch was presented as having reunited thanks to the daily prayer enacted in front of a picture of the Holy Family: “Il-fidi u t-talb jistgħu joffru f’it konsolazzjoni għal min jemmen fihom imma kont naħseb li l-Knisja hija aktar midħla tal-problemi serji li jistgħu jinqalgħu fir-relazzjoni ta’ tnejn min-nies” [Faith and prayer may offer some consolation to believers, but I would have thought that the Church is more aware of the serious problems that can occur in relationships] (l-orizzont, 31st May 1983, p. 7).

Miceli stressed that divorce is neither an attack on the family nor a curse. On the contrary, she was of the opinion that divorce is conducive to greater family stability: “Il-Professur Rheinstein, meqjus bħala awtorità fuq is-sugġett, iqis id-divorzju bħala mezz li jagħmel il-familja waħda iktar stabbli. Miegħu jaqblu ħafna studjużi oħra li jibbażaw l-argumenti tagħhom fuq il-fatti u mhux fuq il-ħolm” [Professor Rheinstein, an authority on the subject, sees divorce as a means to make the family more stable. Several academics agree with him, basing their arguments on facts and not on hypothesis] (l-orizzont, 5th July 1983, p. 7).

Analysis

In this section I shall analyse the contrasting points of view expressed in the writings of both Carmen Carbonaro and Pauline Miceli. Their only common denominators seem to be that they were both married women and that they both presented women’s programmes on the radio

station owned by the State before resorting to writing, but the resemblance – at least in terms of content – stops abruptly there. While Carbonaro used both platforms to sustain the prevailing mentality, Miceli's aim was to raise awareness, to make people question what was taken for granted, and to go against the grain. Both women were producers of knowledge, but they produced knowledge from a contrasting positionality. Both were influenced by religion, but while Carbonaro promoted the female virtues extolled by the Catholic Church, Miceli clearly rejected the Church's teachings about women's role in society through the knowledge she produced.

As Magri (2017) observes, the discourse on feminism and the rise of women's groups supporting it reached Malta relatively late. While the second wave of feminism began in the United States in the late 1960s, Malta's own movement only started to take shape in the late 1970s. Although Maltese feminists and activists were considered radical within their society at the time, their approach was generally calm and focused on achieving practical results. Rather than holding street protests, they voiced their ideas through radio and newspapers. Instead of organising riots, they sought dialogue – meeting with ministers and members of the women's section of the governing party.

Carbonaro was clearly not impacted by the international feminist movement, or chose to ignore it. On the contrary, Pauline Miceli was greatly influenced by this movement, as reflected in her weekly articles and as she stated during our interview.

An analysis of Carmen Carbonaro's writings

Carmen Carbonaro espoused the cultural expectations regarding women in traditional 20th-century Mediterranean societies. Osiek (2008) observes that in the traditional

Mediterranean family model of the time, the family's honour was believed to rest with the woman, and she was expected to uphold this ideal in all aspects of her conduct. Furthermore, as noted by Osiek (2008), women in 20th-century Mediterranean societies were frequently excluded from working outside the home and regarded as economically nonproductive, with their worth primarily linked to their reproductive role.

The family structure portrayed by Carbonaro is reminiscent of the writings of functionalist social theorist Talcott Parsons – also in the 1950s – who maintained that the roles of men and women within the family were distinct and gender-specific. As observed by Conway et al. (1987), Parsons' theory is based on the belief that gender roles are determined biologically and that modernization led to a rational distribution of roles. To Parsons' way of thinking, the family “functioned on mutually supportive economic and affectional bonds in which the male's capacity for instrumental (or public, productive, and managerial) work was complemented by the female's ability to manage the expressive aspect of family life and the rearing of children” (Conway et al., 1987, p. XXI). In this way, men are expected to serve as the breadwinners, while women take on the roles of caregivers and homemakers. When both husbands and wives fulfil their designated roles properly, this ensures not only stability and order within the family but also in society as a whole.

Through her writings, Carbonaro conveyed her belief in this ingrained division of gender roles. As an active member of the Catholic Action Movement (Farrugia, 2018), she used her writings to disseminate and bolster the teachings of the Catholic Church, which also promoted this gendered division. She constantly conveyed the message that a married woman's sole mission is to be of service to her husband and children and that she should not seek fulfilment in a career outside the home. According to her, this was in line with the Church's own message at

the time. This gendered division of labour, however, was more patriarchal than religious since this set-up was also embraced by established non-Catholic sociologists in the United States, like Parsons, in the same time frame.

Carbonaro started to publish her writings in the early 1950s, just a few years after the end of World War II in the mid-1940s. Camilleri (1997) says that Maltese newspapers gave importance to Pope Pius XII's address to the Catholic Women Workers Associations in the summer of 1945, where women were admonished that their participation in the labour market would prove detrimental to the general wellbeing of their families.

Lehen is-Sewwa – a Maltese newspaper run by the Catholic Action, had this to say about the Pope's address in its 29th August 1945 edition: “Bosta nisa ħassew id-dispjaċir li kellhom iħallu djarhom – iżda llum tant draw fl-impjiegi li jsibuha bi tqila li jergġu lura lejn djarhom. Il-Papa juri ċar it-tħassib tiegħu li l-familja u d-dar imorru lura jekk il-mara tfittex ix-xogħol u l-impjiegi.” [“Many women initially felt sad to leave their homes but have now grown so used to their jobs that they find it difficult to go back home. The Pope expresses his belief that homes and families will degenerate if women seek employment.”]

According to Camilleri (1997), the Catholic Church was concerned that during the war, many Maltese families had broken up precisely because of the increased presence of women in the workplace, implying that women's employment was a cause of adultery. There was therefore an effort by the Church to push women back towards the more 'appropriate' feminine jobs located within the home, such as sewing, knitting and lace making.

Moreover, as Darmanin (1992) states, in the 1950s, this dominant patriarchal ideology promoted by the Church in Malta was further strengthened by the dire economic conditions left in the wake of the war. In this situation, the entry of women to the workforce was considered a

threat, so legislation was used to circumvent women's participation in the labour force, which ensured the restored role of men as breadwinners.

Considering Carbonaro's staunchly Catholic background, it comes as no surprise that the housewife and mother portrayed by her are reminiscent of the metaphors linked with Our Lady, the Virgin Mary – meek, obedient, soft-spoken and presenting no threat to patriarchal structures. Mulherin (2014) notes that cultural environments where the Virgin Mary is considered the ideal female role model share the common trait of patriarchal dominance. In fact, the author suggests that feminine qualities associated with Our Lady are crucial for upholding male dominance in society, as the Virgin Mary could never be portrayed as ambitious, intellectual, or self-sufficient – “stereotypically male traits necessary for success in the public sphere. Essential to Mary's exultation by the Church is the underlying element of passivity” (Mulherin, 2014, par. 12).

Carbonaro's comparison of the housewife to a 'queen of peace' is also evocative of the position of the Virgin Mary within the Catholic faith – 'queen of peace' is even one of the descriptions attributed to Our Lady in the litany of the rosary. Fernando (2021) states that Mary's status as 'Queen of Heaven', whereby she is associated with mediation and peacekeeping, was officially defined as a dogma of the Catholic Church by Pope Pius XII in 1950. Fernando (2021, p. 8) also notes that feminist scholars argue that the Virgin Mary's status of 'queen' not only has left unchanged the inferior status of women within the Church but “operates as an unhealthy feminine ideal of obedience and self-sacrifice”.

In her book *The Second Sex*, published in 1949, just a few years before Carbonaro's writings, Simone de Beauvoir also describes women as being influenced by Marianism and the Cult of the Virgin, where the virtues of passivity, servility and humility are praised. De Beauvoir

argues that the Catholic Church glorifies Mary because she willingly embraces the role of submissive obedience given to her by a male deity.

Indeed, the housewife and mother portrayed by Carbonaro, epitomized by the metaphor of the nun in the psalm mentioned previously, fit perfectly into the description of the typical housewife presented by Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex*:

In the evening, (the husband) restores himself in the house, where his wife cares for the furniture and children [...] The wife has no other task save the one of maintaining and caring for life in its pure and identical generality; she perpetuates the immutable species, she ensures the even rhythm of the days and the permanence of the home she guards with locked doors; she is given no direct grasp on the future (de Beauvoir, 1949, p. 506).

De Beauvoir (1949) states that nothing but boredom and resentment can ensue from such an existence, because a housewife's days are long and empty: "She [...] knits or sews [...]; she does her mending; her hands work, but her mind is not occupied; [...] she daydreams, she is bored; none of her occupations suffices in itself; her thoughts are directed toward her husband and her children [...]; she lives for them alone" (de Beauvoir, 1949, p. 582). Carbonaro did not concur with this opinion though – women's duty towards their husbands and children were more important than their empowerment and fulfilment.

Carbonaro's implication that wives are to blame when marital problems arise is reminiscent of Eve and the Catholic Church's teachings about her, which have been used across the centuries in justification of patriarchal ideologies and practices. Mahlangu (2024, par. 6) observes that the biblical story about Eve "laid the groundwork for a societal perception that discouraged women from seeking knowledge and questioning established norms." According to Mahlangu (2024, paras. 10 - 12), this punishment of curiosity "became a powerful tool for

reinforcing gender roles and justifying the suppression of female education” and strengthened the belief that “women should focus on domestic duties, reinforcing the idea that their role was confined to the home.”

Interestingly, Fernando (2021) observes that throughout theological history, Mary has been viewed as the New Eve – a concept that originated in the early second century and persisted as a consistent theme. While Eve’s disobedience led to humanity’s fall, Mary’s obedience allowed humanity to be redeemed through Jesus, the son she bore. Given that no ordinary woman could match Mary’s purity and holiness, it was believed that women, in general, were more akin to Eve than to Mary. The author suggests that this perspective may have contributed to a sense of gynophobia among early Christian thinkers. Carbonaro echoes this when she maintains that women should be chaste, demure, quiet, and self-effacing.

The housewife portrayed by Carbonaro is also reminiscent of the biblical sacrificial lamb. Meek and taciturn, she is expected to accept her lot unquestioningly, even if this entails self-abnegation. The relayed message is that this self-sacrifice is crucial for the survival of the family and will eventually be rewarded by a harmonious husband-wife relationship and a united family, much like the concept of eternal gratification taught by the Catholic Church in its bid to make sense of human suffering and help Catholics accept pain and suffering caused by exploitation and discrimination in their life. This topic is expounded in great detail in *Salvifici Doloris*, an apostolic letter written by Pope John Paul II in 1984 on redemptive suffering.

The portrayal of women in the writings of Carmen Carbonaro is a clear example of what Tuchman (2000) describes as women’s banishment to hearth and home, and what Carter (2012) describes as a portrayal that depicts women’s domestic service as one of their most highly valued characteristics. This type of portrayal also echoes Friedan’s (1963) affirmation that from the end

of the 1940s and throughout the 50s, the American woman's occupation was portrayed in women's magazines as being that of a housewife. These magazines excluded women from careers outside the home and from any mission except that of a housewife.

Carmen Carbonaro is therefore clearly a product of her time. The messages that she conveyed to women as a writer did not seek to challenge the prevailing norms or to instigate change driven by feminist values of emancipation. On the contrary, Carmen Carbonaro seems to have internalized the two prevalent discourses of her time – namely Roman Catholic teachings and patriarchy – and produced knowledge that perpetuated the status quo and helped replicate the prevalent views about women.

An analysis of Pauline Miceli's writings

Pauline Miceli entitled one of her articles “Biex tiddeciedi kontra dak li kulhadd jippriedka hija iebsa ... kuraġġ” (It's hard to go against what everyone is preaching ... be brave). In the article itself, she said that it is very difficult to make decisions that oppose the prevailing mentality, such as “li titlaq mid-dar, mizzewġa jew m'intix; li tibgħat lill-ġenituri tiegħek f'dar tax-xjuħ; li forsi wkoll tħalli lil uliedek warajk. Xi drabi, iżda, hekk hu meħtieġ. Għall-ġid ta' daww kollha mdahhlin fil-biċċa” [leaving home, whether married or single; placing your parents in a care home; maybe even leaving your children behind. Sometimes, however, this is what needs to be done. For the good of all those involved] (l-orizzont, 1st January 1985, p. 4). This article epitomizes what Miceli wanted to achieve through her writings – making people, particularly women, question what had always been taken for granted and giving them the courage to speak up and go against the tide, as opposed to what Carbonaro preached.

As Miceli herself said during our interview, it was impossible for her to follow in Carbonaro's footsteps. "Ma stajtix nikteb bħal Carmen Carbonaro għaliex l-ideat tiegħi, il-kuxjenza tiegħi kienet hafna iktar wiesgħa [...] Lanqas kont nemmen li l-irġiel huma the perfect person li aħna rridu nikkupjawhom. Aħna ma rridux insiru rġiel imma rridu nikbru u niżviluppaw l-affarijiet kollha tagħna" [I couldn't write like Carmen Carbonaro because my ideas, my conscience was receptive to other ideas [...] I didn't believe that we should emulate men, envisaged as the perfect beings. We don't want to become men but we want to grow and develop in all aspects].

Miceli was the precursor of the radical transformations that occurred in Maltese society towards the end of the 20th century and in the beginning of the 21st century. She repeatedly pushed for change even when it seemed that hers was a lone voice in the wilderness. And even when she had to face harsh backlash, especially from the very women whose plight she was trying to improve. In fact, she had to resort to a *nom de plume*, as did British novelist Mary Anne Evans in the mid-19th century when she published her works under the pseudonym 'George Eliot'.

Miceli was not entirely on her own. In the 1980s, she formed part of a small local pressure group called 'Min-Naha tan-Nisa', which aimed to raise awareness and bring about change with regard to women's role in society. As Magri (2017, p. 18) observes, this group of women "lobbied for the introduction of family planning clinics, introduction of divorce, promotion of contraception and numerous other issues." Magri (2027) further notes that the members of the group – so few that one could count them on the fingers of one's hands – publicly voiced their opinions that women were still being treated as second-class citizens, that

they still lacked several rights, even over their own body, and that a distancing from the Church's perspective on women was greatly needed.

Pauline Miceli was very much influenced by the second wave of feminism, which started in the 1960s and continued into the 1990s, as she points out in her interview. Rampton (2008) says that this second wave evolved in the wake of protests by anti-war and civil rights movements as well as the opinions voiced by minority groups around the world. Sexuality, reproductive rights and social equality were dominant issues among second wave feminists who vociferously opposed patriarchy, which relegated women to household chores or boring, low-paying jobs.

The second wave was increasingly theoretical, based on a fusion of neo-Marxism and psycho-analytical theory, and began to associate the subjugation of women with broader critiques of patriarchy, capitalism, normative heterosexuality, and the woman's role as wife and mother. Sex and gender were differentiated – the former being biological, and the later a social construct that varies culture-to-culture and over time. (Rampton, 2008, par. 7)

During our interview, Miceli said that at the time when she was writing her weekly page, she kept abreast of what was happening in the west thanks to the foreign newspapers that her husband, who was a journalist at the time, would bring home with him from work. She also read books by Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, and Sheila Rowbotham, who aroused her interest. These inspired her to write about working-class women. “Kellek diversi nisa li qegħdin isemmghu leħinhom u klassijiet soċjali differenti, allura n-nisa soċjalisti kienu mod u mbaġħad kellek ir-radikali li kienu iktar estremi [...] Lili, li kont veru mild, [...] kienu wkoll jarawni radikali meta ma kontx” [Many women were voicing their opinions and they derived from

different social classes, so you had socialist women on the one hand and then there were the radicals who were more extreme. [...] I myself was considered to be radical (in Malta) when in reality I was very mild].

Friedan's and de Beauvoir's writings have already been quoted in previous chapters. Rowbotham, on the other hand, is somewhat lesser known and has been called "the most underrated feminist of our time" by Melissa Benn in *The Guardian* (2000). Rowbotham wrote about the predicament of working-class women – office workers, miners' wives, home workers, cleaners, and tenant organisers. She compared marriage to feudalism, where wives are the equivalent of feudal serfs, contracted to serve their husbands (Rowbotham, 1973). This metaphor encapsulates Carbonaro's image of Maltese women in the 50s.

In a debate with Lindsey German in November 1989, titled 'Which way to liberation', Rowbotham is reported to have spoken about the material circumstances affecting women's everyday lives: "These are not simply to do with production or even simply to do with something called the economy, but are a lot broader. They are about the time it takes to take children to a nursery and then get to work, about how a supermarket is designed and located, about the availability of public transport." These ideas prevail in Miceli's writing, as already manifested in this chapter.

Miceli can be described as both a socialist feminist and a materialist feminist. Armstrong (2020, p. 1) states that socialist feminism "emphasized patriarchy as a power role that oppressively shaped women's lives" and that it "sought to synthesize feminist analyses of gender inequality, social reproduction and economic reproduction". Materialist feminism, on the other hand, emerged from the socialist feminist movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s, and explores women's realities not only through the lens of gender but also by focusing on the lived

experiences of women themselves, according to Hennessy and Ingraham (1997). Materialist feminism also highlights the concept of the empowered, self-aware subject: the idea that individuals in marginalized positions can possess the insight and agency to drive social transformation, state Hennessy and Ingraham (1997). The latter was not true of the majority of Maltese women in the 80s and less so in the 50s.

Miceli echoes Karl Marx when she describes the Catholic religion as the opium of the people. According to Guy-Evans (2024), when Marx stated that religion is the opium of the people, he was referring to the distorted view of life that may be conveyed by the Church's teachings, making a virtue out of suffering and offering no solutions to earthly misery but promising rewards in the afterlife. While Carmen Carbonaro promoted women's self-abnegation, extolling it as a Christian virtue, Miceli said the complete opposite.

In constantly stressing that women need to be financially independent, Miceli was defying Malta's bishops at the time, whose predominant message in their pastoral letters was that, in order to safeguard family unity, women should not seek employment outside the home. As previously expounded in the introduction to this dissertation, the bishops' message remained largely unchanged from the time of Carmen Carbonaro's writing to the time of Pauline Miceli's weekly page and after. Azzopardi (2024, p. 129) observes that "the Church saw economic female liberation in the light of the concurrent call for female participation in politics, and it feared the eroding effects this could have on the fabric of the traditional Maltese family."

Interestingly, Azzopardi (2024) also illustrates the opposition by Maltese women themselves to a change in mentality, which Pauline Miceli saw as a major stumbling block for change. Azzopardi (2024) quotes correspondence in the Times of Malta of 1981, where female readers voiced their opinions on the removal of the Marriage Bar, which had restricted female

employment after marriage. In their letters to the Times' editor, several women expressed their opinion that a mother's sacrosanct duty was to be a full-time child-carer (Azzopardi, 2024). Patriarchal notions had been ingrained in the mentality of generations of Maltese for so long that "when elements of the legislation were changed, as with the removal of the Marriage Bar, the lingering effects remained. More activism was required to put due pressure on the authorities to close the discrimination gaps that persisted" (Azzopardi, 2024, p. 140).

The radical transformation in Maltese society advocated so passionately by Pauline Miceli did occur, albeit decades later, through new policies and law reform. As Cutajar et al. (2023) state, the policies introduced at the start of the millennium facilitated women's entry and retention in the Maltese labour market. These policies, which included a one-year income tax exemption for mothers returning to work after a five-year absence, had the desired effect as during the 2010s Malta registered the highest increase in female employment amongst all European Union member states (Cutajar et al., 2023).

Moreover, as Cutajar et al. (2023) observe, prior to Malta's EU accession in 2004, legislative changes were enacted to reflect EU directives, laws and policies about gender equality. Of particular importance amongst them was the Equality for Men and Women Act, 2003 (Laws of Malta). EU legislation therefore had a direct positive impact on Malta's legal framework where gender equality was concerned. However, entry into the European Union was not the only reason why patriarchy was challenged. Callus (1992) feels that this was also due to the constant pressure coming from feminist groups and individuals in Malta.

In the next chapter I shall present my concluding remarks, mainly comprising the implications of my findings and scope for further research.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

My main objectives when writing this dissertation were to examine whether Carmen Carbonaro and Pauline Miceli, as producers of knowledge through their writings for women and about women in the 1950s and 1980s respectively, sought to challenge the norms and instigate change driven by feminist values of emancipation, or to perpetuate the status quo.

In view of my findings, one can conclude that the messages conveyed by Carbonaro differed greatly from those relayed by Miceli, in terms of both topic and approach. As discussed earlier in this dissertation, Carbonaro seems to have internalized the two prevalent discourses of her time – namely Roman Catholic teachings and patriarchy – and did not seek to challenge the norms. In contrast, Miceli used her writing to make her readers think, and to agitate for change, defying the Church’s teachings in the process. She advocated law reform for gender equality, the introduction of divorce, the use of contraception, and the need for women to be financially independent of their husbands, at a time when Maltese society was still very resistant to change.

Carbonaro remained faithful to knowledge produced by women in the 1950s in the global North. She accepted the gender role expectations of the time (Friedman, 1963), abided by the norm of housekeeping topics (Braden, 2009) thus producing knowledge limited to everyday life, and circulated in contained networks utilizing accepted scholarly traditions. Through her writings, she reinforced women’s subordination in society by promoting the ideology of femininity.

Miceli, on the other hand, had to navigate the complex rules of decorum mentioned by Kafer & Perez (2024) and studied how power operates (Krijnen, 2017). To do so, she used a pseudonym, underlining that she did not feel safe. She critiqued the fact that women have always

been expected to prove their worth by manifesting proficiency in traditionally ‘masculine’ domains, yet they have simultaneously been barred from the very institutions where such skills are cultivated (Phelan, 1990). She was given a women’s page to voice her thoughts. The space allocated to her symbolically questioned her capacity to produce knowledge (Tuchman, 2000), but she used this outlet to question prevalent knowledge and in so doing she reinstated a hierarchy in knowledge production (Phelan, 1990).

My motivation in writing this dissertation also stemmed from the fact that women were excluded for centuries as producers of knowledge – an exclusion that resulted in a masculine perspective being promoted as the norm, and men’s interests and experiences being established as mainstream knowledge, while women’s knowledge and their experiences were sidetracked. My aim was therefore to bring to the fore the writings of two female producers of knowledge, whose articles reflect women’s ‘lived experiences’ and present women’s lives from a female point of view. In analysing these texts and the social contexts in which they were produced, I have provided deeper insights into how Carmen Carbonaro and Pauline Miceli communicated their ideas, influenced perceptions, and shaped the local social discourse.

These social contexts were primarily those of a colonial Malta in Carbonaro’s case and an independent Malta in Miceli’s case. In both cases, however, the underlying common factor is a search for identity. During the last decades of colonialism in Malta, this search was closely linked to the use of the Maltese language by local writers, as observed by Caruana and Grima (2012), and Carbonaro was producing knowledge in Maltese. Miceli, on the other hand, was writing just a few years after the British forces had left Malta for good and, as Doublesin (2025) states, “the loss of a dominant foreign influence [...] encouraged a stronger national identity.”

The writings of Carbonaro and Miceli may therefore be considered as the products of a major transition in Malta's recent history.

My aim in writing this dissertation was also to seek answers to a number of questions about the portrayal of women in the media during two decades of the 20th century, through the writings of Carbonaro and Miceli. Questions such as: What message does this representation convey about gendered expectations regarding behaviour? Does it restrict how women perceive themselves and their life possibilities? What types of lifestyles does the media present as being the most desirable for women? This dissertation has contributed in providing answers to these questions, through an exploration of the media's role in reinforcing gender stereotypes or critically examining them. In so doing, this study embraces the belief that the media has the power to construct reality (Carter, 2012).

Despite the stark contrast between the two writers in terms of content, and despite the fact that Pauline Miceli stands out as the obvious nonconformist, Carmen Carbonaro was also a trailblazer in her own way. Sant (2016, p. 105) says that in a seemingly revolutionary way, Carbonaro encouraged women to take up adult education, even if it was for domestic crafts, like sewing or flower arranging. These, according to the author, were the first steps in encouraging women's emancipation in Maltese society.

In an era when Maltese published writers were predominantly male – except for a negligible number that included women like poetess Mary Meylak and storywriters Ondina Tayar and Mary Caruana (Sharples, 2018) – Carbonaro managed to have her work published. Sant (2016) even states that she published these books herself, making sure to offer them at the lowest retail price possible. The forewords of two of her books were even written by members of the clergy, one of whom described her as an 'apostle', implying that these two priests treated

Carbonaro as an erudite equal. Therefore, Carbonaro paved the way for other local female writers – including those who would later question traditional gender role expectations, like Pauline Miceli herself.

The similarities between the two writers do not stop there. Both women were lucky enough to have received an education, considering the fact – as mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation – that women’s education in Malta in the first half of the 20th century was not given much importance. Both writers produced content by women, about women and for women. Their writing depended on their own lived experiences (Tancred-Sheriff, 1985). Both showed proficiency in a traditionally masculine domain. Both Carbonaro and Miceli were active producers of knowledge, and both redefined the perception of knowledge production in their time – from something that only men did, to something that women could do too. This despite the fact that the knowledge they produced was neither academic nor literary.

As stated in the Methodology chapter, the main limitation of this research study was the fact that Carmen Carbonaro died in 1997 and therefore I was unable to interview her and could only rely on her published writings. She was interviewed by Toni Sant in the 1990s (Sant, 2016), but this interview focused on her radio programme rather than on her writings. Being able to conduct an interview with Pauline Miceli placed me in a better position to understand the social climate in which she was writing, the feminist authors who inspired her, and the goals she wished to achieve through her weekly articles.

The limited word count that had to be adhered to when writing this dissertation restricted the extent to which I could broaden and deepen my analysis. This restriction, however, may provide scope for further research in the future. Since both writers under study presented women’s radio programmes besides writing articles aimed mainly at female audiences, my

original intention was to also analyse the messages conveyed through these broadcasts – an endeavour which proved to be impossible due to my limited word count, but which could provide a future research topic.

For the same reason, I was also unable to examine readers' response to the writings of Carmen Carbonaro and Pauline Miceli. Readers give texts their own interpretation, according to their individual background and experience, and a study in this direction would certainly yield interesting results. This would probably be easier in Pauline Miceli's case, as she allowed space for her readers' opinions on her page.

As expounded in the literature review, in Foucault's view, there is no objective 'truth'; instead, a number of discourses about what is 'true' circulate at any one time or space. Some of these discourses have more power than others to influence people's conceptions as to what is 'true', the most powerful and widely socially accepted forming what Foucault calls 'regimes of truth'. In this dissertation, the focus was on two versions of this 'truth' – one encapsulated the prevalent perception of how Maltese women should 'be', endorsed by the Roman Catholic Church; the other questioned it. Both Carbonaro and Miceli presented their own truth about women, and both were credible. Some knowledge holds more valency, depending on the prevailing discourse in a particular time and space (Read, 2014). Miceli's texts now resonate more since women's equality is given more importance; in Carbonaro's time, the prevailing discourse gave her writing more valency.

On a personal level, this dissertation has been a steep learning curve. It catapulted me into an area of study which was completely alien to me, but which has intrigued me enough to contemplate further research into it. More importantly, as a woman and a former journalist, it

gave me the immense privilege of exploring the writings of two of my predecessors and of weighing them from the vantage point of hindsight.

From Carbonaro to Miceli to the present, women's position in Maltese society has improved greatly, though much still needs to be done. As Azzopardi (2024, p. 140) observes, long after the Second World War,

women were still hard at work to prove their ability of being at once women, mothers, wives and workers [...] More activism was required to put due pressure on the authorities to close the discrimination gaps that persisted. Till then and, more so, since then, gradual improvements were made, but the process of emancipation is far from complete.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: A sample of writings by Carmen Carbonaro

— 23 —

Wisq nahseb li n-nuqqas ikun tal-mara li ma tkunx taf timmanigga u tmexxi d-dar kif ghandha tmexxiha. Wiehed mill-aqwa diffikultajiet taż-żwieġ huwa n-nuqqas ta' ghaqal u ta' hsieb fil-mara. Kif ġa ghedtilkom darb'ohra, hafna xebbiet jitghallmu, per eżempju l-pjanu, u ma jhawdux rashom biex jitghallmu daqsxejn kif jixtru, kif isajru, kif jaghmlu ekonomija fit-tisjir, kif iraqgghu, kif ihejtu xi bluża tal-baby, jew kif ihejtu xi libsa ghalihom, imqar bluża tad-dar. U minhekk imbagħad jigi l-inkwiet kollu. Huwa *assolutament* neċessarju illi x-xebba titghallem dawn l-affarijiet, ghax minn dawn jiddependi jekk iż-żwieġ tagħha jkun suċċess jew le. Ghax ir-raġel iktar jiehu gost nghidu ahna, li jsib ikla tajba, u tfal liebsin minn idejn il-mara stess jigiġifieri bil-hajta tagħha, id-dar u t-tfal indaf tazza, milli joqghod jismagħha ddoqq il-pjanu; mhux qed inghid hekk ghax il-mużika mhix haġa sabieha wkoll, ghax iktar il-mara ma tkun taf, iktar haġa sabieha, imma ftakru dejjem li l-ewwel ma jirbah *in-neċessarju*, dak li hu iktar bżonn, dak li hu iktar mehtieg għall-hajja, imbagħad, s'intendi, haġa sabieha li l-mara tkun iktar kolta, intelletwali, jigiġifieri li studjat xi soġġetti li jagħmluha iktar kapaċi, iktar presentabbli u iktar interessanti. Imma nafu ahna li l-ingliż ighid, "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach," jigiġifieri li r-raġel isir iktar ihobb il-mara jekk din tkun issajjarlu tajjeb. U din haġa naturali, ghax ir-raġel jiehu gost bl-ikel tajjeb, u fl-istess hin, jiehu gost bil-hsieb u bl-attenzjoni li l-mara jkollha lejha. Fl-istess hin, l-ikel tajjeb jagħmel il-bniedem iktar f'sahhtu, iktar kuntent. S'intendi bikel tajjeb ma rridx infisser "gula", jigiġifieri li wiehed għandu jiekol iżżejjed, imma ikel bnin u msajjar tajjeb.

U issa ngħaddu daqsxejn għal xi doveri ohra tal-mara li huma xejn inqas importanti minn dawn li ġa għedt. Ftakru illi l-kuntentizza tagħkom, t'issa u tal-futur, tiddependi għal kollox minnkom, jekk tkunux tafu taqdu d-doveri kollha tagħkom sewwa jew le. L-ewwel ma ngħidilkom huwa, illi kull xogħol jagħmel unur lil min jagħmlu; huwa l-ghażż biss li jiddiżonora lil-bniedem; u allura ma għandekx tiddejjaq mill-faċendi u malli tiżżewweg jew jekk inti miżżewġa diġa', għandek iggiegħel ir-raġel ihoss illi ma hemmx post bħad-dar, jew aqwa mid-dar; ix-xogħol tiegħu naturalment iġegħlu forsi ma jirritornax lejn id-dar hlief fil-ghaxija; u allura għandek toqghod attenta illi ma tilqghux bil-buli u bil-geddum u bid-dgergir; Itakar li ma tul il-ġurnata huwa forsi ikun iltaqa' ma' hafna inkwiet u tfixkil, u għal bżonn jirritorna d-dar imdejjaq u nkwetat. U allura x'jigri jekk jara li inti bil-buli wkoll? Tinqala' xi ġlieda bejnietkom, u hu allura ma jibdiex jiehu gost meta jispiċċa mix-xogħol

jigri d-dar, jibda forsi jfittex xi każin jew xi club; inti tinkweta ruhek, u tibda l-hajja infeliċi; u ta' min ikun it-tort, mhux tal-mara, li ma gharfitx iġġib ruhha sewwa mieghu?

Ftakru li r-raġel ma żżewwiġx biss biex ikollu min inaddafu u min jsajjarlu; imma huwa jrid is-simpatija tal-mara wkoll, jigifieri illi hija tikkonfortah fid-dwejjaq li jkollu, jew li jista' jiltaqa' magghom. Huwa jistenna mill-mara tiegħu s-simpatija, il-konfort, il-kuraġġ, u r-rispett. Huwa jrid mara li tghinu fil-battalji tal-hajja; li ttiħ parir tajjeb; li tispiralu kuraġġ; mela taraw kemm huma kbar id-doveri tal-mara fiż-żwieġ, kważi nistgħu nġhidu li l-mara trid tkun taf almenu ftit minn kollox, trid tkun taf kif għeditkom diġa' kif timmanigġa d-dar, u biex tagħmel dan trid tkun taf il-prezzijiet ta' l-affarijiet u trid tkun taf minn fejn l-aħjar li tixtrihom; trid tkun taf issajjar tajjeb u bil-ħsieb, jigifieri li ma tahlax; ftakru li l-importanza tattisjir tajjeb hija kbira, għaliex minn hekk tiddependi tista' tghid is-saħħa u l-kontentizza tal-familja; trid tkun taf traqqa' l-hwejjeġ bil-galbu, trid tkun taf tnaddaf id-dar u tagħmel il-faċendi bl-ordni u bil-għaqal, u ftakru li iktar ma żżommu l-ordni fid-dar iktar tagħmlu l-faċendi bil-qalb u iktar tagħmlu hom malajr; għandu jkollkom post għal kollox u, aghmlu kollox f'postu biex b'hekk thaffu x-xogħol; għandha żżomm ruhha pulita u nadifa, u hekk iżżomm it-tfal ukoll, għax l-irġiel, għalkemm forsi għalihom infushom daqsxejn traskurati, jobogħdu jaraw lill-mara diżutli u t-tfal mhux indaf biżżejjed. Mela l-indafa fuq kollox, anki imħabba s-saħħa tal-familja.

Ftakru li s-sbuħija tal-wieċ u tal-persuna ma tikkompensax għan-nuqqas ta' ndafa fil-mara. U din haġa hafifa biex wiehed jagħmilha; hasil ta' spiss, bluża nadifa u pulita, biżżejjed huma biex inti tirrendi ruhek mara li tieħu gost hares lejha; għax fejn ikun hemm mara nadifa, bieżla, allegra, mhux buruża, li din dejjem tilqa' r-raġel bi tbissima minflok bid-dgergir, żgur li r-raġel tagħha ma jħalli qatt lil daru għal xi postijiet oħra.

Issa peress li kulhadd huwa soġġett għal mard, kull mara għandha tkun kapaċi tieħu kura tal-marid. Fil-mard, spiss jigri illi l-kura tajba tal-marid tiswa' wisq iżjed minn hafna mediċini. In-"Nursing" huwa wiehed mill-affarijiet meħtieġa ferm fil-mara miżżewġa, u dan jirrendik bżonjuża kemm għall-familja tiegħek, kemm għall-ġirien, li forsi jigri li jkollhom bżonn tal-għajnuna tiegħek. U allura huma iktar japprezzaw jekk int tkun taf tghinhom. U issa nixtieq nammonikom fuq xi nuqqas ta' ftehim li jista' jinqala' bejnietkom, jigifieri bejn il-mara u r-raġel, speċjalment fil-bidu taż-żwieġ, jigifieri fil-bidu tal-hajja tagħkom ta' miżżewġin, għax xi drabi hwejjeġ żgħar, għal xi

nuqqas ta' ftehim jew ta' xi paċenzja jew tolleranza, jiġifieri li wiehed ma jiehux paċenzja b'xi difett ta' l-iehor, jistghu minn hwejjeg żghar, isiru kbar; u jkun hemm xi konsegwenzi koroh; u dan kollu fuq haġa żghira, ghax ma jkollniex il-kapaċità, jew it-tattika li dawn il-hwejjeg żghar inhalluhom ighaddu, u ma naghmluhomx bi kbar, anzi ma natux każ taghhom. Dawn id-diffikoltajiet nistghu nevitawhom billi nistudjaw id-difetti, l-istramberiji, biex nghid hekk, tal-karattru ta' xulxin, jiġifieri kemm tal-mara u kemm tar-raġel, ghax ma ghandniex nghidu kulhadd ikollu xi difetti, ahna lkoll ghandna xi difett jew iehor. U ahna ghandna nistudjaw dawn id-difetti tal-karattru tieghu, tar-raġel, bi skop tajjeb, jiġifieri bl-iskop li nikkoreġu, jekk nistghu, dan jew dak id-difett, imma bil-hlewwa, b'intenzjoni tajba, jiġifieri mhux bi ġlied, imma bil-kelma t-tajba, bil-prudenza; ahna n-nisa ghandna dejjem niftakru illi bil-kelma t-tajba tohroġ il-gurdien mill-mohba tieghu, mhux bil-ghajjat, mhux bix-xenati, imma bil-kwiet, bl-iskop li tirrangja s-sitwazzjoni, u mhux li tgharraha iżjed bi kliemek, ghax l-ilsien tal-mara ghandu jkun aktarx miksi bil-ghasel, milli bil-hall, ghax il-hall iqarras l-istonku. L-ilsien Alla tah lill-mara biex bih tisserva għall-ġid, f'dan il-każ, biex iwitti t-trieq mill-ostakoli li jistghu jinqualghu, fil-hajja taż-żwieġ. Jekk inti tinduna li forsi minghajr ma ridt, tajt xi dispjaċir lil żewġek, la toqghodx, qabel ma tara x'inhu l-inkwiet tieghu u taghmel mill-aħjar biex tirrangja s-sitwazzjoni, u tnehhilu n-nervi. Dik ix-xewqa li l-miżżewġin ikollhom li joghġbu lill-xulxin bl-imġieba taghhom fil-bidu taż-żwieġ, ma ghandiex tispicċa ftit wara ż-żwieġ, imma ghandha tibqa' sejra għal għomorhom kollu, biex b'hekk tinżamm il-paċi u l-armonija bejniethom. Kul wiehed ghandu jahseb tajjeb fl-iehor, u ghandna nneħhu kwalunkwe hsieb li jista' jnaqqas dik il-ghaqda ta' fiduċja perfetta, li ghandu jkollhom il-miżżewġin f'xulxin. Xejn u hadd ma ghandu jnaqqas din il-fiduċja f'xulxin, ghax jekk din il-fiduċja tonqos, allura tibda biex tispicċa l-felicità, tispicċa l-paċi, u jibda l-inkwiet u l-infelicità. Mela naghmlu hilitna kollha ahna n-nisa; f'idejna qeghda ċ-ċavetta tal-paċi tad-dar, f'idejna l-muftieħ tal-kontentizza tal-familja; ahna ghandna nkunu dawk l-ghassiesa tajba li ma jhallux l-animali feroċi jersqu lejn id-dar taghna; tghiduli intkom, kemm irridu nkunu xorti ahna n-nisa! U kemm irridu nkunu nafu xorti! Veru dan, imma taqtghux qalbkom; ghax bir-rieda tajba kollox isir, ftit tal-paċenzja, ftit tat-tattika, ftit tat-tolleranza, jiġifieri nissaportu d-difetti ta' xulxin; ftit tas-sagrificċju, ftit ta' rażna ta' lsienna, u r-riżultat ikun tant tajjeb u sabieħ, illi jirrikompensana ta' dak li nkunu għamilna bil-mija fil-mija. Taqtghux

qalbkom; ittamaw f'Alla, u jtolbuh l-ghajnuna, u kollox taraw li jigikom façli; ftakru li Ġesù qal, "Il-madmad tiegħi huwa helu, u t-tagħbija tiegħi hija hafifa."

U fl-ahharnett ser insemilkom dak il-kliem sabieħ li jghid s-saċerdot biex jitlob għall-gharusa fil-quddiesa taż-żwieġ. Istm-ghu daqsxejn xi ġmiel ta' diskors iġhid, "Halli l-madmad ta' l-imhabba u tal-paċi jiġi fuqha. Sinċiera u pura, ġieġhha tiż-żewweġ fi Kristu, u ġieġhha dejjem timxi wara l-passi tan-nisa qaddisa. Ġeġhha tkun għażiża għal żewġha daqs Rakele, għarfa daqs Rebekka, ghomorha twil u fidila bħal Sara. Ara li missier id-dnub ma joprax il-ħażen fiha; ġieġhha tkun dejjem magħ-ħada mal-fidi u mal-kmandamenti; ġieġhha tkun fidila lejn żewġha u taħrab irġiel oħra; ġieġhha ssahħa id-debbolezza tagħha bid-dixxiplina; ġieġhha tkun serja fl-imġieba tagħha u onorata għall-modestja tagħha. Ġieġhha tkun imghallma taj-ħieb fir-Reliġjon; ġieġhha tkun prolifika; jiġifieri li jkollha tfa-ħieħel li l-ħajja tagħha tkun tajba u mingħajr dnub, biex b'hekk tirbah il-mistrieħ tat-tajbin fir-Renju tas-Sema."

IS-SHUHIJA TAD-DAR, U TAL-FAMILJA

Id-dar! X'kelma helwa hija din għall-qalb tal-bniedem! Jekk induru d-dinja kollha, ma nsibu mkien bħad-dar. Il-lukan-di, it-teatri, il-każini, postijiet tad-divertiment, immorru feju immorru, żgur li ma nsibu mkien bħad-dar. Ġħax id-dar, għall-bniedem, m'hijiex dawk l-erba' hitan tal-ġebel li jiformawha, imma l-imhabba, il-kumpanija, il-kuntentizza u l-unjoni li jkunu jirrenjaw fiha. Iktar ma l-bniedem jiġri mad-dinja, iktar iħoss il-bżonn tad-dar, tal-familja. Ġħaliex jekk ikollok id-dinja kollha kemm hi, imma ma jkollokx dar tiegħek, id-dinja ma hijiex hliet ħabs, ħabs kbir, iva, imma ħabs. Tkun fqira kemm tkun id-dar tagħna, imma mkien hlietħa ma jissodisfana, u mkien ma naraw isbah minħa. U allura kemm għandna nib-żgħu għal din id-dar tagħna, aħna n-nisa, għal din il-familja tagħna! Kemm għandna nibżgħu u noqogħdu attenti għas-shu-hija tagħha, għall-għaqda tagħha, li ma tmurx tiġġarraf, li ma tmurx tiddividi ruħa, tinqasam u tinfired! Ġħax jekk jiġri hekk, inkunu tħifna kollox, inkunu tħifna l-isbah teżor, biex ngħid hekk, għax jekk il-familja tiddistruġġi ruħha kawża tagħna, ta' l-im-ġieba ħażina tagħna, ara kemm inkunu ġibna gwaj u għawġ u deni, lil min imissna nħobbu l-iktar, il-membri tal-familja tagħ-na stess.

Issa ser nagħtikom eżempju ta' żewġ idjar, ta' żewġ familji, l-ewwel wahda ta' bniedem għoli hafna, famuż, fl-istorja tad-

TA' DENBU TWIL

•Qeghdin noqorbu lejn tmiem dan is-seklu. Nahsbu li ngħixu fi zminijiet imdawla, zminijiet fejn l-injoranza qridniha. Nahsbu li Tahnna mohhna. Ahna

Ahna ikoll insara. Anzi Kattolici u ghadna hekk kwazi mija fil-mija. Ir-rizultati ta-censiment li għadha kif għamlet il-knisja għadu ma thabbarx. Imma anke jekk in-numru ta' nies li jmorru jismighu il-quddies naqas, il-knisja qeghda tassikura li Malta tibqa' fuq kollox kattolika daqs kemm kie-

net. Bizezjed inharu lejn dak li t-fal zghira fil-klassijiet elementari jgħallmu. Bizezjed nisimghu ix-xandir. Bizezjed naraw x'inhu jghid il-Papa dwar il-familja, dwar id-divorzju.

Nibdwew bit-fal. Tifa zghira li qeghda fl-ewwel sena fl-iskola tal-gvern, digħa taf it-talb kollu. Tmur id-dar tagħmel inkwarru tal-Madonna u tixgħelha x-xema kuljum. Il-fjuri taqtagħhom



Fazola biz-zalza

IKOLLOK BŻONN:

- 200gr. fazola bajda niexfa
- ftit tewm
- 2 imgharef zejt
- werqa salvia
- 200gr. tadam

KIF TAGHMILHA:

•Ahsel il-fazola. Halliha tixxarrab għal madwar tnax-il siegħa fl-ilma kiesah. Ara li jkollok ilma bizezjed biex ikollha x'tixrob. Sajjar fl-ilma li fih tkun xarrabtha sakemm il-fazola tkun irtabet, iżda issajjarx iżzejjed.

Waqf is-sajran iżzidx la melh u lanqas zejt, għax inkella ddu iddar biex issir. Jekk issajjar fi pressure cooker issajjarx għal iktar minn 20 minuta.

Halluha tibred fl-ilma tagħha.

Go kazzola saħhan iż-zejt u fih aqli t-tewm. Meta jsir saffi l-fazola mill-ilma u iżda mat-tewm. Żid magħ-

biex tpoqgħom quddiem il-Madonna. Meta fit-triq tara nieca jew statwa tal-Madonna, tbusha, ttrodd is-salib u ttredden bħal pappagalit t-talba li għallmitha t-teacher. Dan mhux bizezjed. Tgħallmet digħa l-istorja ta' Adam u Eva. Taf b'dak ta' denbu twil. Tqum bil-lejl imbezza' minn ta' denbu twil. Taf x'm'għandhiex tagħmel. Tiegħu l-impressjoni li r-religjon hija mibnija fuq il-biza' u fuq dak li m'għandek tagħmel. Xejn dwar is-sbu-hija tan-natura, xejn pozit-iv.

ASTRATTA

Religjon astratta, immirata biss biex tillingħom. Dik hija s-sodda ta' l-edukazzjoni Religjuza, u l-formazzjoni Kattolika li t-fal tagħna qegħdin jircievu

...tieghu l-impressjoni li r-religjon hi mibnija fuq il-biza'

MILL-ORIZZONT
TAL-MARA

l-iktoċ CARMEN



Kitbiethom

Għazija Carmen, Madt pjaċir naqra dwar dak li nkteb dwar il-prez-zijiet għoljin li qed jitol-buna għal-frott. Tassew li dan l-abbuz għandu jin-qata' malajr kemm jista' jkun għaliex min għandu familja zgur li ma jistax ilahhaq ma' dawn il-prez-zijiet.

It-twaqqif tal-Għaqda tal-Konsumaturi zgur li tghin f'din il-problema. Dan l-abbuz madt pjaċir naqra bit-twaqqif ta' din l-Għaqda u l-attenzjoni li bi hsiebha tagħti sabiex fi zmien il-Milied il-Konsu-matur jigi protett mill-prez-zijiet esagerati u mill-kwalità nferjuri tal-prodotti li jkun hawn fis-suq. Jiema nistgħu nighed l-attenzjoni tal-garreja tiegħek u fuq kollox tal-Għaqda tal-Konsumaturi dwar l-esplorazzjoni tagħna l-għarrajjes mis-sidien tas-swali tat-tigijiet. Forsi mhux serq li għal nofs ta' nhar qed jitolbu-na nħallsu mitt lira u aktar?!

Il-għala ma jsirx grad-ing mill-Caterina Board u l-prez-zijiet jigu f'issati skond il-klassifikazzjoni? Kull min qed jipprepara biex jizzewweg jaf x'jien ngħid u japprezza hafna l-intervent tal-Għaqda tal-Konsumaturi.

GħARUSA, Qormi

fl-iskejjel ta' l-listat ukoll. Din l-edukazzjoni tkompli wara l-hin ta' l-iskola fil-klassijiet tad-duttrina li t-fal bilfors ikollhom jattendu biex jagħmlu l-precett. L-argument ta' xi whud li jghidu li kulhadd għandu l-libertà li jagħzel jekk iridx ikun Kat-toliku jew le, tagħmilx il-precett lit-fal tiegħek jew le, ma japplikax. Ipprova mur l-iskola u lment. Ipprova insis-ti biex it-fal tiegħek ma jagħmlux il-precett u ara x'jigri. Mhux veru tezisti t-tolleranza.

Din l-istess attitudni u tagħlim tar-religjon ibbazat iktar fuq id-dnub u x'm'għandek tagħmel in-komplu nsibuha f'kull livell fl-edukazzjoni. Tkun id-dar tisma' x-xandiriet tar-relig-jon għat-fal u zghazagh li jattendu l-iskejjel sekond-arji. Xejn li jgawwilek qal-bek. Xejn li jiftahlek moh-hok u ruhek. U nistaqsi għal-fejn l-iskejjel sekondarji għandhom biss xandiriet tar-religjon fuq ir-radju? Għalfejn din il-preferenza meta fl-iskejjel għandhom il-lezzjonijiet tar-religjon bħal ma għandhom lezzjonijiet oħra? Meta għandhom atti-vitajiet religjuzi kemm trid.

Għalfejn ma ngħallmu-homx jiehdu hsieb saħhit-hom, u jgħallmu jagħzlu ikel tajjeb biex inrawwmu-hom jevitaw il-mard? Dan ma jgħallmuhx fl-iskejjel. Jew huma numru zghir wisq li jgħallmuh. Bniat biss.

Biex jitkellmu dwar il-familja, dwar kwistjonijiet so-cjali dejjem għandna l-qassisin. Bħallikieku l-qassis huwa xi espert fuq kif tah-sibha u thossa l-mara. Qed insemi dan għax fil-pro-grammi tan-nisa, dejjem ikun hemm il-qassis. In-nisa jit-kellmu biss fuq kif tarma d-dar, tieghu hsieb id-dar, il-figura tiegħek, jew riċetti. Mhux għax ma sarux xi sforzi, imma għadna 'l bogħod.

Nieghu d-divorzju bħala kwistjoni li tinteressa 'l kul-hadd. Hawn numru konside-revoli ta' nies li jridhu. Nafu li jezisti wkoll moviment biex f'pajjizna tghaddi wkoll din il-ligi tad-divorzju. L-istat lajk suppost jaf li d-divorzju

huwa dritt uman li m'għan-dux iahdu lic-cittadmi tiegħu. Ftit kienu l-mezzi ta' komunikazzjoni li ta cans lil dan il-moviment jesprimi ruhu. Li tidher kiha favur id-divorzju. Fuq ir-radju u t-televizjoni jsiru diskussjoni-jiet. Kelliema ta' dan il-moviment qatt ma gew mis-tiedna. Imma l-qassisin dej-jem kienu hemm. Avolja nafu preciz x'inhi l-pozizzjoni tal-knisja dwar id-divorzju. Il-papa lanqas ma nes-siena l-gimgha li għaddiet meta kien Spanja li d-divorz-zju huwa hazin.

Imbagħad minn fuq, il-kap-pijiet Kattolici jghidu li sirna materjalisti wisq. Li l-edu-kazzjoni tagħna fl-iskejjel ta' l-listat hija mmirata biex tghallim biss lit-fal biex għada piughada jkun jist-ghu jahdmu. Tiegħu l-im-pressjoni li l-formazzjoni re-ligjuza, t-fal Maltin jistghu johduha biss mill-iskejjel religjuzi li biex tattendi fihom trid thallas. Johduha bi kbira għax l-istudenti tal-Liceo l-Gdid jingħataw bonus ta' punti meta jappli-kaw biex jidhlu l-università.

Kellna bzonn ahna s-so-cjalisti f'Malta konna għaqlin daqshom. Huma tassew ulied id-dlamijiet, u jafu li jaqbilhom ihalluna fid-dlam.

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Ihza'

#AXIX...AHNA GHANDNA GHALFEJN NIPPROTESTAW!

IL-GINGHA li ghaddiet f'Malta dabet l-ewwel kunsinna ta' haxix li l-gvern xtara minn barra biex iforni fit-tit mill-htigijiet tal-poplu Malti, wara l-protesta li l-bdiewa imx-ewwxa b'dew jaghmlu. Illam l-interessi partigiani f'din il-kwistjoni hargu fil-berah. Jien qatt ma kelli dubji dwarhom.

Kelna l-opportunita' f'jum wiehed biex nixru haxix importat flimkien ma' haxix imkabbar lokalment. Stajna naraw id-differenzi. Mill-ewwel ngħid li nittama li dan il-konflitt jispicca. Imma jekk biex jispicca jkun ifisser

li ahna l-konsumaturi mmorru minn taht, allura, ahna ikoll konsumaturi, għandna nqumu bil-forzi kollha tagħna biex għall-ewwel darba fl-istorja ta' pajjiżna, il-kelma tagħna tins-tema' sew, u nuru li ma nistghux nibqghu niġu trrat-tati ta' oggetti li minnha kulhadd lest li jerda'.

Il-prezz tal-haxix ta' barra kien irhas. Il-kwalita' tajba. Stajna nqabblu. Stajna mor-na ahjar. Kulhadd seta' jin-nota li fuq kabocca ta' barra l-bejjiegh tal-haxix kellu 100% qliegh fuq kull kilo. Jigifieri li huwa kilo kabocci xtrah 10c u lina bieghhulna 20c. Seta' kellu l-hsara. Kollox sew. Imma għalfejn 100% qliegh?

Stajna ninnotaw ukoll kif xtrajnieh. Iz-zokk kien im-qaxqax sew, u l-weraq żejda

kollha mnehhija. Mhux bhal ta' Malta. Zokk twil ohxon u iktar weraq milli kabocci. Min siefer, u hafna siefru u marru fi hwienet u raw kif il-konsumaturi barra huma moqdija jafu li l-haxix hekk jinxara, bhal ma ahna xtrajna l-kabocci li gew minn barra. Għalfejn m'għandux ikun hekk hawnhekk ukoll?

•SISTEMI

Jekk il-gvern gab minn barra kabocci u haxix iehor bi prezz daqshekk baxx, allura l-bdiewa Olandizi marru minn taht? Ma ridux ninsaw li t-trasport iqum ukoll. Il-bdiewa barra minn Malta m'humiex esposti għall-elementi bhall-bdiewa tagħna? U dawn l-prodotti gew ukoll minn pajjiż fejn il-pagi huma it-tripplu tal-pagi tagħna. Ma nistax nifhem.

MILL-ORIZZONT
TAL-MARA
tikteb CARMEN



Imma jidher li s-sistema li biha niproducu l-ikel f'pajjiżna hija wahda bazwija għall-ahhar, wahda li ahna l-konsumaturi qegħdin inhallu qares biex tagħtina x'nieklu.

Forsi mhux is-sistema tat-tkabbir biss hija għolja. Is-sistema tal-bejgħ ukoll trid tinbidel b'mod radikali. Dan jekk ahna tabilhaqq irridu li l-jeddijiet tagħna bhala konsumaturi jigu mharsa.

L-għaqdiet tal-konsumaturi, għandhom jistudjaw sew kif jahdmu s-sistemi ta' distribuzzjoni

f'pajjiżi oħra. Għandna nagħtu wkoll lok biex nizviluppaw sistemi ta' koperattivi tal-konsumaturi, li fl-ahhar mill-ahhar huma mezz mill-iktar importanti biex ahna niġu moqdija taj-jeb.

Wasal il-waqt li norganiz-zaw irwiehna sew, u nuru s-sahha li għandna biex ma nhallu 'l hadd ikompli jir-fisna. Ahna għandna għal-fejn nipprotestaw u nagħmlu d-dimostrazzjonijiet! Wara kollox dejjem ahna l-konsumaturi mmorru minn taht.

Kitbietkom

IRRIDU NKUNU UMANI

Ghaziza Carmen. Jien wahda mill-hafna qarreja tal-pagna tiegħek, u nixtieq nesprimi l-opinjoni tiegħi fuq wiehed mis-suggetti li qajjem kontroversji kbira dan l-ahhar. Bla dubju qed nirreferi għad-divorzju iwa jew le?

Inhobb naqra l-fehmiet ta' daw k li jiktbulek, mingħajr ma noqghod nigğudika lil hadd. Wara kollox hadd ma għandu dritt jigğudika.

Jien personalment ma tantx jien favur id-divorzju, għax fil-fehna tiegħi iħalli effetti koroh fuq it-tfal, izda nkun tassew egoista u njananta, jekk għax iz-zwieg tiegħi s'issa huwa success, naqbad inwaddab certu diem xejn konsolenti fuq i vittmi li jkunu sabu ruh-om fi stat ta' disperazz-
ni.

Il-bniedem huwa jaf inn x'biex ikun għaddej, inutli li noqghodu nipp-edkaw li d-divorzju wa xi haga ta' min jist-erriha, sempliciment ax ma nkunux fil-żizzjoni iddisprata li nu huma.

Orsi huwa veru dak li idu, li dak li għaqquad a m'għandux ihollu iedem, izda Alla żgur nqas qal lir-raġel biex jar, isawwat jew jittlaq artu għal mara oħra. inqas ma qal lill-mara tittraskura u tibdel lil ha ma' raġel iehor. Li kulhadd joqghod jix-
qal Alla, la jsir qtil, u vandalizmu, u jsiru ffarrijiet sew.

divorzju ma jin-x għal xejn b'xejn, ingħata fuq provi u odi li jagħmluha im-bli għall-koppja li flimkien taht saqaf l. Bhal ma nis-om jgħidu, it-tabib

DIVORZJU...Iridu jgarrqu u jbezzgħu

DARBA kien hemm mara li kienet temmen, li jekk uliedha johorġu mid-dar, tant jistgħu jiltagħqu ma' perikli, li għal snin twal għalqithom żewġa. Meta l-awtoritajiet sabuhom, it-tfal kienu fi stat mizerabbli. Hekk qed jippruvaw jagħmlu il-kattolici Maltin. Ibezzgħu lill-poplu Malti mill-konsegwenzi u l-periklu li jista' jgħib miegħu d-divorzju f'pajjiżna. Juzaw 'l Alla, u l-kelma ta' Kristu kif iridu, biex lill-poplu Malti jhallu maqful gewwa fid-dlam bhal dik l-omm ta' l-istorja li sehhet tabilha-qq.

Anzi ahna diġa wasalna fl-istat mizeru ta' daw k l-ulied vittma. Jekk ahna li hrigna fil-berah biex nitkelmu favur id-divorzju, ma nkomplox bil-għieda tagħna, allura l-poplu Malti se jis-picca mejjet u bla sinsla iktar milli diġa huwa.

Mhux veru li għandna familji magħquda. It-tifrik qiegħed hemm. Li ttipprova żżommu bil-forza qiegħed tmur kontra l-jeddijiet tal-bniedem. Il-knisja u l-istampa konservattiva jridu li jkomplu jinjoraw ir-realtà li ilha tezisti.

M'għandhomx fatti. M'għandhomx argumenti. Kollox mibni fuq il-biza'. Biex tiehu idea agra ftit l-ittri u l-artikli, flimkien ma' l-editorjali li jidhru fil-gazzetti. Ibezzgħu bid-dnub li qiegħed f'mohhhom. Ibezzgħu bl-effetti fuq it-tfal u l-popolazzjoni.

Dan l-ahhar l-argument, li koppji jkollhom inqas ulied jekk ikunu hawn id-divorzju qiegħed jintuza spiss. Ma nafx jekk tistax issejjahlu argument. Juzawh minn fuq kitba li tapplika għall-qawwiet il-kbar, li meta jridu iktar popolazzjoni u familji kbar iduru għall-iktar mezz ripressivi. Jekk il-popolazz-
joni f'pajjiżna tonqos, giđ għandha tagħmilna u mhux

kien. Anzi jekk persuna li tkun hadet annullament minhabba impotenza, lil din tikkundannaha. Bl-ebda mod ma thalliha terga' tizzewweg.

Hafna nies iriduh

U fejn fi żwieg annullat, żwieg li qatt ma kien jezisti ikun hemm it-tfal, dawn x'inhuma? Lanqas jezistu? Din hija l-libertà tal-kuxjenza? Din hija l-imhabba li l-knisja u l-forzi li jżommu magħha, għandhom lejn l-ulied? FL-argumenti kollha kontra d-divorzju, fejn jissemmew it-tfal, jgħidu li numru kbir ta' delinkwenti jkunu gejjin minn familji fejn il-genituri jkunu divorzjati. U

d-delinkwenti f'pajjiżna fejn m'hawnx divorzju, minn fejn gejjin?

Tgħid qegħdin jgħidu dan kollu biex ifarfro minn fuq spallejhom respon-sabbiltajiet oħrajn li l-knisja għandha lejn il-genituri u l-ulied? Hadd minnhom qatt ma jsemmi studji oħrajn fejn l-ulied stess jitekellmu favur id-divorzju, għax huma gejjin minn familji divorzjati u jafu x'tip ta' hajja kienu għaddejjin minnha qabel, meta l-genituri tagħhom kienu flimkien. Dawn ukoll jezistu.

Id-divorzju insostnu li

huwa jedd civili, u għandu jingħata lil kull cittadin li jinhtiegu. Hemm hafna nies u rġiel li jriduh. Hemm hafna kattolici li jemmu li l-istat għandu jagħtiulhom. Hemm ukoll hafna nazz-jonalisti li jriduh. Li fil-għurnali tal-knisja u fil-għurnali l-oħra ma tithallix tidher kitba favur, jew ftit minn dak li jintbagħat juri kemm huma jipprattikaw il-kuntrarju ta' dak li jipp-redkaw. Dan huwa nuqqas ta' tolleranza għall-opinjoni-jiet diversi, u è-çahda ta' tagħrif bilançjat lill-qarreja tagħhom. Dan imur kontra l-libertà tal-kuxjenza.

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M'għandhomx iigu għax gew!!

•INT għandek il-jedd li tiddeciedi kemm u meta għib l-ulied fid-dinja. Int għanduk jkoll ukoll il-jedd li tagħzel iigħis jew ma għibx ifaf. Fi kliem iehor, int għanduk jkoll il-jedd li tikkontrolla gisemk int stess.

Imma l-kliem biss ma jservi għal xejn. Jekk hadd ma jgħidli b'hekk possibbli li tkun taf x'mezzi hawn biex l-ippjana l-familja tiegħek, u jekk ma tkunx tista' tuzahom, allura m'għandek ebda jedd. Dan il-jedd temfasizzah bis-shih il-Gnus Magħquda, meta tikkellim dwar x'schem għandhom il-Gvernijiet rigward iċ-ċittadini, li l-popolazzjoni dinjija. Kull persuna għandha tithalla biex tagħzel l-aktar metodu tajjeb għaliha.

Il-helsien tiegħek għandu jigi rrispettat. Hekk ukoll għandu jigi rrispettat il-jedd tal-kumpanija tal-popolazzjoni. Pajjiz-na għandu popolazzjoni qawwija li tista' twassal għal b'tagħta jzjed, għalik u għall-generazzjoni ta' warajk. Int għandek tqis dawn l-affarijiet meta tigi b'hekk tiddeciedi kemm ikolluk ifaf.

Sfortunatament imma, hafna koppji li jkunu forsi ddecidew li jkollhom zewġ ifaf, jispicjaw biex fl-aħhar mill-aħhar ikollhom tieta, erbgħa jew hamsa "La gew mhux se tarminhom", issib hafna li jgħidulek. Familji ikbar minn hekk issib ukoll.

Ebda stharrig għadu ma sar biex inkunu nafu kemm koppji jkollhom x' metodu jew iehor ta' l-ippjanar tal-familja. Hafna mill-koppji, iżda "joqogħdu attenti", jew kif hafna jgħidu, "jagħmlu hazin", bl-isperanza li l-mara ma tohroxx taqla. Hemm diversi metodi ta'

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l-ippjanar tal-familja, imma ma nafux kemm u lema minnhom qegħdin jintuzaw l-aktar min-nisa u l-irgiel Malin.

L-injoranza f'dan ir-rigward hija kbira. In-nies għandhom idea vaga u mhawda ta' l-effetti li jistgħu jkollhom xi mezzi ta' kontraazzjoni. Il-Knisja u l-movimenti ta' Kana li sa fit ilu kienu l-unici li joffru servizz bhal dan, għalkemm jinsistu li kulhadd għandu l-jedd li jagħzel, ma jagħtux informazzjoni oħra dwar il-metodi li l-Knisja ma tapprovax. Dan m'għandux tkun. Imma fuq il-mezzi tax-sandir, iktar tisma' li dawn u l-opinjoni tagħhom, milli tisma' lil-persuni oħra jikkellmu dwar il-mezzi l-oħrajn kollha li jeżistu.

Int għandek tkun taf ukoll xi zviluppi jkunu saru fuq dawn il-metodi, il-pillola kontraazzjoni, il-minha hawn diversi kwalitajiet addattati għal kull tip ta' nisa, m'humix dawk ta' għoxrin sena ilu. Għandek tkun taf x'riskju fihom jekk tkun taf ukoll dwar l-injezzjoni Depo Provera, li għandha effetti kontraazzjonali aktar fit-tul, imma li s'sisa għadha mbix "hielsa" b'izejje mill-periklu.

li d-domanda għal dan is-servizz, hija akbar minn dik min-tennija. Hemm il-btega ta' aktar nies imbagħta f'dan il-qasam, u kellemi għal dawn iċ-ċentri qal li s-servizz dal-waqt se jespandi biex jinkludi wkoll servizz ta' pariri dwar problemi marbutin mal-hajja sesswali.

Imma ma nisgħux ngħidu li n-nies hija infurmeta b'izejje dwar il-mezi kollha ta' kontraazzjoni. Imkien ma tara avvisi biex kulhadd ikun responsabbli, u minn fejn tista' tiskiseb informazzjoni cara. Bil-Malti ma ssib xejn li jispjegalek kif jagħmlu l-metodi ta' kontraazzjoni. Huma dawk li fit il-sejn jafu bl-Ingliż, li l-aktar għandhom bzonn dawn il-pariri, u dan it-tagħlim.

Int għandek tkun taf ukoll xi zviluppi jkunu saru fuq dawn il-metodi, il-pillola kontraazzjoni, il-minha hawn diversi kwalitajiet addattati għal kull tip ta' nisa, m'humix dawk ta' għoxrin sena ilu. Għandek tkun taf x'riskju fihom jekk tkun taf ukoll dwar l-injezzjoni Depo Provera, li għandha effetti kontraazzjonali aktar fit-tul, imma li s'sisa għadha mbix "hielsa" b'izejje mill-periklu.



MILL-ORIZZONT TAL-MARA
tikteb CARMEN



Dwar il-'coil' nisimgħu biss min iwissina, għax forsi tista' tkun abortiva.

Xejn dwar kemm tista' tmur tajjeb biha.

Zviluppi għadhom isiru. Dan l-aħhar per eżempju, it-Taljani bdew jiproducu forma għda ta' "diaphragm". Id-diaphragm li normalment jintuza jipprova fit-vagina mill-mara qabel ma jkollha x'taqam sesswalment. Din l-ispeċi ta' koppja tithalla f'potha għal madwar sitt siegħat, u meta wzata flimkien ma' xi spermicida, toffri protezzjoni tajba. Din l-istess bhal condoms uzati mir-ragel, m'għandix effetti hżiena.

It-Taljani zviluppaw id-"diaphragm", b'mod illi jagħ-

mlu l-uzu tagħha iktar prattiku. Minflok ma toqgħod tabiel sew kull darba wara li tuzaha, parti minnha tkun tista' tinbidel, u tintrema.

Dan kollu għandna nkunu nafuh sew, il-kontraazzjoni hija xi haga aktar tagħna n-nisa, għaliex il-kontraazzjoni ta' naqqas ta' hseb dejjem aħna neħu bihom. Kif jgħid il-Malti, "ir-ragel qal dejjem bandiera bajda".

Għandna nibdew nieħdu aktar inizzjattiva u responsabbiltà fl-attività sesswali tagħna. Meta l-fertilità tagħna jkollna kontroll fuqha, inkunu għamilna l-ewwel pass biex nipplanaw sew hajjina. B'hekk biss id-destin ikun f'idejna.

Tagħlim kontra n-nisa

•KONT hsbti li fl-aħhar xi hadd kien indenja ruħ jaqbad il-kwistjoni tan-nisa biex iqanqal aktar kuxjenza dwar kif is-sitwazzjoni tan-nisa Malin tista' titjeb. Imma murt imqarraq meta d-dramm "Is-serdu fil-gallinar" magħzul bhala wieħed mill-aħjar drammi mtelgħin mill-iskejje, gie pprezentat fit ilu. Dan mhux talli ma jgħinx biex titqajjem kuxjenza, talli l-effetti hazin li seta' halli fuq min rah, u aktar u aktar fuq il-ftajtiet li bih inhadem dan id-dramm ifixkel bis-shih il-hidma li saret s'issja biex titjeb il-qagħda tal-mara u dik tas-soċjetà Maltija.

F'dan id-dramm suppost soċjali, insibu lin-nisa, minn pozzizzjoni servili u ta' ebda poter, kif għadha s-sitwazzjoni preżenti ta' hafna nisa, f'revoluzzjoni jiehdu l-poter u jibdew imexxu huma min-flok l-irgiel. John Suda l-awtur ta' dan id-dramm żvoga l-pregudizzju qawwi, biex ma ngħidk ukoll il-mibgħeda kontra n-nisa, meta nisa, giegħhom iduru bis-shih kontra l-irgiel għas-simpliċi raguni li huma irgiel, ukoll l-animalli rgjel, tant li n-nisa fil-poter qed-duhom kollha.

Il-messagg kien ċar. Jekk lin-nisa nagħtuhom cans biex jakkwistaw il-poter, huma mhux talli jirrepetu l-izbalji ta' l-irgiel, talli jkunu aghar minnhom. Fl-aħhar tad-dramm insibu lin-nisa

jimorru għall-gwerra biex ikabbru l-hakma tagħhom. Imma "ta' nisa li huma", jiti l-fuq, il-kap tagħhom tahrab, u l-uniku salvazzjoni għalihom tkun is-sejba ta' serdu fil-gallinar, jigi fieri li nergħu lura għal fejn konna qabel bdejna.

Min jaf x'ridu tabillhaqq in-nisa, u għaliex qed jiggieldu jaf li dak li ntwera kien biex jostkura l-movimenti tan-nisa, li hafna minnhom jiggieldu biex ikun hawn ugwaljanza vera, mhux dominanza kif jimplika d-dramm. Min jaf x'qed jagħmlu l-movimenti kollha tan-nisa madwar id-dinja, jaf li n-nisa huma minn ta' quddiem fil-għieda għall-paci. Huma kontra l-vjolenza. Irgiel li feħmu jafu li biex ikun hawn il-paci, id-dinja trid tagħti kaz ta' x'qegħdin

jitolbu n-nisa, jafu li huma wkoll għandhom x'jirbhru. Id-dramm kien insult kbir għan-nisa. L-ingurja hija ikbar meta tqis li geġja minn

nies li l-ghan tagħhom għandu jkun li jedukaw. Fejn huma l-ideat soċjalisti u progressivi? Li rajna kien eżempju ċar tal-kuntrarju.

GHALIK U GHAL HADDIEHOR

•L-GHAQDA Min-Naha Tan-Nisa, għadha kif waqqfett ferġha li tikkoncentra fuq is-sugġett tal-ippjanar tal-familja. L-iskop huwa li permezz ta' xogħol voluntarju, l-għaqda tkun tista' tgħin biex in-nisa jkollu speċjalment f'dan il-jedd, u ruħom f'dan il-qasam tant importanti fil-hajja ta' kull persuna. Dawk il-persuni speċjal-

ment nisa li jhossu li jistgħu jgħinu, u huma lesti li jkollu kontribuzzjoni biex dan l-ghan jintuzaq, huma mit-tal-ghan jikkontattjaw il-Għaqda Min-Naha Tan-Nisa, PO Box 956 Valletta, jew icemnu fuq in-numru tal-telefon 882647 bejn 1.4.00 p.m. u 6.00 p.m. Tistgħu wkoll tiktbu f'dan l-indirizz "Carmen", mill-Orizzont tal-Mara, WMB, Valletta.

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Appendix 3: Questions addressed to Pauline Miceli during the semi-structured interview

- i) What prompted you to start writing a regular women's column in a local newspaper in the 1980s?
- ii) How would you describe the situation of Maltese women in the 1980s with regard to: employment opportunities; access to education; reproductive justice; role in the family; family laws?
- iii) What were the main themes that you tackled in your column?
- iv) Would you have liked to tackle other topics but they were deemed too controversial at the time (by yourself or by your editor)?
- v) Were there any articles that you wrote but that remained unpublished for one reason or another?
- vi) Were there any clashes between you and the Church authorities due to your published articles?
- vii) Were you a practising Catholic at the time of writing?
- viii) How would you describe your readers' response to your articles at the time?
- ix) Why did you feel the need to use a nom de plume for your articles?
- x) Did you suffer any personal backlash because of your writing?
- xi) Did your activism impact family life?
- xii) At the time of writing your column, were you a member of any women's group? If yes, did this help or undermine your advocating role?
- xiii) Do you think that in the end you achieved the aim that you set out to accomplish when you started writing your column?

Appendix 4: A small section of the transcribed semi-structured interview

Carmen huwa s-second name tiegħi, it-tieni isem tal-magħmudija. Meta bdejt nikteb, jekk ma kontx qtajt ir-radju kont qiegħda biex. Għaliex imbagħad jiena reġgħu fetħu l-applications fin-1980 biex jimpjegawna. Kumbinazzjoni kienu avviċinawni tal-Education biex niġġojnja l-ischools broadcasting, u allura that was the same line tar-radju u t-television, u rġajt dħalt fl-education. Jiġifieri dawra, naraha qisha spiral.

Domt hafna hemmhekk imma tant kont inħobbu s-suġġett li ma ridtx naqta' u mbagħad għedt mela orrajt ħa niffoka naqra fuq il-gazzetta, nibda nikteb. Fil-bidu li bdejt nagħmel ir-radju lanqas kont naf nikteb sew bil-Malti, imma tgħallimt, u mbagħad speċi hekk, biex nikteb kont inħares ħafna, kont naqra kummentaturi u opinjonisti nisa fil-Guardian, fl-Observer u hekk u kien jogħġobni wkoll l-istil tagħhom. U għedt ara it's a good idea, issa speċi għandi biżżejjed knowledge biex nikteb u nkun koerenti u nikteb b'mod ċar.

Lanqas kienet a women's page actually. Ma ridthiex tkun ħaġa tan-nisa traditional, għaliex naħseb hemmhekk kont tindirizza niktat l-irġiel hemmhekk, fil-gazzetta, mhux nisa biss, bħar-radju. U ħassejt li ok I'll try this. Jiena dejjem kont nieħu pjaċir nipprova xi ħaġa ġdida. U bdejt nagħmilha. Kellhom ukoll naħseb xi vacancy hemmhekk u aċċettaw li nagħmel il-paġna. U bdejt nagħmilha regolari. Kienet naqra biex tipprepara iktar xogħol mir-radju sa ċertu punt, għax imbagħad ir-radju tibda tidra u tagħmel in-noti, timxi, imma mbagħad print trid tirfinah naqra biex joħroġ il-messagġ ċar. Jiġifieri għandek medium differenti, firxa u udjenza naqra differenti.

Meta bdejt jien fuq ir-radju, hemmhekk radju biss. Radju Malta biss u mbagħad kien hemm Radju Malta II, imma kien għadu fil-bidu tiegħu. Allura kulhadd ir-Radju Malta kien

jisma', kellek udjenza. Gazzetti kellek hafna udjenza oħra, diversa, kompletament differenti, u ridt noqgħod pass lura mill-media, għax il-media ddejjeq. Min kien jarani fuq it-television kienu jagħrfuni anki minn leħni min ma kienx jafni di persona. Min kien jieħu gost jisimgħek jgħidlek bil-qalb, l-oħrajn Hm Hm inti dik?

Opportunitajiet ta' xogħol għal nisa miżżewġin ma kienx hemm hafna, għaliex l-ikbar stumbling block kienet il-mentalità. Mentalità tan-nisa u mentalità tal-irġiel, li meta mara tizzewweġ, ir-raġel kien jistenna li tibqa' d-dar, ma tmurx taħdem, huwa l-breadwinner. Int ma tilbisx il-qalziet tar-raġel, dik kienet il-general idea. Il-biċċa l-kbira tan-nisa kienu jaċċettawha din. Ftit kienu jirribellaw għaliha. Dik kienet naħseb l-iktar ostaklu x'tegħleb, il-mentalità. Kienu jaħsbu li issa ma tibqax tal-ġabra, tittraskura t-tfal, titlaq ir-raġel, dawn l-affarijiet. U jekk inti qed taħdem, il-mentalità kienet li la inti qed taħdem mela r-raġel ma jistax iżommok.

Raġel 'emancipat' xorta jagħti kas x'jgħidu n-nies, imma jekk inti tkun determinata li trid tagħmel xi haġa, naħseb jirrealizza li isma' mhux qed taffettwani, anzi aħjar. Għax jiena nieħu mill-każ tiegħi, jien kont xorta nagħmel ix-xogħol li kelli x'nagħmel u l-biċċa l-kbira tan-nisa kienu jibqgħu jagħmlu l-istess affarijiet qishom to prove themselves – isma' mbilli qed noħroġ naħdem xorta qed nagħmel l-istess affarijiet kif jagħmlu n-nisa tad-dar. Però fejn jidhlu t-tfal imbagħad, kemm l-għajnuna fid-dar I mean biex jagħtu sehemhom fid-dar kif ukoll fit-tfal that was a no no eh mill-irġiel. U hafna min-nisa kienu jhossu li dak huwa dover tagħhom. Jien anke Charlie kien jgħidli, "Mhux int ridt toħroġ taħdem? Hadd ma bagħtek taħdem. Mela hu ħsiebha inti, biddlilha inti l-ħarqa, ħudha inti għand ommok." Imma mbagħad ftit ftit. Il-culture change iddum, u għadha mhix kompleta ovvjament, ħamsin sena wara.

Appendix 5: A copy of the approval email received from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Malta

Subject: FW: The status of your REDP form (ARTS-2024-00363) has been updated to Approved

----- Forwarded message -----

From: <form.urec@um.edu.mt>

Date: Fri, 1 Nov 2024 at 10:40

Subject: The status of your REDP form (ARTS-2024-00363) has been updated to Approved

To: <daniela.attard.11@um.edu.mt>

Dear Daniela Attard Bezzina,

Please note that the status of your REDP form (ARTS-2024-00363) has been set to *Approved*.

This status change was accompanied by the following explanation/justification: *Dear Daniela, I refer to your Research Ethics and Data Protection application ARTS-2024-00363. The Faculty Research Ethics Committee has reviewed your application and has determined that your research is in conformity with the University of Malta's Research Code of Practice. You may therefore proceed with your research.*

You can keep track of your applications by visiting:

<https://www.um.edu.mt/research/ethics/redp-form/frontEnd/>.

*****This email has been automatically generated by URECA. Please do not reply. If you wish to communicate with your F/REC please use the respective email address.*****

Appendix 6: A copy of Pauline Miceli's consent form

Formola tal-Kunsens tal-Parteċipanta

The Portrayal of Women in Maltese Print Media by Two Female Contributors

Jiena, hawn taht iffirmata, naghti l-kunsens tiegħi li niehu sehem fl-istudju ta' Daniela Attard Bezzina. Din il-formola tal-kunsens tispjega t-termini tas-sehem tiegħi f'din ir-riċerka.

1. Inghatajt l-informazzjoni bil-miktub u bil-fomm dwar l-iskop tar-riċerka; kelli l-opportunità naghmel il-mistoqsijiet, u kull mistoqsija nghatajt twegiba għaliha b' mod sfiż u sodisfaċenti.
2. Nifhem ukoll li jiena libera li naċċetta li niehu sehem, jew li nirrifjuta, jew li nwaqqaf il-parteċipazzjoni tiegħi meta nixtieq minghajr ma nagħti spjegazzjoni jew minghajr ma niġi penalizzata. Jekk naghzel li nipparteċipa, jaf niddeċiedi li ma nwegibx kull mistoqsija li ssirli. F'każ li naghzel li ma nkompilx niehu sehem fl-istudju, l-informazzjoni li tkun laqet ingabret minghandi tithassar dment li jkun teknikament possibbli (ngħidu aħna, qabel ma tiġi anonimizzata jew ippubblikata), u sakemm l-għanijiet tar-riċerka jkunu jistgħu jintlahqu u ma jintlaqtux serjament. Nifhem li Daniela Attard Bezzina se jkollha aċċess għall-informazzjoni personali tiegħi u li jista' jkun hemm ċirkostanzi fejn supervizuri u eżaminaturi jkollhom bżonn aċċess għall-informazzjoni personali tiegħi għal skopijiet ta' verifika.
3. Nifhem li għejt mistiedna nipparteċipa f'intervista semistrutturata, u f'aktar minn intervista waħda jekk ikun hemm il-ħtieġa, u l-persuna li qed tagħmel ir-riċerka se tistaqsini għadd ta' domandi biex tesplora l-messaġġi li jien kont ngħaddi li nisa oħra permezz tal-gurnali stampati fis-snin 80, u biex tanalizza jekk bil-kontribut tiegħi jien kontx qed nipprova nżomm l-istatus quo jew inkella nisfida n-normi u ngħib bidla. Jiena konxja li aspetti marbuta ma' twemmin reliġjuż se jkunu diskussi matul din l-intervista/dawn l-intervisti. Jiena konxja li l-intervista/i se ddu/jdumu bejn wieħed u ieħor sagħtejn jew tliet sigħat kull waħda. Nifhem li l-intervista/i se ssir/jsiru f'post u f'ħin li huma komdi għaliġa.
4. Nifhem li l-parteċipazzjoni tiegħi ma fiha l-ebda riskju magħruf jew mistenni.
5. Nifhem li bil-parteċipazzjoni tiegħi f'dan l-istudju, m'hemm l-ebda benefiċċju dirett għaliġa. Nifhem ukoll li din ir-riċerka jaf tkun ta' benefiċċju għall-oħrajn għax se tixhet dawl fuq il-qagħda tan-nisa Maltin fis-snin 80 permezz ta' analiżi tat-temi li ffokajt fuqhom fil-kitbiet tiegħi f'dak il-perjodu, u analiżi tal-messaġġi li jien kont inwassal lill-qarreġja tiegħi.
6. Nifhem li, skont ir-Regolament Ġenerali dwar il-Protezzjoni tad-Data (GDPR) u l-Ġegizlazzjoni nazzjonali, għandi dritt naċċessa, nikkoreġi u, fejn hu applikabbli, nitlob li l-informazzjoni li tikkonċernani tithassar.
7. Nifhem li l-informazzjoni kollha miġbura se tiġi arkivjata f'temp ta' sena minn meta jitlesta l-istudju.
8. Inghatajt kopja tal-ittra ta' tagħrif biex inżommha u nifhem li se ninghata wkoll kopja ta' din il-formola tal-kunsens.
9. Konxja li, jekk nimmarka l-ewwel kaxxa t'hawn taht, inkun qed nagħti l-kunsens tiegħi biex l-intervista/i tiġi/jiġu rrekordjata/i bl-awdjo u maqluba/in f'kitba fl-istess waqt (traskrizzjoni).

IMMARKA BISS DAK LI JAPPLIKA

- Naqbel li l-intervista/i tiġi/jiġu rrekordjata/i bl-awdjo.
 Ma naqbilx li l-intervista/i tiġi/jiġu rrekordjata/i bl-awdjo.

10. Konxja li, la qed nimmarka l-ewwel kaxxa t'hawn taht, qed nitlob li nara siltiet mit-traskrizzjoni tal-intervista miegħi li r-riċerkatriċi se tirriproduċi fir-risultati tar-riċerka tagħha qabel ma jiġu ppubblikati. Jiena konxja wkoll li nista' nitlob li jsir xi tibdil fihom jekk ikun meħtieġ.

IMMARKA BISS DAK LI JAPPLIKA

Updated by UREC on 18 July 2022

- Nixtieq nara siltiet mit-traskrizzjoni tal-intervista/i mieghi li r-riċerkatriċi se tirriproduċi fir-riżultati tar-riċerka qabel ma jiġu ppubblikati.
- Ma nixtieqx nara siltiet mit-traskrizzjoni tal-intervista/i mieghi li r-riċerkatriċi se tirriproduċi fir-riżultati tar-riċerka qabel ma jiġu ppubblikati.

11. Konxja li, jekk nimmarka l-kaxxa t'hawn taht, inkun qed nagħti l-kunsens biex l-identità tiegħi tkun żvelata fil-pubblikazzjonijiet, fir-rapporti jew fil-preżentazzjonijiet li joħroġu minn din ir-riċerka, u li t-tweġibiet li nipprovdni jaf ikunu kkwotati direttament jew indirettament.

- Naqbel li l-identità tiegħi tkun żvelata fir-riżultati tar-riċerka.

12. Jiena naf li l-intervista/i tista'/jistgħu ssir/jsiru online wkoll; f'dak il-każ ir-riċerkatriċi se tuża z-Zoom u se tattiva l-għażla tar-*Require Encryption for 3rd party endpoints SIP/H-323*. Ir-riċerkatriċi se tirrekordja l-filmat tas-sessjoni.

Qrajt u fhimt l-istqarrijiet t'hawn fuq, u naqbel li nippartecipa f'dan l-istudju.

Isem il-partecipanta: Pauline Miceli
Firma: 
Data: 7/01/2025

Daniela Attard Bezzina
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