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FEMALE TYPOLOGIES IN THE MEDIA.BUILDING THE FEMALE MEDIA CHARACTER. EVOLUTION AND METHODS

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Abstract:In addition to the function of watchdog of democracy, the media has the power to create, defend or destroy people and personalities on their way of conquering their personal or professional dreams. Women, either seen as muses or as a disadvantaged category, are often valuable media subjects, capable of generating rich journalistic content, often sympathetic, intriguing, moralizing or educative. In recent years, the presence of women in televised talk-shows has grown beyond that of men, the number of women's senior management positions has also increased, as well as interviews with women as experts. Instead, in films and television commercials, the presence of women has fallen, and that of men has fulminantly increased.
In the present paper, we shall analyze and exemplify the way of building and the perception on certain typologies of female media character, such as the heroine woman, the goddess woman, the courtesan woman, the cultured woman, the wife woman wife, the mother woman or the contemporary woman

Keywords: media character, mass-media, the heroine woman, the goddess woman, methods, typologies

Mass-media is the right place to create celebrities, personalities, and to change or shape people's lives. Together with the development of worldwide media, the readers, viewers' appetite for the closest knowledge of people's lives, for their personal and professional life details has grown. This appetite for voyeurism has also developed the shapping of models borrowed from the media. In this paper we'll talk about how the media builds the media characters, especially the feminine ones, and we'll identify different typologies. We chose to look at media figures such as the heroine woman, the goddess woman, the courtesan woman, the myth woman, the cultured woman, the wife woman, the mother woman or the contemporary woman. We'll take as an analytical environment both the Romanian and the international areas.

The press, like also advertising, works with symbols. Typologies, traits, framing, are based on world culture, on the popularization of literary works or famous characters. The heroine woman is an old concept, well-rooted in many cultures. It is the woman who sacrifices herself for a dream, for an ideal and chooses to face fate with dignity, in order to achieve a noble goal. The Communist period was the best time to promote the woman as the heroine, born out of the necessity of that society: “The consolidation of the communist regime in Romania implied concerted efforts to promote women and settle in the forefront, according to the Soviet model, of perfecting the identity of the beautiful sex, both socially and politically. The traditional role of mother and wife is now doubled by the right and responsibility to take up a job and to exercise

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its new political attributions. Propaganda, mainly maintained by the press, portrays the woman's portrayal of communism as a heroine, reuniting fantastic powers of devoted mother, zealous worker and fierce warrior in the name of socialism."[1] It is practically required the masculinizing of the woman, and, also, to overcome the natural threshold of mother and wife in order to approach the man's capabilities and activities. At the same time, this alleged equality is highly controversial: "The new identity of a woman consists of a double polarization process: on the one hand, the woman is defeminised in the public space, becoming equal on the labor market with the man, but on the other hand, she becomes a heavily sexed subject in the domestic space."[2]

The heroine woman of the Communist era was Elena Ceausescu, who fulfilled all the criteria stated above: "On this occasion, the women of the country will pay a special homage to comrade academician engineer Elena Ceausescu, member of the Political Executive Committee of the Communist Party, Minister of the Government, President of the National Council of Science and Education, eminent revolutionary militant, highly scientific scientist."[3] Today, the heroine woman is the one who, besides the roles of mother and wife, also deals with the development of a career or a business.

But the heroine woman we chose to present in this work is Ecaterina Teodoroiu, who marked the history of Romania and who was even decorated as the heroine of her generation. She participated in the First World War, where she first went as a nurse. After the death of her brother, on the front, she decided to join the army, as a soldier, to replace him and continue his struggle. She wanted to fight in her brother's memory and take further his ideal. He died on the front, shot in his chest, where his heart beat for his country. Ecaterina Teodoroiu's motivation was so strong that the risks were secondary. She sacrificed the security, the peace that a family would give her, to defend the honor of the brother killed and to save the country.

The goddess woman is another typology, commonly found in the press and literature of all time. About goddesses we know stories since antiquity, myths are being built, roles are assigned, temple buildings are built, and offerings are dedicated. The goddesses are the ones that protect, guide and help in fulfilling dreams. Located above the earth, they are omnipotent and ubiquitous, they are models to follow and represent the dream of becoming of many women. For men, the goddesses are the supreme partners, the most beautiful women, the most wise, brave, balanced and worthy to lead the world with them. In Greek mythology, we meet "besides mother woman (Hera), the infernal woman (Persephone) and virgin women (Artemis and Athens)."[4] Mythology "also proposes the category of women as a symbol of beauty, pleasure and love, personified, of course, by Aphrodite."[5] Among the goddesses who lived on this earth was Cleopatra. She became the Queen of Egypt after using her personal charms to conquer Caesar and, along with him, all of Egypt. About this queen of Egypt there are a lot of writings, even

[1] Șerban, Alexandra, *Communist woman: heroine mother, worker, activist* https://www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/femeia-comunista-mama-eroina-muncitoare-activista, available at 07.05.2018.
[2] *Ibidem.*
[3] Sofronie, Madalin, *Women in Romania during communism: protective mothers and skillful workers,* http://adevarul.ro/locale/slobozia/femeile-romania-timpul-comunismului-mame-protectoare-muncitoare-iscusite-1_54fc09f6448e03c0fd5857a9/index.html, available at 07.05.2018.
[4] *The woman in mythology,*https://istoriiregasite.wordpress.com/2012/10/30/femeia-in-mitologie/, available at 07.05.2018.
[5] *Ibidem.*

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today, screenings are made and a long time and space is devoted for: "Since the first decade of the twentieth century, periodic adaptations of the famous pieces signed by Shakespeare and G.B. Shaw are played, but no satire is missing. The 20s-30s abound in various approaches of the character, especially during the interwar period. In the era of glory of the epic film, the most notable productions are running. Shortly before the end of the war, came up the British production *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1945), an adaptation of Shaw."[6] The way this goddess is presented to the public is "an extrapolation of the new woman ideal of the 20s-30s, which begins to benefit from more political, economic and personal freedoms."[7]

Today, the goddess woman is an exalted beauty, an image often used in advertising: "She does not only promote a product exclusively for her, but she can promote men's products (perfumes, cars), relying on the attraction she exerts on the man: he will certainly look at a woman's ad (even more if nudity is appreciated) and will involuntarily access the message."[8] A contemporary example for the embodiment of the goddess woman is given by Mihaela Radulescu, the television star. The press sees her as a professional woman, a mother, a lover, who successfully manages to combine all these aspects and, in addition, to maintain herself in the top of the most beautiful and appealing women in Romania. Television appearances are based on sensuality, seduction, and on the promotion of love. At a simple search of her name on Google, we find 239,000 results. Most of the article's titles mention either the appealing physical appearance or details of her lifestyle: "Mihaela Rădulescu SHOKS again! How she appeared in the break from the Romanians have Talent. The fans have seen ALL", "PHOTO | How posed Mihaela Rădulescu in the backstage of "Romanians have talent". With this picture, fans have gone mad", the personal site "www.mihaelaradulescu.ro/," "Felix Baumgartner has changed his mind and still wants a child? Mihaela Radulescu is ready to become a mother again." The media character goddess woman has evolved, according to social transformations, but the basic characteristics remained the same.

The courtesan woman is a media character detached from stories with sovereigns. In its definition, the courtesan was a woman of free habits, yet elegant, of spiritual nature, living in the courts of the sovereigns. The courtesans were women trained to lure men and give them affection, manifested in all its forms. They were learned notions of general culture, the code of good manners, the art of speech, the notions of clothing and personal care. The courtesans knew how to attract love and how to enter into the minds of the sovereigns. One of the most famous courtesans of a secluded epoch was Agustina Otero: "Born Agustina Otero Iglesias, in her youth everyone knew her as "La Belle Otero". Many years before, before the two world wars, she had been known as the best courtesan in Europe - perhaps the last great courtesan of La Belle Epoque. She had known, among others, Albert I of Monaco, Edward VII of Great Britain and the great dukes of Russia, and had been the target of the envy of many women."[9] She was called Nina and she was dancing in theaters. She conquered the public in Paris and after that, the one in New York. She had a relationship with Grand Duke Petru Nikolaevich, Tsar Nicholas I's

[6]Manea, Irina-Maria, *Cleopatra, from queen to sex symbol* https://www.historia.ro/sectiune/portret/articol/cleopatra-de-la-regina-la-sex-simbol, available at 07.05.2018.
[7]*Ibidem.*
[8] Deleanu, Cristina, *The woman's image in advertising*, https://romaniancopywriter.ro/imaginea-femeii-in-publicitate/, available at 07.05.2018.
[9]*La Belle Otero, the last great courtesan of Europe,* https://www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/la-belle-otero-ultima-mare-curtezana-a-europei, available at 07.05.2018.

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nephew. She would later know Edward, the Prince of Wales, the heir of Queen Victoria, and also the Emperor Wilhelm II. These facts have made her the most famous, but also the most envied woman in Europe. She charmed famous men who did everything for her. She led a scandalous life, based on seduction and debauchery. The media character of the courtesan woman is represented nowadays by the easy women, the mistresses, the women of mild morals. These media characters appear, as a rule, in the tabloid press as young, sophisticated women, who sometimes work as models or television assistants. The statements of the press have a pejorative tone. Even if it promotes their image, on the merchantability criteria, the tone is condemning and reproaching.

The media character woman as myth is found in television, commercials or in movies. We meet idolized women, who have built an untouchable image, an undeniable one. The myth woman is a muse, a symbol-personality, who remained alive, although she is not: "The myth of the deadly diva is as old as the hills. From biblical temptresses to blood-sucking vampires, from the sirens of Greek mythology (whose seductive singing lured many a sailor to his death) to the succubi who appear in men's dreams, women have been portrayed as man-hungry predators throughout the history of literature."[10] She is notorious and is a good model for many brand promotion campaigns. In addition to celebrity and physically pleasant look, she has qualities such as: "Intelligence, intuition, cunning, courage, seductive power, trust and self-esteem, education, virtue, integrity fit into the character of a successful woman."[11] These qualities will be induced, and then, learned, by the women who look at the commercials: "The image of the famous woman in the spots carries out in the mind of the consumer curiosity, confidence in the product and a positive attitude towards the promoted brand. The advertising pioneer, the famous woman, can promote a product as an explanation of success in the targeted field, determining a worthy model or, simply, guarantees the success of advertising and, implicitly, the sales of the promoted product, based on its notoriety and sympathy".[12]

The press and the advertising industry preferred, as most of the times, to choose Marilyn Monroe to represent the myth woman. She was actress, model, singer, sex symbol and pop diva: "The iconic actress Marilyn Monroe remains a contemporary role model even decades after her death."[13] At a simple search of her name on Google, we have 28,100,000 results. All articles talk about the turbulent life of the diva, about her lost love affairs or quotes from her statements. In the photographs, Marilyn Monroe appears provocatively dressed, seductive, while singing or playing in movies.

The woman of culture is the embodiment of the woman who possesses vast knowledge from different fields. She has a high intellectual level, based on universal knowledge. She is the opposite of the media character the plastic woman or the inflatable woman. She has emotional intelligence, dignity and respect for work and devotion. And she acquires them and practices them every day. She promotes culture through every gesture she does and often works as a teacher or as a mentor. The media character the woman of culture is embedded in our society by

[10] Heymont, George, *The Myth of the Deadly Diva*, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/george-heymont/the-myth-of-the-deadly-di_b_1208158.html, available at 08.05.2018.
[11] Deleanu, Cristina, Imaginea femeii in campaniile de publicitate, https://romaniancopywriter.ro/imaginea-femeii-in-publicitate/, available at 08.05.2018.
[12] *Ibidem.*
[13] Marilyn Monroe: The myth, the muse, the legend, http://www.dw.com/en/marilyn-monroe-the-myth-the-muse-the-legend/a-19295592, available at 08.05.2018.

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women like Herta Muller or Ileana Vulpescu. As far as Ileana Vulpescu is concerned, she has 1,120,000 searches on Google, which illustrates people's lower appetite for culture, compared to scandal, love stories and drama. She is presented as a philologist, lexicographer, prose writer, novelist and Romanian translator. The press talks about her lifestyle, the love story between her and her husband, about the books she has written. There is no scandal in the articles, and the media character is treated with respect. The photos embody her with her family or at her work desk.

The media character wife woman meets the criteria set by society for what the ideal wife is. There is a wide range of media articles that define and explain what qualities the ideal wife must have. Among these are: "Learn to prepare his favorite food", "Write to him what you feel for him", "Take care of him", "Help him", "Let him help you with the house chores", "Do not lose your playful spirit", "Surprise him"[14]. And this is not all. The press is abounding in details such as: "The ideal wife must look like everyone thinks she is a mistress!", "Can we talk about the ideal husband or the ideal wife after marriage?", "7 qualities that a perfect wife must have", "How to be a perfect wife." The ideal wife is presented as omnipotent, all-knowing, devoted, good housewife, attentive to the needs of her husband. Numerous books have been written, movies and series have been produced, wives' behaviors from around the world have been analyzed. It has come to the conclusion that this ideal is different from one society to another, from one individual to another, depending on the education, culture and traditions of each area.

The media character the mother woman embodies, in fact, the perfect, devoted mother, sacrificed for raising and educating her children: "The mother is always near you. She is the guardian angel of each. You can find her in the adherence of the leaves you pass by, in the smell of the foods you remember from childhood. She's in the flowers you choose to give, she's in all your everyday smiles. You find her in the hand that touches your forehead when you have fever, in the silence of the rainy days when you feel melancholy, she is in the colors of the rainbow and in the heat you feel on Christmas mornings. The mother bears the world on her shoulders. She is the beginning of all the beginnings, the teacher of the teachers and the book of the books."[15] The mother is the only magical woman and the source of human development. From her are starting to be built the foundations of society and the consequences of children's behaviors are also coming back to her. In all societies, the mother is respected and loved, regardless of country and age. In the Romanian press, different women are presented as being suitable to fit into this category. We will take Anca Serea as an example. She was a model and a news presenter. She is mother of five children. The newspaper titles that sets her in the mother category are as follows: "Chicken pox home to Anca Serea! The star with five children is going through a hard time!", "Anca Serea, mother for the sixth time? We are young and have energy!" Searching on the Google engine, her name gives 306,000 results. Most of the photos that show up place her the midst of her children. In the shows she is attending is asked about children and their growth. She is the promoter of conferences on children's issues, as well as on humanitarian causes concerning children.

[14]How to be a perfect wife. 7 Tricks You Need to Know About Lasting Marriage!, https://www.ele.ro/relatii/dragoste/cum-sa-fii-o-sotie-perfecta-7-trucuri-pe-care-trebuie-sa-le-stii-pentru-o-casnicie-de-durata--39738, available at 08.05.2018

[15] Mother is like a liturgy, is sacrificing by sacrifying,,https://nobleteafemeii.wordpress.com/category/femeia-mama/, available at 08.05.2018.

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The contemporary woman is an extended media character to several types of women. However, the characteristic of all is the independence. Contemporary women succeed in combining career, education, and family activities. There are those modern women who have financial results, regardless of husband or parents, who continue their education, independent of marriage or the birth of children, who build their careers in the fields they like to work, regardless of the financial situation at home. However, the contemporary woman postpones the marriage and the birth of children, to the detriment of professional and financial growth. In the book of *Philosophical Meditations*, Ernest Bernea is extremely tough and confesses: "The great social and moral transformations of the modern world have given the woman the freedom to manifest in full what the old traditions were stopping to manifest, meaning the sensual and peripheral data of human nature. The woman today escapes from the home, runs away from chastity, escapes from maternity, all the defining elements of her nature. Her soul life is too much engaged in sensation and pleasure and too broken of an activity of the spirit, where in the past she excelled."[16] The magazine *The Woman* considered that: "Contemporary woman is only frightened by the word "mediocrity", so she will work until exhaustion, hoping that at the end of the day her work will be significant."[17] You can find the contemporary woman working in corporations, occupying important positions, negotiating with men at the same level. The press presents her with admiration and sustains her work and progress: "Prejudices about Women in Contemporary Society", "Evolution of Women in Society".

The woman, as a media character, is subject to both praise and discredit. The press has an important contribution in building the female media character, who is more common in the media than the masculine character. Through articles, television broadcasts, advertising, photographs, the media has the power to grow or destroy the media characters. It creates them a public profile, a psychological profile and a personal profile. The female media characters are often subject to media lynching, and the image of women, their progress in life, are often in full accord with their representation in the mass-media.

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