



# **The Image of Women in Romanian Advertisements: The 1930s. A Discourse Analysis Approach**

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**Abstract.** This article aims at picturing the image of women as portrayed in Romanian advertising during the 1930s. Torn between forward-looking associations fighting for equal rights and traditionalist tendencies confining the woman to the household, the female image, as captured by adverts, underwent spectacular changes, as a reflection of the mentalities and implications generated by the historical and social background.

**Keywords:** female image, feminist movement, inter-war years, the discourse of advertising, discourse analysis

## **1. Introduction: Aims and methodology**

The present study starts from the assumption that the discourse framework of advertisements represents an important mechanism through which one can investigate how a society is built, viewing it as a cultural, political, economic, and social microcosm. Advertising captures, registers, and renders in a faithful manner the realities of an epoch, evaluating its various constitutive elements synchronically. The canvas of the advertising discourse is imbued with and absorbs the image of the background against which it is painted, committing to the long-term memory of humanity the features and characteristics of the period of time it mirrors.

Part of a larger study dedicated to capturing, portraying, and rendering the image of women throughout time, in Romania, from a discourse analysis point of view, this article is focused, synchronically, on one period of time, i.e.: the 1930s, and it is based on a corpus of 99 adverts, with further studies centred around other time spans. For this, mention needs to be made regarding the corpus of

images that we compiled from the public domain of @ReclameVechiRomanesti. OldRomanianAds (see *Figure 1*) for the purpose of the present study: a selection from the total corpus of 279 advertisements amassed by the authors was operated for the current analysis, focused on the 1930s, as the rest of the database will represent the raw material for the next periods of time we intend to research into:



**Figure 1.** *The database collection*

Moreover, a further subdivision is worth defining, from the point of view of discourse strategy, considering the fact that the items found made the subject of a categorization as either image-focused ads, from which text is not excluded, or solely written text ads, where there is no image present, the latter category comprising articles, announcements, or manifestos.

Thus, in order for the final graphic of the feminine image to be portrayed, a comparative diachronic approach of the changing image of women against the background of the Romanian society will be considered necessary by the authors of the current research, as depicted and reflected by the vivid discourse of advertising.

As a main target, this paper aims at identifying a Romanian prototype of femininity which could make the profile of a feminine figure around the period of time mentioned. It also intends to depict the stereotypes used in the epoch to portray a certain type of image which was desired to be associated to that of women as influenced primarily by the domestic social context and interests as well as by the external factors which could have contributed to the artefact called “woman”.

## 2. The social, educational, legal, and political context of the 1930s with regard to women: The premises of a new emerging trend and its new claims

According to the analysis provided by Vighi (2018), the changing status of women in Romania in the 1930s was driven, first of all, by external factors which contributed to influencing their mentality as a result either of widening their physical horizons, by means of travelling and getting into real contact with international trends, or of having access to education. Their emancipation came as a result of their readings, all against the background generated by World War I and the necessity of women to take over some of the roles of the missing men.<sup>1</sup> Here is what a written advertisement (see Figure 2) portrayed regarding the exact above-mentioned tendencies when depicting the phenomenon called *the masculinization of the woman* in an article by N. Adrian, issued in *Sănătatea* [Health] magazine in February 1938 on page 11:

**MASCULINIZAREA FEMEII**

În toate timpurile și la toate pogoarele, au existat femei, cari s'au dovedit a fi de aceeași energie ca și bărbații, ba uneori i-au și întrecut.

Dovezi avem destule în istorie și e suficienți să amintim de Caterina cea Mare, împărăteasă Rusiei; Maria Theresia a Austriei sau Marguerite d'Anjou, soția lui Henric al VI-lea, regele Angliei.

Toate aceste femei au reușit să învingă în epocile lor, numai grație energiei fără seamăn de care au dat dovadă. Pe lângă energie însă, aceste femei au mai avut și o altă virtute: curajul.

Acestea sunt cele două calități principale cari se cer pentru a răzbi în viață și cu atât mai mult unei femei. Dar cele mai multe femei xresc confundând energia cu brutalitatea sau curajul cu obraznicia.

a) **Omul energie** este acela care poate începe și duce la bun sfârșit o acțiune;

b) **Omul brutal** este acela care n'are alt argument de opus decât forța;

c) **Curajosul**, e individul capabil a săvârși fapte mari, demne de fiinta omenescă, riscându-și de multe ori viața;

d) **Obraznicul** este individul indolent care desfășoară față de ceilalți oameni o acțiune insuportabilă, dându-și pe față poririile urâte.

Până la izbucnirea războiului mondial, femeia și-a îndeplinit rolul ei de mamă, educatoare și bună gospodină, menținând echilibrul căminiciei. De la război însă, femeia a început să-și schimbe mentalitatea. Dorind să mînte pe bărbat în toate privințele, a studiat dreptul pentru a deveni **femeia-avocat**, a început a urma cursurile școlii de sofeuri, iar în timpul din urmă școala de pilotaj pentru avion. Acestea sunt de altfel numai câteva din ocupațiile femeii de astăzi.

Afară de acestea, femeia a căutat să ia și în alte direcțiuni locul și obiceiurile bărbatului. Sunt, de pildă, în Anglia și America, femei polițiste și detectiviste, precum și câteva cari ocupă posturi de marinari pe vapoare de comerț. Multe femei se ocupă și cu pescuitul, fiind pentru unele o sursă de câștig, iar pentru altele un sport, de altfel mult mai potrivit decât automobilismul sau boxul. Pentru acest din urmă sport, s'au găsit câteva amatoare tot printre femeile americane și engleze.

În îmbrăcăminte și portul femeii s'au produs de asemenea mari schimbări: rochiile s'au modificat, imitând croiala bărbătească.

Sunt unele femei cari sfidează pe bărbați prin atitudinile pe cari le iau față de aceștia. Personal, am avut ocazia să văd o tânără doamnă, în costum de călărie, care, după descălecare, și-a scos part-figuratul din buzunar și luând o figură și-a apăs-o. În fața acestei amazoane stătea un domn, care din politețea primea în nas fumul pe care i-l trimitea drăgălașa doamnă.

Masculinizarea femeii a cauzat omenirii un foarte mare rău, întru cât a îndepărtat pe femeie dela rolul ei de mamă și educatoare, distrugând căminicia și căminul și lipsind pe soț de îngrădire și mîngăierile atât de necesare, în viața șucimată de azi.

N. ADRIAN

11

Figure 2. The masculinization of the woman

1 All quotations or paraphrases from Vighi are rendered into English by the authors of the paper.

Briefly summarizing the main features captured by the article, all the traits identified by Vighi as being part of the new woman are present, including the desire of women after WWI to be equal to men, thus changing their mentality and their role from that of mother, educator, and good housewife into that of lawyer, driver, airplane pilot, or police detective. Even the fun or the sports activities can be listed next to those which were previously associated to those of men and men only: fishing, car racing, boxing, or horse riding. The conclusion of the article comprises men's almost general belief in the epoch, which will be dealt with later on in the paper, that "the masculinization of the woman caused humanity a lot of negative things because it drove the woman away from her role of mother and educator, destroying marriage and home and depriving man of the care and tenderness so necessary these tormented days".<sup>2</sup>

## **2.1. The public image of women in the society of the 1930s**

What is yet to be considered before evaluating the new claims and demands regarding the desire to have their position in society changed is the status they "enjoyed" at that time, in all respects. The social, political, and economic contexts that constituted the background of cross-gender relations at the time render the profile of women in the Romanian society of the epoch under discussion.

Thus, from a legal point of view:

[T]he married woman, having the same status as the underage and the ostracized, was not considered a legal person, thus not being allowed to close contracts and to appear at court without her husband's approval. If married to a foreigner, she would lose her nationality. Moreover, "paternity testing" was forbidden. Consequently, exclusively the maternal side had responsibilities towards common children, resulted from an illicit relationship, while the natural father was absolved of any obligation; the woman was deprived of any right regarding the guidance of her children, even when she was a widow; she was also restricted from managing her own or her children's fortune during marriage, and her trusteeship rights over her children were very limited. The exclusive right to use the dowry was entrusted to the husband, and, upon his decease, the dowry of the married woman, alongside all inherited fortune, would be passed on to the relatives of the man or even to the children. In case of divorce, the ex-husband was obliged to return the dowry to the woman only after one year, even if proven that the woman had no means of subsistence whatsoever.<sup>3</sup> (Mihăilescu 2002: 23)

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2 The translation of all advertisement texts belongs to the authors of this paper.

3 All ideas belonging to Ștefania Mihăilescu and rendered in this paper under the form of either quotations or paraphrases are translated by the authors of the present study.



A report on the harsh life conditions of Romanian women presented in 1929 by Alexandrina Cantacuzino – a report to be found in the anthology of texts dedicated to the history of Romanian feminism compiled by Ștefania Mihăilescu – showed that:

[M]ost women performed not only household chores but also the most difficult works in the field, such as ploughing, harvesting, taking care of animals, activities they accomplished even during maternity; during winter, while men rested, they wove carpets, sewed clothes, and did embroidery. Some women were employed in agriculture, on a salary much lower than their male counterparts. Moreover, they did not even have the right to use the money they earned. Most peasant women were illiterate and lacked elementary education. (2006: 18)

The comment upon this situation could not have been offered in more succinct and clear terms than the ones used by Calypso Botez, the President of The Executive Committee of the National Council of Romanian Women, constituted in Bucharest in 1921, who was quoted by Bouleanu in 2017 in an article written for the *Alexandria* magazine:

We, Romanian women, through the Napoleonic Code governing us, are assigned to a category... among children, minors, mentally disabled, and idiots. We are not allowed to administer our property, we cannot do anything without the authorization of men, we cannot raise our children the way we want to, we cannot use any possession inside our households according to our own wishes, as the law assumes that in the house where there is a man, everything belongs to him. In short, the woman only lives under the magic wand of marital authority.<sup>4</sup>

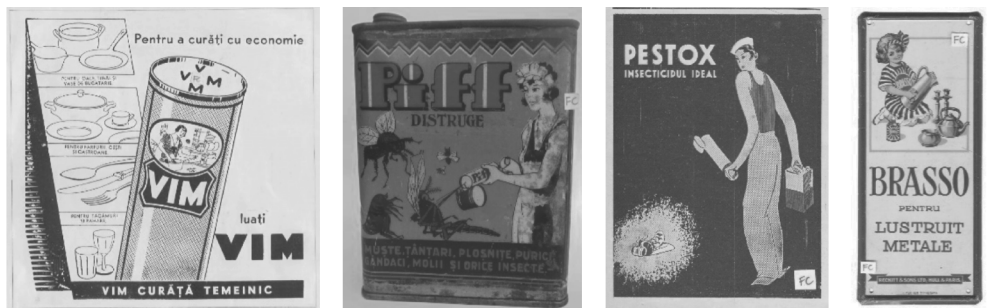
Evidence for this image of women persists in the adverts of the 1930s, even though much milder than in the previous decade, that of the 1920s and before, under the form of either picture-portraits which associate women with household objects and chores (see *figures 3a* and *3b*) or even in the form of written ads which display a multitude of announcements casting women in the role of persons looking for jobs (see *Figure 4*):

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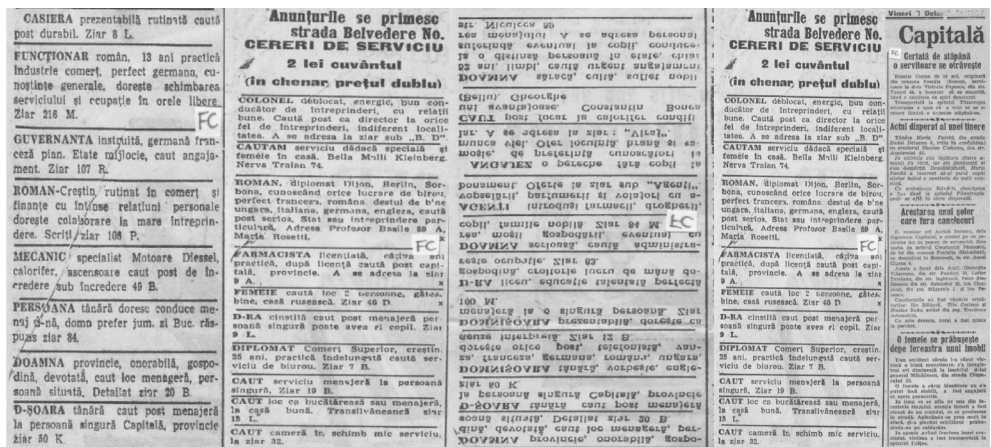
4 Translation rendered by the authors of the study.



**Figure 3a.** *Women associated with household chores*



**Figure 3b.** *Women associated with household chores*



**Figure 4.** *Women looking for jobs via announcements*

*Figure 3* above presents two of the activities traditionally attributed to women inside the house: ironing and cooking, using more modern equipment, meant to make women's life easier when dealing with the household chores, as depicted by *Vremea* [The Time] magazine along the 1930s, the first two belonging to 1930 and the last one to 1937. In the same line of thought, *Figure 4* above brings together the image of women and some substances to be used for housekeeping: dishwashing powder, the ideal pesticide, liquid for polishing metals, all stretching across the same period of time in different magazines.

The range of jobs present in the announcements of the publicity columns in *Curentul* magazine in 1938, as depicted in the selection of announcements in *Figure 4* above, represents a good example in point of female typology regarding workplaces and job profiles: the vast majority of these refer to cleaning ladies or cooks, with minor nuances when considering the governess position and with one exception when describing a young graduate pharmacist looking for a job in the capital city. However, what starts to be striking in the discourse of advertising of the age is the way in which the self-portrait is built by the very female authors of the announcements such as when self-awareness regarding graduation from high-schools, an educated background, or command of foreign languages become marketing features that could add to the personal profile of the woman who self-advertises her own image. The age is varied, comprising young ladies, women no longer in their prime, and middle-aged women, but what is shocking is the fact that even if they provide evidence of a cultivated educational background, they still look for the same traditional gender-associated roles around the house, aiming at minor positions in society. Moreover, the feeble character of women doing all these jobs or being deceived in love is also captured by the announcements as some of them even write about the dramatic consequences women are exposed to when facing harsh reality: some commit suicide by poisoning themselves with different substances as a result of either being no longer loved or having disappointed a pretentious employer or simply die cleaning windows, listed as work accidents.

The above observation becomes even more relevant when comparing the same announcement columns, from the same magazine, in the same period of time, portraying men looking for jobs, emphasizing once again, in real terms, the difference of position on the social ladder: men are colonels, diplomats, clerks with experience in industry and/or commerce and/or finance, wanting to be hired as factory managers or to collaborate with a factory and specify that they want to work in an office as white collars. The exception with men is present in a reversed proportion to that of women when it comes to blue-collar work, only one ad capturing the desire of a man to work as a mechanic or as a boiler fireman.

The aspect related to education configures a very sensitive issue in Romanian society, regarding women's access to it, and not only. Access to education has a fundamental role in the way in which the social self is constructed and,

consequently, in the way social, economic, and political contextual factors build the early-20<sup>th</sup>-century female image. Education offers an outstanding picture of gender roles within the framework of any society.

The worldwide development in the area of education during the 19<sup>th</sup> century must be understood and integrated in the larger context of the undergoing social changes that involve power and domination. According to Bock (1991), education does not represent only the idealist-illuminist attempt to cultivate the mind and elevate the soul but also an instrument of maintaining social control through dissemination of national, moral, and religious values convenient to dominant social categories at a certain moment in time. From a cross-gender perspective, education involved the creation of customized roles, directing women to the household area and men to the public arena (1991: 5).

Romanian women's access to education was acquired with difficulty and struggle against various forces repressing women on political, economic, and social levels. Since the passing of the law on education of the Romanian United Principalities in 1864, women had been fighting for their rights on an equal level to men in the domains of education and in all the other segments of social and political life.

As Mihăilescu renders in her anthology of texts, a vast number of historical documents represent proof that national women's associations, such as *Uniunea Femeilor Române* (U.F.R.) [Romanian Women's Union], *Consiliul Național al Femeilor Române* [The National Council of Romanian Women], *Asociația pentru Emanciparea Civilă și Politică a Femeilor Române* (A.E.C.P.F.R.) [The Association for the Civil and Political Emancipation of Romanian Women], were considered important organizations supporting the international feminist movement (2002: 15).

Access of Romanian women to the public area occurred not as a result of a natural social transformation but as a result of intense activity at the level of these feminist organizations involved in the emancipation process.

In Moldavia and Wallachia, the Law on Education of 1864 stipulated the mandatory and free character of primary education for boys and girls for a period of four years between eight and twelve years of age. The same piece of legislation controls the setting up of an equal number of schools for boys and girls, nevertheless with a different number of classes: five for girls and seven for boys and a smaller number of subjects for girls (Diac 2004: 55). These differences in the number of subjects represent an obstacle on the path to higher education and, consequently, give rise to heated protests (Mihăilescu 2002: 16).

To sum up, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, female roles were mostly limited to the household area, and, even when women acquired access to education outside the family, it was restricted quantitatively and qualitatively as they had the right to a smaller number of years in school and a more limited number of subjects than men. Deprivation of access to knowledge entailed lack of access to many if not most jobs outside the domestic area, which could be

faithfully depicted by the advertisements of the 1930s. Statistics record that women were not permitted to attend higher education in the provinces where Romanians lived at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Up to 1920, women in Wallachia and Moldavia did not have the right to become lawyers (Câncea 1976: 74–76). Up to 1932, married Romanian women were not allowed to own property, to fulfil the role of the tutor for their children (Mihăilescu 2004: 300–301). Up to 1946, Romanian women were not full citizens: they did not have the right to vote in parliamentary elections, they were not allowed to be elected in parliament or become ministers. During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the feminist organizations in the areas where Romanians lived fought for the social and political emancipation of women: access to education, work, jobs which excluded women, the right to vote and to be elected in administrative and legislative positions.

As mentioned by Bouleanu (2017), “access to political life for women in Romania wouldn’t have been possible without the contribution of the representatives of the feminist movement. Ever since the ending of the 1800s, feminist voices started fighting for women’s rights”. Thus, according to Bouleanu:

[I]n 1896, Adela Xenopol was pleading for the citizenship status of women and for their participation in public and political life: “When a woman asks for equal rights in the field of capacities, she is forced not only to ensure her economic state, but she is also asking for her right as a citizen; when the woman will be granted public access, she will work next to her comrades and then the difference between pure politics and political parties’ fights will deepen.”<sup>5</sup>

Between 1918 and 1923, the activities of the feminist movement in Romania intensified compared to the period before World War I. A special representative of the feminist movement, as mentioned above, was Calypso Botez, a graduate of philosophy and history, teacher at Carmen Sylva high school in Bucharest, and President of the Red Cross in Galați. She was the one who laid the foundations of The Association for the Civil and Political Emancipation of Romanian Women (Asociația pentru emanciparea civilă și politică a femeilor române). Through the voice of the feminists, the issue of women’s right to vote had already reached the plenary debate in Parliament in 1922. Hereby we present another idea of Bouleanu, who – quoting Calypso Botez – says:

Granting women political rights was not “a heart-related issue but one of logic and updating. Women will be granted the right to vote because they need it. Considering the fact that they participate in general work, women

5 All quotations from Bouleanu rendered in this paper are translated from Romanian by the authors.

have to have the capacity to impose laws to protect them and to ensure control to them over the products of their work”. In her opinion and that of other ladies, the right to vote for women represented, in the inter-war period, “an urgent national necessity”.

However, after such a fight for emancipation and so many battles won on the political field, the lingering stereotypes profiling women, which are still powerfully displayed in advertisements, can be summarized – in Vighi’s words (2018) – as a powerful attachment to fashion, make-up, or to other petty feminine things. Also, the portrait of the woman is associated with that of a tender, vulnerable creation limited to the confined space of the house, her obsession being with interior design, decorations and shopping as well as with good manners.

In what the interest manifested by the women of the epoch towards fashion is concerned, the multitude of advertisements dedicated to fabrics and textiles, dresses, hats, bathing suits, and shoes (see *Figure 5*), but also to the articles selling tips to the ladies on how to maintain their silhouette and on how to accessorize in style (see *Figure 6*), represent enough proof that the core semantemes which still lingered to configure the paradigm for the image of women were very much tributary to previous clichés:



Figure 5. Clichés

Make-up, hairdressing, crèmes, perfumes, tights, lip-stick, tooth-paste, powders, all put together on the canvas of the advertising discourse of the 1930s account for the feminine paraphernalia that assemble the portrait of the “feminist army of everywhere”, as referred to in *Saloanele de modă PARISUL* on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 1930, or, more relevantly worded, of “the feeble sex”, as addressed to in the *Ilustrațiunea Română* magazine in the column dedicated to Fashion, on the

20<sup>th</sup> of February 1930. *Figure 8* below configures the mosaic of the miscellaneous collection of details that rendered the image of women and of their interests in the epoch under analysis:



**Figure 6.** Multiple facets of women's interests in fashion

The Tokalon crèmes and powders, the Adesgo tights, the Elisabeth Arden and En Vogue powders, the Kissingen diet pills, the Perlodont and Odol brands of tooth paste, the Ritz lipstick, and so on are just a few of the famous makes of feminine cosmetics famous on the market of the feminine industry of the time. As a special characteristic of the advertising discourse of those days, the majority of images displaying products were accompanied by tips and pieces of advice directly addressed to women regarding the way in which they could stay young, look beautiful, and embody perfection (see *Figure 7*) in the earliest attempt to reduce the entire public image of women to stereotypes and clichés, thus doubling the impact over the psychique of female clients.



**Figure 7.** Tips for women to stay young and beautiful



## 2.2. The new claims

Having already claimed “the changing of civil and commercial code articles that have to do with the minority status and legal powerlessness of women” (Vighi 2018)

6 The translation of Alexandrina Gr. Cantacuzino's statement belongs to the authors.



and “[t]he right to vote and to be elected in county councils, law-making bodies as well as the right to occupy any position by virtue of their acquired academic titles” (ibid.), according to Valentina D. Focşa in *The Association for the Civil and Political Emancipation of Women* [Asociația pentru emanciparea civilă și politică a femeii], as formulated in 1919, the change starts to become real during the governance of the National Peasant Party. The latter stipulated giving equal right to vote to women under the pressure exerted by women’s associations on the legislative bodies. Thus, the law on administrative organizations was passed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 1929, and according to it women obtained, for the first time in Romania, the right to vote and be elected in local and city councils. This legislative measure was considered a reward for the decade-long efforts by the Romanian feminist movements (Mihăilescu: 24) and was to be officially celebrated at the national level in 1938, when the women’s right to vote was also granted by the Romanian Constitution.



**Figure 9.** *Women and reading*

In the light of all this, women start changing their habits, their look, their desires and expectations; their role in society is similarly captured by the advertising

discourse which has to adapt to and cater for the new trend. Consequently, representations of women wearing trousers, cutting their hair short, riding a bicycle, smoking, or practising male sports (Vighi 2018), even though referred to as “really revolutionary and directly frightening things for the conservative men of the time, who saw this leap as a real threat to the peace of their home” (Vighi 2018), is quickly depicted and used by the journals, magazines, and newspapers of the time via advertisements.

As obviously depicted by the collage in *Figure 9*, women are now directly associated with reading and even with encouraging to reading by means of an advertisement using the frame-within-the-frame technique such as in the picture of the woman who made a skirt out of newspapers and started shouting out loud to everybody to read the *Dimineața* newspaper, thus disclaiming the fashion obsession of the frail woman and emulating the posture of the boys distributing papers during the war to spread the news about the latest ordeals or pieces of news concerning humankind.

Women are also lead figures on stage, at the opera house, have daring appearances in very short-legged swimming suits, with upright positions of the body, admired by men and looking up or straight in the eye of the camera (see *Figure 11*), which, according to Goffman (1988), are all traits of the male-related gender stereotypes that the discourse of advertising has promoted in a significant measure.

A significant number of products related to life planning and self-preservation start to be promoted by women for women, as intimate hygiene and protection against unwilling intimate diseases (see *Figure 10*) become part of the self-awareness programme that would help women to have a better life.



**Figure 10.** *Women looking after themselves*

Quantitatively analysing the data, the number of advertisements capturing and rendering the image of the modern woman is significantly lower than that of the ones still tributary to the traditional feminine profile, but, qualitatively

establishing a rapport with them, they really made a difference in the epoch and only proved how attentive and sensitive the discourse of advertising is to the changes that a society inflicts upon so many different strata of existence.

### **3. Male-figure reactions in their dichotomic polarization**

The growing emancipatory trend in the Romania of the 1930s gave rise to a number of reactions from important male politicians, members of associations, or writers of the age.

As captured by Ungureanu (2014), Ioan Cantacuzino, a Member of the Romanian Academy, mentions that “women must avoid compromising their image by using the old ways of our political parties. They must represent a unifying factor, not one of strife and destruction.”

The important male members of the Romanian society of the period under analysis contribute to maintaining a traditional female profile, laying stress on the importance of a mainly domestic role and excluding the woman from the leading areas of social, political, and economic life. To this purpose, a Conservatory Party Representative, Constantin Argetoianu, is quoted as saying that “men, while engaging in politics, they engage in nonsense. Politeness prevents me from labelling ladies’ action of doing politics. I believe that, for now, the role of the woman would be more appropriate to her natural disposition if she limited her activity to matters related to the household” (Ungureanu 2014).

In January 1940, in “*Neamul Românesc*”, Nicolae Iorga, the famous historian, academician, and politician, evaluates the newly acquired status of the Romanian woman negatively and sees the evolution of the city as only bringing to the surface the evil side in Eve’s daughters: “Today’s housewives are no longer what they used to be. It’s true, the allure of the city, with its lustrous superficiality contributes incessantly to harmful interpretations, to the weakening of good qualities. Bad tendencies and lack of guidance lead to laziness that one can notice in many rural households. And as for children’s upbringing.... God forbid!” (Vighi 2018).

George Călinescu, a Romanian academician, literary critic, and historian, thought that “the woman is a satellite of man. [...] Her passions are subordinated to her violently practical instincts. [...] The woman is physical, the man – metaphysical” (Ungureanu 2014).

In 1935, in “*Viața literară*” Eugen Ionescu, a francophone Romanian playwright, ridicules the recent change in the female image: “So, we no longer have young writers, but we have girls, only girls, girls’ schools, girls in love, student girls. Go girls! Engage both in culture creation and food making! And here’s the kitchen turned into a cultural salon: Erastia Peretz, Anișoara Odeanu, Lucia Demetrius,

Yvonne Rossignon, Sidonia Drăgușanu, Marta Rădulescu, Coca Farago, Elena Eftimiu, etc.” (Vighi 2018).

Nevertheless, despite the outstanding number of deprecating evaluations of the new female image, the period under discussion witnessed many encouraging and positive stands. Eugen Lovinescu, a literary historian and critic, the founder of “Sburătorul” cenacle, a willing supporter and promoter of feminine literature, author of the preface of the first anthology of literature written by women, opened the door of his cenacle to female writers and guided their writing, the case of Hortensia Papadat-Bengescu being the best-known among them.

## 4. Conclusions

The woman of the 1930s is at the crossroads of two conflicting trends: on the one hand, she is reduced to frailty and confined to the household area and, on the other hand, the emerging powerful emancipatory tendency of the age depicts her as strong, educated, and able. She is no longer a satellite of man but on a par with man.

At times drifting with the political and economic current, shaken and overpowered, defeated but rising from her own ashes, the Romanian woman becomes strong and fights for her rights, independence, and the worldwide recognition of her individuality and power. She empowers herself while breaking the chains of the household realm, creates and advances associations and groups, and becomes educated to gain increasing access to the social, political, and economic stage.

As illustrated in the present paper, this changing female image is captured very well in advertising. The study of ad evolution along the years shows first a frail woman gravitating graciously towards a male world and then a progressively more independent individual, becoming free of controlling influences.

Advertising has been proved to mirror social behaviour successfully, and the ads discussed have demonstrated that words, along with posture, expression, and gesture, show vivid images of a time when male and female roles were negotiated in harsh terms.

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