The masculine/feminine dichotomy is a basic symbolic division in the tradition of monotheistic societies. For millennia the world has been divided into these culturally-determined halves which are reflected in the models of thought and behaviour imposed by the dominant principle of authority. The established stereotypes of how a body acts mirror the official ideology which is made natural and legitimate by the biological differences. Different epochs have their own standards of the characteristic male and female features and social roles. When determining the features of masculinity and femininity, the body is only a medium on which culture and the society impose their standards. To make these standards effective one has to constantly and ritualistically repeat them, thus giving them near-magical power and compulsory character. Every epoch has its mechanisms of implementing this ritualistic repetition which provides for the functioning of the social laws and, ultimately, the authority.¹
The Bible has been the chief mediator over a long period of time but nowadays one could say that this role has been taken over by the media. The media (especially the so-called lifestyle magazines) behind the façade of freedom of choice spread the femininity and masculinity models, intangibly turning them into laws: laws of appearance, behaviour, morality. It turns out that in the post-modern society of leisure time and consumerism it is exactly the demonstration of lifestyle which gives a large number of people identity. The esthetics industry benefits from this creating, spreading and giving content to the models. The stronger the thirst for self-definition, the stronger and the more binding the power of these models is.

During the period of the post communism society (which according to some researchers is not yet finished) the Bulgarian woman is torn between the desire to imitate Western models (luxury goods and lifestyle), the remains of the traditional Bulgarian ideas of femininity (which include selflessness and full commitment to home and family) and their low economic capability. Women’s lifestyle magazines offer a possible solution by giving access to the dream world by glossy photographs, encounters with celebrities, advice on appearance and behaviour while at the same time remaining true to a more archaic image of the woman. Since all of this happens on paper, in a safe imaginary world, the reader can keep choosing between incompatible identities, satisfying her thirst for what is new, fashionable and different.

It is interesting that for the modern Bulgarian woman buying and reading the so-called women’s magazines is not directly connected to her social status and income.
и приход. Понатаму, откривено е дека жените со помали приходи се поголеми љубителки на овој вид списанија, а основните мотиви за тоа се достапност на корисни и интересни информации и релаксирањето од животот исполнет со стрес. Женските списанија се претпочитат затоа што може да се направи пауза во нивното читање и да се продолжи без да мора да се сеќава што е претходно прочитано. Овој фактор, засилен со фактот дека не треба многу време за да се прочита списание, ги прави пооинтересирани за читање од книги. Книгите имаат поголема социјална вредност, за читањето книгата потребни се мир и тишина. Спротивно на тоа, списанијата добро се вклопуваат во врева, не обврзуваат, со нив поминува времето и не бараат премногу внимание. Тие се успешен лек против здоденоста, го намалуваат стресот и често се сметаат за најефикасан начин за искучување од секојдневните проблеми. Читањето списание буди позитивни емоции и има одбранбена функција со која се означува личната територија: Читателите сметаат дека е дел од нивниот личен стил, кој, пак, е и нивна лична одлука и печат. Списанијата воведуваат во свет којшто се доживува како личен и неповредлив. Бидувањето во тој свет ги оттргнува од нивните секојдневни проблеми и им ја даде енергијата којашто им е потребна за да се справат со тешкиотите во следниот работен ден.³

Постои уште едно нешто кое треба да се земе предвид: списанијата се создадени како извор на знаење за реалноста. Купувањето списанија ги дефинира читателите не само како консументи на културата, туку и како „културни луѓе“ – компетентни и информирани. Блескавите фотографии им будат чувство дека се личности кои се грижат за себеси, и во културна, и во материјална и емоционална смисла, т.е. дека го зголемуваат своето знаење и својот статус на културни луѓе. Така, списанијата на нивните жени-Furthermore, women with lower incomes are found to be the greater fans of this kind of magazine, the basic motives being the availability of useful and interesting information and relaxation from a stressful life. Women’s magazines are preferred because they can be left aside and then taken up again without having to remember what one has read before. This factor, enhanced by the fact that magazines do not take a lot of time to read is probably what gives them preference over books. Books have greater social value, reading a book demands peace and quiet. Contrary to this, the magazines fit well in a noisy environment, create no obligation, kill time and do not demand a lot of attention. They are a great cure for boredom, they ease stress and are often considered to be the most efficient way to tune out everyday problems. Reading a magazine provides positive emotions and has a defence function which marks personal territory: the readers consider it as a part of their personal style which is also their personal decision and signature. The magazines lead to a world thought of as personal and inviolable. Being in this world takes them from their everyday problems and gives them the energy they need to cope with the difficulties of the next working day.³ There is yet another consideration: the magazines are construed as a source of knowledge about reality. Buying the magazines defines their readers not only as culture consumers but as “cultured people” – competent and informed. The “glossies” help them feel like persons who take care of themselves – in a cultural, material and emotional way, i.e., they enhance their knowledge and their status of cultured people. Thus, the magazines provide their female readers with fantasies of their ideal self – the idea of being a modern woman with attitude to all
new products, a woman who knows when and where to go and what to read, an intelligent, innovative and resourceful woman. This is the fantasy about the emancipated woman who is able to make her own decisions. She greatly appreciates the pragmatic aspect of the knowledge she receives and likes to keep things under control. Magazines are a virtual reality in which women train themselves and improve their decision-making ability. The fantasy about this image helps women feel stronger and less vulnerable.

On the other hand, it is notable that the female readers like the pragmatic aspect but most of them deny putting advice into practice or if they do, it is done rarely and selectively. In other words, magazines are an imaginary world which nevertheless is part of the respective person, helping her cope with reality in an easier and more efficient way. This peculiarity evokes, creates and popularizes a new model of femininity which is made more attractive the more its controversies are and is sometimes impossible to imitate. This is a model which easily combines opposites and is not afraid of experimenting with stereotypes from different epochs in order to create the image of the ideal modern woman.

During the time of the post-communism society an influential disseminator of the new vision for the woman is one of the bestselling and prestigious women’s lifestyle magazines in Bulgaria - “Eva,” which successfully builds the new/old model of the wished-for femininity. According to “Eva,” the female image today is a combination of controversial ideas: an independent and ambitious...
Написите во списанието „Ева“ се организирани врз основа на принципот теза – антитеза. Често се случува материјали ставени едни по други да се зала- гаат за противни идеи. Го користат контрапунктот како стил/средство за споредување на контрастни појави - идеи, слики, и т.н. Целта на оваа споредба е, од една страна, да се истакне една од позициите со противставување на истата со нејзината спротивност, и од друга страна, да се привлечат целни групи со различни гледишта и интереси. Можно е да се постигнат двете цели, зашто информацијата е претставена во стилот типичен за списанието „Ева“ - толерантен и урамнотежен.

Во првите броеви се дадени текстови наменети за јасно зацртување на ставот на новото списание и за дефинирање на целните групи читатели. Во првиот број има обраќање до читателите во које се наброени идните приоритетни теми: „Ќе говориме за пари, професии, за домот и децата.“ Ова е првпат да се зацрта сликата за „вистинската жена“, која, според визијата на списанието „Ева“ е богата, успешна, со семејство.

career-woman but a selfless mother, wife and housewife. Besides this, there is a clear model, according to which she needs to have the most fashionable items, clothes, cosmetics and live a luxurious life if she wants to keep up with the times. The woman builds her identity by her independence and the technique for maintaining this identity is consumption as a proof of high financial capability and therefore of successful career. But independence does not mean loneliness: a happy woman has a husband and children to whom she is devoted and if she wants to be perfect, she will learn to cook and keep her home spick and span.

The articles in “Eva” magazine are organized on the principle thesis – antithesis. It is very often the case that consecutive materials defend opposite ideas. They make use of the stylistic device counterpoint by comparing the contrasting phenomena – ideas, image, etc. The aim of this comparison is, on one hand, to highlight one of the positions by contrasting it with its opposite, and, on the other hand, to attract target groups with diverse views and interests. It is possible to achieve both aims since the information is presented in “Eva” magazine’s typical tolerant and balanced style.

The first issues feature texts which aim at outlining clearly the position of the new magazine and define the target readers. There is an address to the readers in the first issue in which future priority topics are enumerated: “We will talk about money, professions, homes and children.” This is the first time the image of the “true woman” as “Eva” magazine views it is outlined – rich, successful and with a family.
The models of the contemporary femininity in “Eva” magazine are easily discernible by tracing some of the basic dichotomies presented in the magazine. One of the most common oppositions in the interviews with famous Bulgarian women is the opposition working woman – housewife.

According to some researchers the ideal of the woman as a housewife appeared in 14th-century West-European art. Then the Virgin Mary and the female saints began to be shown more motherly, gentler. Simone de Beauvoir states that by being a housewife the woman asserts herself and gains power. The attitude towards the woman as a housewife in “Eva” magazine is dual – and this can be traced in the answers of the inevitable questions about housewife issues in the interviews.

On one hand, the career woman is put on a pedestal – she is the idol that everyone else wants to be like. On the other hand, though, career alone is not enough to define the perfect model. A story titled “The Price of Success” features the society woman of 1998 – the perfect combination of having a successful career and a wonderful family. She is independent, generous, travels all over the world, happily satisfies each of her female whims. She has a dynamic life but she spends her few free minutes with her family. Although she does not have the time to be a housewife during the week, during the weekends she loves to prepare meals. In the photo, she is wearing a violet tailored suit with a short skirt. Business style, yet with a touch of sexuality hinted at by the short skirt and the eccentric boots while the violet colour reminds one of sensuousness and romance. Beside the photo, there is a list of the brands of the clothes, the purse, the jewellery she was wearing right then and the preferred cosmetic products. The brand is a sign of prestige, a proof of a successful career and high financial capabilities. The la-
The image of this business woman, even though at first glance it seems to be the product of the new post-communist time, has a lot of the features of the communist rule superwoman. Except for the expensive Western clothes and jewellery, this is still the woman who works as much as, and even more than the man and at the same time takes care of the family. The only difference is that she cooks only during her days off but then she does it with pleasure and impresses relatives and guests with her skills. Thus the magazine targets, on one hand, the working women who have no time for their families and need to justify their view, and on the other hand, housewives who can find a model to identify themselves with and to fill the lack of their own career. The guilt, instilled for years on end in women who put their own desires first and the family second, is now completely rejected. However, in “Eva” magazine the feminist position, according to which a woman totally neglects her husband and children to pursue her self-accomplishment, is combined with the traditional idea of the superior value of the family. If a woman’s career makes her happy then it is better for the children as well – they will be happier and more contented. “Eva” magazine’s vision of the modern “true woman” combines the two discourses. The ideal is a successful woman with a happy family, this sharing some common ground with the ‘communist-rule’ model. Of course, the differences with the communist-rule model are many. The major difference is the focus on a woman’s own needs and wishes coming first. A successful career is of great significance since it enables her to be financially independent. This is why every sacrifice to her career is justified. Consumption has openly become
a cult – what is important is not only the functionality of the objects but the consumption of luxury goods in itself. It is a symbol of prestige and a technique for maintaining an identity.

The modern woman lives by her own rules. Love has become a major part of self – accomplishment, it is the necessary basis for the life of every person. It is spiritual and carnal, the platonic and the sexual attraction combine in one feeling. Love is the basis of personal individualism for the post-modern woman. The idea of the absolute necessity of love experiences which, alongside with sexual activeness, continue throughout one’s life now comes to the fore. At the same time, it is not a prerequisite that this love has something to do with marriage. An emancipated woman sometimes is ready to give up the security of a stable marriage for the sake of her independence and a new love. This is how “Eva” magazine presents the pop singer Irina Florin: “A woman of luxury, cared for by a rich man, she looks like a delicate greenhouse flower with no thoughts of unexpected decisions and irrational emotions. However, it was Irina who ended a ten-year-long stable relationship which had resulted in a child as well and turned over a new leaf. Very few are the women who will suddenly leave a secure life to pursue the unknown even if they make it out of great love. Is this the whim of a spoiled woman or is this the act of a hopeless romantic who looks for the One?”

Silvia Petrova - Contemporary Woman between Feminism and Tradition
The singer embodies the ideal of the modern emancipated woman who puts her happiness first disregarding the traditional ideas of what is appropriate. She combines the ideal of a beauty with a luxurious life with the drive for independence. She leaves behind the security which the man with her gives her and even a child cannot stop her from pursuing her goals. All this is not because she is cold or senseless but just the opposite – gentle and romantic. What is important is the quest for love itself. This is one aspect of the modern individualism.

The traditional idea of the family is also changed. The singer states with certainty: “Marriage is not about being faithful to someone. The formal aspect of marriage has nothing to do with the feelings... I want to understand how you can spend your whole life with one person, accepting him with all his positive and negative sides.” Marriage is no longer an institution of eternal faithfulness. What is more important is the inner feeling, being sure of one’s feelings. Nothing can keep the modern woman at her husband’s side if she has decided that this is not what is best for her. However, whereas the idea of the family has changed so drastically, there is still a traditional element in the attitude towards man: “A woman is dependent on a man mostly emotionally, then financially or the other way round. It is acceptable if there is a balance. I believe that a man feels happy and confident when he can give everything to a woman who can love. It is masculine for a man to help you without tyrannizing over you... Basically, there are no such men. I myself have always been financially independent. I work, I make a good living.”
This view shows “Eva” magazine’s model; the typical combination of emancipation and tradition. It is a matter of honour for a woman to earn her living herself but a “true man” has to be financially capable. She does not want to be “head of the family” in this sense, she prefers to be taken care of, even though she is emancipated.

Even when a woman is not devoted to her career and takes care of her children and husband it is again considered degrading for her to feel financially dependent. The title of an interview with the BNT channel newsreader Vyara Ankova who at that time was devoted to her family only reads: I am not a housewife who asks her husband to give her five levs for a coffee. “I work now as well, I am a BNT correspondent so I am not wholly dependent on my husband. It is true indeed that the money I am paid cannot cover all my expenses. But I don’t spend a lot... I manage with the money the TV channel pays me and with some assistance from my father’s construction company... It is always the right thing for a wife to be economically independent. Thus she feels more of a woman... I am not the kind of person who stays at home. This is absurd! I cannot imagine asking my husband to give me 5 levs for a cup of coffee with friends... I wish I could spend a lot of time with the children and work at the same time, this would have been perfect but unfortunately – unreal... Family comes first to any career... For me, this is a woman’s main calling. She might have professional success but when she undertakes the responsibility of giving birth she must undertake the responsibility of raising her children as well. Because giving birth is not what makes a woman a mother alone... Now I miss the work stress, back then I missed the children. Every situation has its advantages.”
раѓање не ја чини жената мајка... Сега ми недостасува работниот стрес, а тогаш ми недостасуваа децата. Секоја ситуация има свои предности“.

Финансиската независност е услов за женственост. Доколку економската зависимост од мажот беше норма в традиционалното општество, во исто време, и за време на комунистичкото владеење, жената мора да работи за да добие своето семејно место, т.е. за доброто на семејството. Сега работи за нејзино сопствено добро, за нејзината женственост. Дури и за жена со традиционни семејни критериуми, која ги става своите деца и сопругот на прво место, срамно и неприфатливо е да се бил целосно финансирана од страна на главата на семејството. Ова двоумене помеѓу модерните и патријархалните вредности доведува до внатрешен конфликт. Жртвувањето на сопствените интереси на жената за децата, сè уште е смета за нужност и во денешно време, но сега тоа чини повеќе – го подрива дигнитетот на жената. Оваа амбивалентност, двоуменеето при изборот помеѓу еманципацијата и традицијата, е извор на постојано незадоволство.

Следува дека модерната жена е комбинација на екстреми: Таа е одважна, а нежна, храбра, а беспомошна. Ова е најлесно воочливо кај жените со типично машки професии. Според списанието „Ева“, Миролуба Бенатова е таква жена: „Таа има 26 години. Како известувач на црната хроника за каналот БТВ, таа успева за кусо време да направи многу ударни новински репортажи за кривични дела, се сретна и со Гадафи и беше единствениот медиумски известувач кој направи интервју со сериски убиец од неговата келија, веднаш по апсењето“. Миро Бенатова е силна конкуренција, и таква која одамна стои на цврсти Financial independence is a condition for femininity. If economic dependence on a man was the norm in the traditional society, at the same time, during communist rule the woman had to work as well in order to contribute to the family budget, i.e., for the good of the family. Now she works for her own good, for her femininity. Even for a woman with traditionalist family values, who puts her children and husband first, it is shameful and unacceptable to be fully financially supported by the head of the family. This hesitation between modern and patriarchal values leads to inner conflict. Sacrificing a woman’s own interests for the sake of the children is still considered as a must but today it costs more – it undermines the woman’s dignity. This ambivalence, the hesitation when choosing between emancipation and tradition is a source of constant discontent.

Thus, the modern woman is a combination of extremes: she is bold but gentle, brave but defenceless. This is most discernible in women with typically male professions. Such a woman, according to “Eva” magazine is Miroslava Benatova: “She is 26. The criminal reporter from the BTV channel managed to make in no time a lot of breaking news reports on crimes, she met with Kadafi and she was the only media reporter who took an interview from a serial killer from his cell after he was arrested.” Mira Benatova is a competitor, and a long-standing one, in the discipline criminal reporting which worldwide is practiced mostly by men. “8
Danger is a magnet for the modern woman. She is better at men’s professions even than the men themselves. Youth does not mean inexperience but more desire for work, more ideas, more drive. The idea of the timid and defenceless woman has been replaced by the idea of dynamism and provocative behaviour. The closer the danger is, the greater the desire to win the competition with men is. This is the situation professionally. In terms of the private life, however, the situation is the exact opposite: “I am not aggressive in my personal life. I do not think that being aggressive is the right approach, especially for a woman.” To be successful, a woman has to always live a dual life – she must be assertive in the public sphere and gentle in the private sphere. Thus, on one hand, she keeps her traditional role but she also takes on male characteristics so that she can be competitive against men. The traditional characteristics of femininity are not rejected but new are added to them, such as were associated with masculinity before. This combination results in strange and controversial viewpoints: “I like intelligent men who know what they want from life, achieve it, and, if they puncture a tyre in the desert, they will change the tyre. Though it seems that there are plenty of men who can change tyres in the desert and cannot change a light bulb. I have long ago come to the conclusion that I should be able to change tyres by myself but I cannot.” The aspiration for absolute independence is combined with the “feminine” desire for protection. Thus the position remains a vicious cycle, it remains vague and unclear.

Silvia Petrova  Contemporary Woman between Feminism and Tradition
On the other hand, despite the lack of trust in men’s ability to cope with complicated situations, the criminal reporter emphasizes: “I do not think that women can really be successful without the support of men. Only if a woman has by her side a man who makes her feel like the Woman can she manage like a man outside of the sphere of her private life.”

Gender equality in the public sphere is possible only under one condition – the presence of a man in the private sphere. It turns out that a woman has attained happiness if she is a woman at home and a man at her profession. As a result of this double standard the criteria in the private sphere are vague: “I have a boyfriend, I feel good with him and that’s it. I do not wonder when I will put a white dress with full skirt on, put my hair up in a bun, where exactly we are going to have the wedding and who we will invite. I want to have children but now this does not depend from the ticking of my biological clock. Profession-wise, in ten years I see myself doing the same.”

The woman of “Eva” magazine has many faces: sometimes she is totally independent, emancipated and narcissistic, rejecting all traditional values. Sometimes she is delicate and affectionate, values highly the man by her side and puts family first. The perfect “Eva” woman is a combination of these two extremes. In fact, the magazine argues that every one belonging to the “fair sex” has features of both extremes and this is what makes her a true woman. She has to combine opposites, to find the balance between them in order to feel satisfied with herself.
The reporter Sevda Shishmanova, after listing her numerous international awards in journalism and talking at length about the commitment her job demands, says: “I am positive that if I have to give up my job for a man, I will do it. I grew up in a family in which my mother was always devoted to me, my brother and father.”

The respected woman with successful career yearns for domestic atmosphere and states that she will leave all professional commitments for the sake of her family. Some women can very well combine the two opposites (emancipation and tradition) within their system of values. The perfect woman was raised in a patriarchal atmosphere but has the spirit of the new times as well. This is why the most positive depictions are of those women between 30 and 40 years of age since they have kept some of the spirit of the times when the mother was completely devoted to the family and they also have the dynamics and ambition of contemporary times. This woman has a stand of her own, she has found the success formula: “A couple of times, while we talk, Sevda’s eyes brim with tears. Do not imagine her a ball of nerves, though. Her vulnerability is strangely combined with cool reserve.”

The identity model offered by “Eva” magazine to its female readers is precisely this strange combination which comprises the modern woman’s system of values.

It is yet another paradox that despite the obvious presence of a clearly outlined emancipation thread in the articles, the magazine firmly brands feminism as a position
which evokes hostility, or, at best, ridicule. Time and again the magazine shows that the model of the modern Bulgarian woman rules out feminism. To prove this, the patriarchal characteristics of love and commitment to the family and the home are pointed out. Despite that, in practice, the magazine disseminates exactly the ideas of last-generation feminists – “equality in differences.” That is to say, that every woman has the right to assert her individual interests and needs – which are, after all, different and depend on various factors such as social status, education, religious beliefs etc. According to this thesis the patriarchal acceptance of the man as the standard against which the woman is defined as a difference, marks social relations of power. The attitudes and the values of the dominating group are accepted as the norm and the group which does not comply with the standard (i.e., the women) is always marginalized because its identity is incompatible with the universal model. Thus the binary model constantly creates identity and its counter-identity. This is why poststructuralist feminism insists on deconstructing the simple opposition uniformity/diversity and proceeding to many multiple diversities. To admit the existence of all the differences and to reconstruct the ethical would give equal value to women and would recognize them as self-determined subjects. The ethical issue of feminism is about women keeping their female characteristics and at the same time becoming full moral agents. Today it is obvious that different women think of themselves and their interests and problems in a different manner. This is a step up in the history of feminism since now the relations between women themselves are the object of research.
Interviewing famous Bulgarian women, “Eva” magazine stresses the worth of every woman’s own individuality – regardless of the particular profession or social status. The stars from the Bulgarian Olympus (Edgar Moren) are the role models the reader has the freedom to choose from. Apart from models of physical beauty, the celebrities offer a lifestyle. The celebrities unite the principles of projection and identification. They make the synthesis between the fantasy world and the real world. In modern society the role models (real and imaginary alike) have great significance since they give a person the opportunity to try on different roles or lifestyles without experiencing the consequences of a real-life choice. They offer models of behaviour from which a person can take the best for one’s own life. However, everything that glitters is not gold. The celebrities on which a person bases one’s own identity are more and more transitory. The frequent change of models results in insecurity, lack of stability, difficulty in determining one’s own lifestyle. In the interviews “Eva” magazine offers its readers these exact identity models. These women outline the model of the contemporary femininity which underlies the ideology of the magazine. Femininity as a cultural and social construct is expressed in certain forms of behaviour, imposed by the society. The media are the mediator who has the power to spread and impose these schemes on society in an intangible way.
Alongside the opposition career woman/housewife, another opposition describing the image of the modern woman is affluence/poverty. Since the model of the successful woman is central, it is only logical to emphasise the value of high financial capabilities. Apart from self-realisation and self-satisfaction a career should mean good financial returns. It is economic independence that makes the woman feel successful and independent as a whole. That is why the most important proof of a woman’s successful professional development and therefore of a social status in the eyes of the public is embodied in the idea of consumption. Self-realisation is thought of as a basic value but what is important are not career achievements in themselves, rather – how a person spends money and enjoys life. There is a close relationship between the independence of the woman as a basic feature of her modern identity and consumption as a technique for maintaining this identity. A woman’s incapability to spend money and have fun lowers her esteem in her own eyes, as well as in the eyes of the public. Affluence means prestige not in itself but as a means which gives access to consumption and thus, a symbol of success.

In modern society, the minimum living standard includes the consumption of a certain amount of goods. This is a consumption imposed by the society and every individual who does not keep up with it loses his/her social existence. The social system is what imposes the necessity of consumption – a social compulsion which is seemingly the result of the freedom of choice. In fact, in modern society, the “freedom” to consume is equivalent to the “freedom” to work. Consuming goods is not thought of as an expense but rather, as a sensible investment, a prerequisite for affluence. In this sense, consumption and affluence are closely bound.
According to “Eva” magazine these are the main characteristics which describe the ideal image of the modern woman. A successful career means affluence, the way to demonstrate success is spending money and consumption turns into a cult. This thesis is the guideline for the largest part of the content, textual and visual alike. Every self-respecting woman has to spare a large part of her time for “shopping” (one of the few foreign language borrowings used in “Eva” magazine). An article from March 2001 defines the meaning of this modern-woman activity: “Shopping therapy is the number one therapy in a woman’s survival strategy... The effect of a small piece of women’s goods we have bought during lunch break or after work is incredible. Every insignificant thing – a piece of goods we buy – matters. Because it can effect a smile which matters. Because each of your smiles can make someone else smile and so on.”

Shopping is the way to happiness. It is argued that acquiring newer and newer possessions must turn into an incessant process which will make the world happier and full of more smiles. Consumption equals a good deed for you and for others. Consumption provides a positive attitude to the world; it is a source of good emotions: “Aromatic bath products series, energizing sprays, cellulite – killers and breast-lifters – don’t forget to indulge your body daily. These are as compulsory for you as positive emotions are.” the magazine’s pages “Beauty and health” state. In the pursuit of propagating the ideology of consumption even new words are coined – the rule for pure and proper language which the editors of “Eva” magazine generally hold in high priority no
The objects of consumption give meaning to life. They provide an escape from the dreary daily life, they help the woman enjoy life and herself: “For some people, life is black or white only. This, though, is a trite, pessimistic and old-fashioned belief. Get rid of all doubts: Life is wonderful! And colourful! The make-up trends prove it.”

Life mirrors the world of objects – they dictate the rules. Reality is what goods present it to be.

The diversity of the objects of consumption is extremely important for deriving full pleasure. The magazine showers its readers with an enormous amount of information on the whole range of cosmetic products and clothes. All are equally strongly recommended, only the positive sides are underlined. The articles look like pieces of advice but in fact they recommend everything equally passionately. One is left with the impression that the modern woman needs a wide range of products to look and feel good. Above all, it must be stressed time and again that the newest products must be tried on because “new” means better, more efficient and more sophisticated. At the same time, the needs which are created by propagating the abundance of new products should never be completely satisfied. The articles and the photographs in the magazine are a never-failing source of temptations,

на идеологијата на консумирањето, се коваат дури и нови зборови - правило за користење на чист и правилен јазик, кој уредниците на списанието „Ева“ го сметаа за приоритет, веќе не важи за овој дел. Се станува второстепено во однос на идејата на „светот“ набавување нови производи кои го зголемуваат уживането во животот.

Предметите за консумирање му даваат значење на животот. Тие нудат бегство од здодевниот секојдневен живот, тие ја овозможуваат на жената да ужива во животот и во себеси. „За некои луѓе животот е едноставно или само црн или бел. Ова пак, е дотраено, песимистичко и старовремско верување. Ослободете се од сите сомнежи: Жivotot е прекрасен! И разнобоен! Трендовите во декоративната козметика го потврдуваат тоа.”

Жivotot го рефлектира светот на објектите – тие ги диктираат правилата. Стварноста е таква каква што ја претставуваат стоките.

Разноликоста на предметите за консумирање е многу важна за извлекување на целосно задоволство. Списанието ги бомбардира читателите со огромни количества информации за цели палети на козметички производи и облека. Сите подеднакво се препорачуваат, се истакнуваат само позитивните страни. Написите личат на совети, но всушност сè препорачуваат подеднакво страстно. Крајниот впечаток на читателите е дека на модерната жена ја треба ширика палета производи за да изгледа и за да се чувствува добро. Пред сè, неизбежно сè нагласува дека најновите производи мора да се пробаат, затоа што „ново“ значи и подобро, поефикасно и пософистицирано. Во исто време, потребите кои се создаваат со пропагирањето на изобилството нови производи, не смеev никогаш да
enticement is a never-ending process. There is always the hint that something even better and more tempting remains on the market. This is how a consumer who wants to be tempted is created. This is what one of the major goals is about: people live with the anticipation of the following pleasure which will be even sweeter than the previous one. The pressure for consumption is presented as an expression and proof of freedom of choice. The industry and the magazines which work for its benefit aim at creating a consumer who cannot live his/her life in any other way but with the constant thirst for new and soon-to-become-boring pleasures.  

In the magazine buying is presented as an all-consuming, central activity, a main meaning of life. As if nothing else existed. What is important is the act of buying itself, not the use of the products afterwards. A self-respecting woman has to acquire the newest and most fashionable item in every moment. The ability to afford to buy everything seems highly attractive. The image of this woman evokes respect and envy, thus making her a model of identity. Frugality causes only comical situations and that is why it is not recommended.  

Except as a rescue of the soul, “Eva” magazine presents consumption as a prerequisite and at the same time as a proof of successful career. In an interview the singer Irina Florin (who has appeared on the magazine cover twice) mentions: “I am the client of a few leading fashion shops in Sofia – Replay, Miss Sixty, Pamela Megan, Contradiction. In other words, I always have the freedom to wear clothes from a new collection for every event... It is a great pleasure for me to leaf through a good fash-
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Golemo zadovolstvo mi prетставува прелистувањето на добро модно списание кога имам малку слободно време. Така можам да ги проверам трендовите и да го почувствувањата на времето... Сметам дека е многу важно една јавна личност да знае што и кога да носи... Јас одам во сала за вежбање трипати во неделата, а порано, одев и секој ден на масажа. Внимавам што јадам – риба, бело месо, зеленчук, овошје, многу вода – тоа е моето мене... Во домот, јас сум мајка на мојот син и мамина ќерка. Сепак, факт е дека нашите односи зависат од потребите на мојата јавна професија”.

Една успешна жена зависи од стоките кои ги кон- сумира – многу е важно тие да се дизајнирани и скапи. Ова е најважниот символ на престиж. Присуството во јавната сфера е еднакво на консумирањето на одредени производи. Распуштеното консумирање на скапа и луксузна стока значи професионалност. Сё, включително и семејството, е на второ место во однос на кариерата, која најмногу зависи од предметите за консумирање кои ја обликуваат социјалната слика за една личност. Овие предмети внесуваат доверба или недоверба кон тоа лице. Тие се показатели на професионалните квалитети. Оттаму, консумирањето е резултат на успешна кариера (што ја дава способност за купување), како и предуслов за неа (во однос на почитувањето кое го диктира во општеството).

Консумирањето, како централен дел на постоенето, исто така ја менува и идејата за мајчинство: „Би лажела кога би рекла дека најмногу уживам во купувањето играчки за мојата ќерка. Се чини дека сум добра мајка, но не вложувам премногу во тоа... Сепак најмногу уживам кога трошам пари на себеси... Сакам да бидам различна секој ден и облеката многу влијае врз моето расположение. (Силвија Лулчева, an actress, dubbing the main character in “Sex and the City” TV series).

A successful woman depends on the goods she consumes – it is very important that they are designer and expensive. This is the most certain symbol of prestige. Presence in the public sphere is equivalent to consuming certain products. The ostentatious consumption of expensive and luxury goods means professionalism. Everything, the family included, comes second to the career, which largely depends on the objects of consumption which form a person’s social image. These objects make one trust or distrust the respective person. They are the indicator of professional qualities. Thus, consumption is the result of a successful career (which gives the financial capability of buying) as well as a prerequisite for it (due to the respect it commands from society).

Consumption as a central part of existence alters the idea of motherhood as well: “I will lie if I say that I delight mostly in buying toys for my daughter. I seem to be a good mother but I don’t invest in this that much... After all, I delight mostly in spending money on myself... I like to be different every day and clothes determine my mood to a great extent.” (Silviya Lulcheva, an actress, dubbing the main character in “Sex and the City” TV series).
актерка, го позајмува гласот на главниот лик во телевизиската серија „Сексот и градот”).

Фотосесиите во списанијата се создаваат во согласност со истите принципи. За разлика од женските списанија од временот на комунистичкото владеење, кога претставувањето на облеката која ја носеа моделите, ја истакнуваше пред сè функционалноста, списанието „Ева“ не се занимава со практичниот аспект на облеката. Бодријар (Baudrillard) забележува дека има повеќе димензии во предметите од нивната функционалност, дека секогаш има нешто што им дава престиж и го покажува социјалниот статус на нивните сопственици. Ова е поради фактот што предметот за консумирање го стекнува својот статус во конфликтот помеѓу моралот на аристократската идеја, поврзан со слободното време, и пуританската работна етика. Денес, статусот на предметот од изминати времиња се заснова на опуштеност и екстраваганција. Функционалноста го ослободува предметот од вината и токму затоа, бескорисните предмети често делуваат практично, а корисните – украсно. Резултатот од оваа игра се мноштвото значења кои ги има еден предмет.

Списанието „Ева“ не се обидува да ја нагласи функционалноста. Напротив, фотосесиите не посветуваат премногу внимание на практичноста на облеката која се носеат. Оваа замисла најверојатно се должи на фактот што тоа што е дизајнирано и скапо, се смета за корисно и за квалитетно. Тоа е и причината зошто списанието не ги наведува предностите на стоките, туку само продавниците од кои тие може да се купат. На онли кои умеат да го прочитаат кодот, не им требаат дополнителни податоци. Сакање стоката е стандардно функционална, иако може да се причини дека е целосно бескорисна. Истото важи и за козметичките

The photo sessions in the magazine are shot in accordance with the same principles. Unlike the women’s magazines from the time of Communist rule when the presentation of the clothes worn by the models stressed, above all, functionality, “Eva” magazine has done away with the practical aspect of the clothing. Baudrillard notes that there is more to the objects than mere functionality, that there is always something which gives them prestige and demonstrates the social status of their possessors. This is due to the fact that the object of consumption receives its status in the conflict between the morals of the leisure time, related to the aristocratic idea and the Puritan work ethic. Today, the status of the object of former times is based on ostentation and extravagance. Functionality comes to free this characteristic of the object from guilt and this is why often the useless objects look practical and the useful ones – decorative. This game results in the abundance of meanings carried by an object.

“Eva” magazine does not try to stress functionality. To the contrary, the photo sessions pay no attention to the practicality of the clothes they display. This, though, is probably due to the fact that what is designer and expensive is considered to be also useful and of good quality. This is why the magazine does not list the advantages of the goods, only the shops from which they can be bought. Those who can read the code need no further details. Expensive goods are functional by default even though they might seem utterly useless. The same is valid for cosmetic products – the higher the repute of the brand and the higher the price, the more miraculous the effect of the product. What is expensive is also useful and of good
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quality, this is the logic of modern consumption. It is so by default, no arguments are necessary.

Fashion trends are the main focus of the photo sessions of “Eva” magazine. Fashion is what makes the dysfunctional look attractive and desired. Fashion is a seemingly random production of meaning – it produces “beautiful” by the principle of its radical negation, by putting a sign of equality between the beautiful and the ugly. Thus, what is most impractical, eccentric or scandalous can be declared beautiful – this is the legitimacy of irrationality. Those objects which are strange or unusual please by provoking the attention. They attract the attention by their pretension to absoluteness. Since fashionable objects are a symbol of social prestige, celebrities show them off all the time, thus re-asserting their belonging to the higher social strata. The obsession with fashion in post-communist Bulgarian society is perhaps the result of the desire to prove financial stability and “normalizing.” “Eva” magazine claims to provide its readers with information about the newest fashion trends. This, though, is made pointless to an extent by the equality they put between fashionable and expensive. In the long run, the thesis which gains the upper hand is that every expensive item is fashionable, the bigger its price, the bigger the prestige it gives to its owner.

As we have already discussed, the consumption of expensive, designer goods is a condition for, result and a proof of a high social status. Therefore, public consump-

Производи – колку е поголема репутацијата на марката, а повисока цената, почувестен е ефектот на производот. Што е скапо, истовремено е и корисно и карактерно – тоа е логиката на современиот консумеризам. Тоа е толку стандардно, што не се потребни никакви доказувања.

Модните трендови се основниот фокус на фотосесиите на списанието „Ева“. Модата е таа што придонесува нефункционалниот изглед да делува привлечно и посакувано. Модата навидум е случајно произведување на значење - таа произведува „убаво“ по принцип на радикална негација, со ставање на знак на еднаквост помеѓу убавото и грдото. Оттаму, нешто што е најнепрактично, експонирано или скандалозно, може да биде прогласено за убаво - тоа е легитимност на нерационалноста. Предметите кои се чудни или необични, пружаат задоволство преку предизвикување на внимание. Тие го привлекуваат вниманието со нивното претендирање кон апсолутноста. Бидејќи модерните предмети се симбол на социјален престиж, славните личности постојано ги експонираат, потврдувајќи го својот мод на покажување.
Lora takes a sip of her cappuccino, clad in jeans and a T-shirt with no trace of make-up. If Jackie Collins had the chance to know her, she would have enriched her gallery of strong women who are at the centre of her Hollywood sagas. Lora is just like the fictional characters of Jackie Collins – even when fate tested her to the limits and put her through all the pain in the world she managed to pull herself together, not to give up and to start over. Even more – she has won the day, she has created a business empire and a name without losing her taste for life or the skill to enjoy it and make the most of it... No other woman from the Bulgarian business elite can match her breadth of vision. Lora has a business empire as cosmopolitan as herself... she radiates such energy and passion for life that can exhilarate a convent full of depressed nuns. At the same time she has sensitivity, vulnerabil-
This is the true model of the woman of today – strong but sensitive and sophisticated as well. The editor-in-chief of “Eva” magazine presents her as an unattainable role model – from a boarding-school girl to a business lady owning luxury houses in Italy, Africa and Bulgaria. A classy woman with a “sophisticated taste for objects”, Lora is greatly admired by the author of the interview. “Lora is a unique person. She has a kind of charisma... I admit that I cannot write about her with impartiality because I flatter myself that I am one of her friends.”

This is how this woman represented as the absolute ideal describes herself: “I am strong, but I am very vulnerable when it comes to love, children, friends... I go through sentimental crises, too. I suffer when a friend lies to me or offends me. I can be hurt easily... I can cook. I am an excellent cook, I can prepare anything and I do it with love. African, Italian, Chinese, Bulgarian cuisine – nothing is too difficult for me... I don’t smoke. I rarely drink; I do a lot of sport. I swim, I go to the gym. And I meditate.”

This is a woman who seems perfect in every aspect. She has built a business empire; she is strong, hard-working and independent, living in ostentatious luxury, but healthily. At the same time she upholds traditional values, she is sentimental and tender, she puts her family first, and she is a perfect housewife. Excellent taste and refinement are revealed in the abundance of extravagant

...
It is no wonder that the editor-in-chief of “Eva” magazine is the person outlining this image, which is the epitome of the magazine’s ideal of modern femininity – a middle-aged woman with a successful career and traditional family values. Described as it is, the image seems absolutely unreal. The sugarcoated style of the article, exactly in the style of the novels for women by Jackie Collins, who the author mentions in the beginning of the interview, contributes to the image to a great extent. Lora Vidinlieva seems more unreal even than the fictional characters of these novels. The only thing disturbing the calm grandeur of her image is the fact that this woman is usually associated with the shady business society whose financial means are of unknown origin. It is intriguing why exactly such a kind of woman was chosen to represent the magazine’s ideal of femininity in its purest form; why exactly a woman with such reputation was turned into a model of identity. Presented like that the ideal image is purified of its negative air. Only the positive, admiration-evoking characteristics, which women from all social groups would love to identify with, remain. Affluence, luxury and the elegant lifestyle which is a sign of prestige conceals the negative reputation and purifies the image. The result is decriminalizing, legitimating and rehabilitating her in the public space. From this it logically follows that all people with questionable social reputation, who, though, have high financial capabilities and demonstrate extravagance, can be declared paragons. The only criterion for this is luxury. The moral side of things is totally left behind. The identity models don’t need to
follows that each person with questionable social status, who has acquired large financial possibilities and shows extravagance, can be declared as a model. The only criterion for this is luxury. The moral side of the matter is completely set aside. The models of identity do not have to be ethical examples. What is important is abundance, accompanied by ostentatious consumption.

By creating this model, the magazine takes out “in the open” such people, turning them into the person of the day. The mechanism for their decriminalization turns them into stars, into role models. From the not so prestigious place they hold in society, they are transferred into idols and the only base for this is the demonstrative extravagance presented by the magazine as a sign of sophisticated taste. From characters with unknown past these individuals are transformed into aristocrats. In this way the media commit a manipulation, a legitimacy operation through which they turn people, who should rather serve as a negative example, into the embodiment of virtue and elite. As a result, in the post-communist Bulgarian society the identity models are set by people with doubtful reputation, who on the other hand also want to imitate a certain (Western) lifestyle, but often do it clumsily and at times even comically.

The model of femininity as a sum of culturally imposed characteristics is outlined in “Eva” magazine with utmost clarity. It is a paradoxical combination of patriarchal and feminist characteristics. The modern woman is an individualist, independent and ambitious, often taking over man’s roles. She has achieved success both in her
Silvia Petrova  
Contemporary Woman between Feminism and Tradition

Таа има успешна кариера и приватен живот. Сепак, еманципираната слика е успешно комбинирана со традиционални идеи – нејзината идеална верзија на женственост вклучува цврсти семејни вредности. Во традиционалните патријархални идеи, женственото се гради преку негација на мажественото и се дефинира единствено како позиција на неприсуство. Традиционалните карактеристики, кои обично им се припишуваат на мажите, вклучуваат и претприемништво, разумност, сила, агресивност, доминантност и така натаму. Жените се дијаметрално спротивни – пасивни, сензитивни, грижливи, покорни. Во патријархалниот дискурс, сликата на жената е универзална – нејзиното место е во домот, а нејзината улога е да се грижи за домаќинството, за одгледувањето и образованието на децата. Скромноста и покорноста се меѓу главните лични квалитети коишто се припишуваат и основната теза е дека жените припаѓаат кон приватната сфера, додека мажите припаѓаат кон јавната сфера. Во рамките на оваа визија, на женската еманципација се гледа како на симптом на пропаѓање. И, можеби ова е причината зошто модерните Бугарки го истакнуваат своето несогласување со феминистичките идеи. Некои истражувачи забележуваат дека жените во посткомunistичките земји, и покрај нивната лоша позиција, не се придружуваат кон движењата и доктрините за еманципација. Напротив, постои недостаток на интерес и јасно изразена нетрпеливост кон феминистичките идеи. Во Бугарија, антифеминистичките чувства се јасно изразени и се покажува целосно несогласување со феминизмот. Со многу малку исключения (главно од академските кругови), на феминизмот се гледа како на привилегираност на жените во однос на мажите, а дискриминирањето на мажите жестоко го одбиваат самите жени. Уште повеке, се смета за навреда некого да го наречеш „феминист/ка“.

career and in her personal life. Still the emancipated image is combined successfully with traditional ideas – in its ideal version femininity includes sound family values. In traditional patriarchal ideas the feminine is built up as the negation of the masculine and is defined solely by means of absence. The traditional characteristics which are usually attributed to men include activity, reason, strength, aggression, domination and so on. The women are diametrically opposed – passive, sensitive, caring, and submissive. In the patriarchal discourse the image of the woman is universal – her place is at home, and her role is to take care of the household, the upbringing and education of children. Modesty and submission are among the main personal qualities ascribed to her and the main thesis is that women belong to the private sphere, while men belong to the public sphere. Within the framework of this vision, women’s emancipation is seen as a symptom of decline. And maybe this is the reason why modern Bulgarian women make a point of disagreeing with feminist ideas. Some researchers have noticed that in post-communist countries, despite their bad position, women do not join emancipation movements and doctrines. On the contrary, there is a lack of interest and clearly expressed hostility towards feminist ideas. In Bulgaria anti-feminist feelings are clearly expressed and a total disagreement with feminism is demonstrated. With very few exceptions (mainly among academic circles) feminism is seen only as a privilege of women over men, and discrimination of men is strongly rejected by women themselves. What is more, to call someone a “feminist” is considered an insult.
In practice, though, the modern lifestyle model of femininity includes feminist ideas as well, with a slight modification: the strong, independent and self-confident woman at the same time has to be tender and loving, a wife and a housewife. Keeping this identity is accomplished through consumption – a guarantee for a happy personal and professional life, high social status, physical beauty and health, and ethical virtues.

Notes:
5. Eva magazine (January 1999), 34.
6. Eva magazine (September 2000), 35.
7. Eva magazine (December 2001), 30.
8. Eva magazine (June 2002), 33.
10. Ibid.


20. Жан Бодрияр, Към критика на политическата икономия на знака (София: Критика и хуманизъм, 1996), 77-78.

21. Ibid., 74-75.

22. *Eva magazine* (октомври 2003), 42.

23. *Eva magazine* (октомври 2003), 42.

24. For example see www.bulpres.net/article/6261.

25. Корнелия Славова, Феминистки разноречия Изток-Запад (Feminist Dissension East-West), в: Майки и
дъщери. Поколения и посоки в българската феминизъм (Mothers and Daughters. Generations and Directions in Bulgarian Feminism)) (София: Полис, 1999), 9.
