

Available online at <http://lumenpublishing.com/journals/index.php/po/index>

e-ISSN: 2069-9387; ISSN-L: 2068-0236

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# Postmodern Openings

2017, Volume 8, Issue 2, September, pp. 62-65

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**Review for the volume:  
Bărbatul și femeia:  
imaginea unei polemici cu  
privire la echitatea de gen.  
Iasi, Romania: LUMEN  
Publishing, 2017, authors:  
Iulian Apostu & Cristina  
Georgiana Petrescu**

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**DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18662/po/2017.0802.05>**

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*How to cite:* Unguru, E. (2017). Review for the volume: Bărbatul și femeia: imaginea unei polemici cu privire la echitatea de gen. Iasi, Romania: LUMEN Publishing, 2017, authors: Iulian Apostu & Cristina Georgiana Petrescu. Postmodern Openings, 8(2), 62-65. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18662/po/2017.0802.05>

**Review for the volume: *Bărbatul și femeia: imaginea unei polemici cu privire la echitatea de gen.*  
Iasi, Romania: LUMEN Publishing, 2017,  
authors: Iulian Apostu & Cristina Georgiana  
Petrescu**

Elena UNGURU<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** In the volume entitled “*Man and Woman: The Image of a Gender Equality Polemic*”, published in 2017 by LUMEN Publishing House, the authors Iulian Apostu & Cristina Georgiana Petrescu conduct a study, in a sociological manner that wishes to highlight all those aspects from postmodernity that marks the contemporary conjugal space. The authors of the volume aim to identify the functional features of the couple, starting with the classic-traditional image and ending with the condition of conjugal modernity.

**Keywords:** man, woman, gender, marital couple, modernity.

### **Introduction**

The volume titled *Man and Woman: The Image of a Gender Equality Polemic* was published in 2017 by LUMEN Publishing House, the authors being Iulian Apostu & Cristina Georgiana Petrescu. They aim to conduct a complex sociological analysis of the relationship between men and women in the space of the contemporary family, by carefully tracking the socialization resources that influence opinions, as well as the concrete attitudes in gender relations. The authors identify a two-way crossing - both traditional and modern - that stimulates the dual behavior of both partners. Most of the time, they express themselves in a modern way, when defining the relationship of marital or gender role, however, in concrete behavior, traditional structure and relations of power take place. In the present social space, the argumentation of superiority of male status is difficult, with objective reasoning, which is why a tendency of social argumentation based on social stereotypes becomes a strategy (Apostu & Petrescu, 2017).

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### **Men's resistance to modernity, an atypical aspect in the contemporary society**

In order to highlight the particularities of gender relations in the present society, the authors make a brief incurs in the history of these relations, in order to better mark the status evolution, insisting on the great amount of cultural imperatives that created the social inequality between man and woman over time (Apostu & Petrescu, 2017).

The volume is structured in four chapters, as follows: the first chapter deals with the conjugal couple viewed from a socio-psychological point of view, the second chapter bases the work on man and woman as a unity in diversity, or as a diversity towards separation, while chapter three deals with the social evolution of a feminine-versus-masculine gender polemic, and the fourth chapter presents the masculine "regrets" for women's modernity.

Comparing the data optimized by the authors with other studies from the literature (Ciupercă, 2000; Goddy, 2003; Costaforu, 2005), the common picture of the obtained data shows that the tendency towards the general orientation is towards a self-censored traditionalism, since the social context, and especially the chosen woman no longer allows the type of marital structure in which men tend to orientate your marital behavior to the image of the traditional status. In the view of the authors of almost every male respondent in their study, they dropped formulations that showed the traditional temptation to perform the roles (Apostu & Petrescu, 2017).

As a result of the analysis, the authors can say that the degree of acceptability or adaptation of men to the new role structures is quite low, given the high number of respondents who have testified that activities such as house / household care, raising and educating children are the main roles of the woman. The author's studies have highlighted the fact that men use a wide range of strategies to try to maintain the tradition of roles (Apostu & Petrescu, 2017). Among the most important results of the research carried out by Iulian Apostu & Cristina Georgiana Petrescu, we mention: men's resistance to modernity does not necessarily appear as an atypical aspect in the contemporary society. However, the modernity of marital relationships is generally described in all social environments, but role behaviors, which define gender relations, do not always show equity between men and women (Apostu & Petrescu, 2017). Contemporary social space still supports, in a direct or indirect way, the traditional attitudes, as most of the men are socialized in families where parents have developed traditional roles.

Therefore, the degree of "specialization" of the man in the development of domestic tasks is not always in accordance with the expectations of the female person, which leads the woman to a complete assumption of these tasks, which therefore appears to be "incompatible" with the man. As such, the medium-term socialization of this type of assumption is still the basic premise of both gender and marital inequality. According to studies by the authors of the volume, men appear to be aware of the idea of equity, yet their views are not doubled by their practical approach (Apostu & Petrescu, 2017).

In the view of the authors of the volume, the analysis of the social evolution of gender relations provides over time a good perspective of the social relations between men and women, but it can also explain the possible syncope of conjugal functionality, the development of role relations, given that the authors anticipate that the evolution from traditionality to modernity has been achieved in different intensity depending on gender, resistance to the new, social environments, and other variables that have influenced the acquisition of valences of modernity (Apostu & Petrescu, 2017).

Gender conflict is stimulated by agents of socialization, as well as by the fact that the society as a whole still runs traditional patterns that favor unfair behaviors. Today, one of the main challenges of modernizing marital relationships seems to be supported by women. Men do not seem as eager for modernity, since old gendered structures are beneficial. According to the authors Iulian Apostu and Cristina Georgiana Petrescu (2017), today's men still retain a traditionalist perspective on the status of women in the family and society, and therefore they are hardly detached from the stereotypes inherited from the past, about the sexual division of roles in the family. This difference derives not only from men's initiative of assuming modernity, but rather from women's concrete attitudes and actions to stimulate equity in their marital environments (Apostu & Petrescu, 2017).

## Conclusions

The importance of the volume is both a theoretical and practical nature for sociology specialists, but also for other researchers in the area of social sciences, interested in the field.

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