

# Family Portraits: Gendered Images of the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Hungary

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What is the nation, and how do we know it? We have come to know the nation by the arguments weighed in its defense. We have come to imagine these new worlds through complex images and dense symbols.<sup>1</sup> And we have come to live new social relationships through radical transformations of European society, culture, and political economy. The project of constructing new communities was achieved in part by hard-fought battles, political and social; yet new communities were also created through images which conveyed succinctly the moral imperative and natural wisdom of change. Throughout the nineteenth century, intellectuals and artists all across Europe formulated visions of nationhood: in political tracts, academic tomes, pictures, sculpture, architecture, music, poems, and most of all perhaps, in novels.<sup>2</sup>

Visions of nationhood gave birth to communities of nations. The transformation of European nations—East and West—entailed momentous changes in all domains of society and culture. The transition from feudal empires to nation-states, the usual chronicle of nationalism, was also intimately tied in Central Europe to the transition from feudalism to early capitalism. Nationalism and capitalism—two revolutions of radical import—significantly altered gender relations throughout society. I will illustrate the relationship between gender, nationalism, and capitalism by examining images of women in a treatise on political economy, discussions of agrarian reform, and the role of the state in Hungary. Implicit in my discussion will be a concern with the

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1. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983).

2. Ibid. Homi Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (London, 1990).

current transition in Hungary, in which gender ideologies figure prominently in the politics of community and the economics of the nation.

I came to this question in a roundabout way, as I was preparing to write about theories of agrarian reform during the nineteenth century in Hungary. I expected this to be a dry, rather esoteric exercise in political economy: extensive discussions of new forms of rationality and improved efficiency, altered conceptions of labor, the changing role of capital, and not least, the value of manure. I planned to begin my discussion with István Széchenyi's famous treatise of 1830, *Credit* or *Hitel* in Hungarian. This volume stands as an icon of the reform era, cited in all histories of the period for its role in arguing forcefully for the abolition of serfdom and in articulating a plan for nationalist development. Much to my surprise, I discovered as I opened the volume that Széchenyi had dedicated the volume to "the more beautiful-souled women of our homeland" (*honnunk szebb-lelkű asszonyinak*). Although I was assured by several friends that this could be explained by Széchenyi's well-known predilection for the fairer sex, I was not convinced. My skepticism grew as I began to read *Credit*, which is full of passages extolling women's virtue and frequent discussions of marriage and sexual union as metaphors for national development. In other words, women were not merely objects of idle fancy for Széchenyi; they represented important images of a national morality, born to nurture new relationships in the shifting terrain of the nation.

The frequency with which the nation was represented as a woman in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is well known: Marianne in France, Germania in Germany, and Britannia in Britain.<sup>3</sup> While in Hungarian the nation could be referred to in such neutral terms as "homeland" (*hon*), the term "Mother Country" (*anyaország*) was also frequently employed. This image of the nation as mother was further developed in some nationalist writings when Hungary figured as "the Virgin Mary's Country" (*Mária országa*). Visual representations gave form and physical presence to these symbols.<sup>4</sup> Such representations were part of the new ordering of male and female relationships: a new

3. George Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe* (Madison, 1985), p. 90.

4. An example of this iconography is the depiction of a woman in mourning leaning over Kosuth's bier on Easter Sunday of 1894 published in the penny press. Another well-known image is the poster by Lajos Deák-Ebner for the millennial celebrations in 1896, entitled *Hungaria* and showing a stately woman, crowned and surveying her realm.

division of labor, of morality, and of politics directly tied to nationalist movements.

The prominence of women in nationalist imagery did not correspond, however, to increased civil or political rights. In fact, the development of ideologies of domestic virtue and bourgeois morality consigned women to the home, and banished them from public affairs:

This trope of the nation-as-woman of course depends for its representational efficacy on a particular image of woman as chaste, dutiful, daughtery or maternal. If Britannia and Germania can thus be gendered feminine, this iconography operates despite or rather *because* of the actual experiences of their female populations: "No nationalism in the world has ever granted women and men the same privileged access to the resources of the nation-state." Their claims to nationhood frequently dependent upon marriage to a male citizen, women have been "subsumed only symbolically into the national body politic," representing in this process "the limits of national difference between men."<sup>5</sup>

Or as George Mosse states so succinctly, "[n]ationalism had a special affinity for male society, and together with the concept of respectability legitimized the dominance of men over women."<sup>6</sup> In other words, the images and symbols of nationalism were crucial to the project of reformulating gendered social relationships during this period. Despite the wealth of studies which examine the complex history we now define as nationalism, the centrality of gender ideologies and the consequent transformation of gender relationships have been significantly absent.<sup>7</sup>

Though studies of nationalism have not been particularly sensitive to gender as an analytic category, studies of the bourgeois family and the development of public/private domains in capitalism have addressed the question of gender construction directly, examining the rise of new forms of gendered morality, subjectivity, and citizenship.<sup>8</sup> In his pio-

5. Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer, and Patricia Yaeger, eds., *Nationalisms and Sexualities* (New York, 1992), p. 6.

6. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, p. 67.

7. See, for example, Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, 1983); E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalisms Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge, 1990).

8. Jean Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought* (Princeton, 1981); Elshtain, *The Family in Political Thought* (Amherst, 1982); Linda Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History* 75:1(1988), pp. 9-39; Joan Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, 1988); Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford, 1988); Carole

neering study, Mosse examined the relationship between European nationalism and the development of middle-class morality and sexuality. "The respectabilities we now take for granted, the manners, morals, and sexual attitudes normative in Europe ever since the emergence of modern society, have a history in which nationalism played a crucial role."<sup>9</sup> Following Mosse's lead, we must consider more carefully how the construction of proper gendered identities and of normal/abnormal forms of sexuality was as central to nationalism as were categories of ethnicity and race. Indeed, there is a clear affinity between theories of race and gender in the nineteenth century.

Differences between sexes and the races were at issue in a broad range of scientific projects in nineteenth-century Europe. Medical doctors and scientists joined their colleagues in the social sciences and humanities to argue that racial and sexual differences were immutable.<sup>10</sup> Hungarian intellectuals were conversant with these debates, and founded academies, institutes, and scholarly lineages inspired by Western European science. These views, however, only continued a project which had already been initiated by early modern philosophers of politics and society, for example, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau.<sup>11</sup> In fact, the project of discovering the natural features of social community, and the inherent qualities of its members, preoccupied social observers—be they writers, doctors, missionaries, or politicians—throughout the early modern period. This effort marks a shift to biological foundationalism, that is, recourse in explanation and argumentation to a biological essence or a domain of physical reality which is necessarily prior to and determinative of social reality. Chronicling the shift in theories of the body and sexuality in the eighteenth century, Laqueur argues,

When, for many reasons, a preexisting transcendental order or time-immemorial custom became a less and less plausible justification for social

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Pateman, "Feminist Critiques of the Public/Private Dichotomy" in *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory* (Stanford, 1989), p. 118–40; Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York, 1985).

9. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, p. 1.

10. Ludmilla Jordanova, *Sexual Visions: Images of Gender in Science and Medicine between the Eighteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Madison, 1989); Cynthia Russett, *Sexual Science: The Victorian Construction of Womanhood* (Cambridge, 1989).

11. Pateman, *Sexual Contract*; Joel Schwartz, *The Sexual Politics of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Chicago, 1984); see also Nancy Folbre and Heidi Hartmann, "The Rhetoric of Self-Interest: Ideology of Gender in Economic Theory," in Arjo Klammer, Donald McCloskey, and Robert Solow, eds., *The Consequences of Economic Rhetoric* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 184–203.

relations, the battleground of gender roles shifted to nature, to biological sex. Distinct sexual anatomy was adduced to support or deny all manner of claims in a variety of specific social, economic, political, cultural or erotic contexts.<sup>12</sup>

Once European metaphysics had been challenged by Enlightenment theorists and other practitioners of the sceptical arts in the revolutionary period of the late eighteenth century, new means to explain and justify hierarchy were employed. Thus was born the amiable fraternity of nature and power, the naturalizing hegemonies of the modern era. Instruments forged to establish a new hegemonic order were drawn from the rapidly expanding tool box of social science, physical science, philosophy, and politics. Those seen to be inherently inferior—savages, children, and women—were grouped together in scientific studies. Studies of the development of bodies, of races, and of genders were directly related to notions of progress and growth underlying theories of national ascendancy.

That women, children, and savages shared many traits in common was a finding that appeared to emerge from the evidence of physical anthropologists and psychologists. Recapitulation shed light on why this might be so. . . . In the dual sequence of ontogeny and phylogeny child and savage neatly counterpointed each other. Woman, however, played a role in both: in ontogeny she represented eternal adolescence, in phylogeny she recalled the ancestry of the race.<sup>13</sup>

These widespread and interlocking efforts to adduce inherent ties of body and soul, of biology and community, built quite self-consciously on theories of gender and race, using them as metaphoric implements and central organizing principles for nationalist projects.

The project of constructing a community founded on new relationships of sociality, economic interest, political activity, religious belief, family status, sexual behavior, and bodily characteristics was a monumental effort, in which “representational labor” was paramount. The possibilities of national solidarity were sketched within these projects, circumscribing the limits of community and providing common-sense categories to make the community real. Images fleshed out the community in the most explicit way with family portraits, paternal gazes, and

12. Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 152.

13. Russett, *Sexual Science*, pp. 51, 54.

maternal embraces. Having glimpsed these images as I waded through nationalist polemics, I shall assert very simply that metaphors matter; indeed, in the study of political economy and nation building, they matter crucially, for there is an intimate relationship between how we imagine our communities, and how those communities are fashioned.

The sources I have employed for this analysis are Széchenyi's famous treatise from 1830 and agrarian newspapers, pamphlets, and books published during the latter half of that century. Though of limited scope, these sources offer us an opportunity to consider a specific set of gender images and gender roles characterizing nationalist writings during this period. The topics I consider are constrained by the evidence at hand and the preliminary state of my analysis, but I believe that the issues addressed have relevance beyond the immediate scope of these data.

### **Learning to Love the Nation: Széchenyi and National Progress**

The publication in 1830 of Széchenyi's manifesto, *Credit*, constituted a founding moment of the progressive reform period in Hungary. Széchenyi's thesis was simple: Hungarian economic development required that relations of property and production be radically restructured, a process which could be assisted by the infusion of foreign capital. Central to the restructuring of agriculture would be the elimination of feudal service (*robot*). Széchenyi's plea to his fellow aristocrats was to construct a Hungarian path toward development, while building on the experiences of other nations. He wove together the economic fortunes of Hungary with its destiny as a nation, a spiritual as well as social community.

As a prominent member of the aristocracy and of parliament, Széchenyi addressed his remarks to his fellow magnates and wealthy landowners. Széchenyi had mounted a campaign to forge a truly national elite, hoping to marry the best qualities of Hungarian character to European sensibilities. Although he often admonished his countrymen for their poor habits, he maintained his belief in their redeemability, convinced that his political and economic program depended upon their active participation. One may consider this a cornerstone of embourgeoisement, with the qualification that Széchenyi never envisioned this process to occur outside the bonds of the aristocracy, whom he

considered to be the natural leaders of the nation.<sup>14</sup> Though his program contained radical elements, his overall conception of economic development was envisioned within the existing political hierarchy of the aristocracy and the monarchy.<sup>15</sup>

Széchenyi illustrates his developmental project, in which economic modernization is intimately linked with societal improvement, by discussing relationships with women and their commitment to the national project:

If we wish our ladies to become Hungarianized, then let us make what is Hungarian acceptable, pleasing. Let us accomplish this through our superiority. We cannot expect that our Beauties would love to be in the company of a patriot, who, I daresay, would visit in greasy boots, and fill up the house with pipe fumes, . . . may we do so in ways that would make us worthy not only of respect, but even friendship and love, so that our experience, more beautiful customs, and our behavior would make our company more desirable, more amusing, and charming. Let us not accuse our women, because the fault is ours. Let our nationality and our Hungarianness stand in so beautiful a light, that the chaste virgin, though blushing before the entire world, share her life with ours; have no fear, all decent women, whose husbands are men, will become Hungarian.<sup>16</sup>

Széchenyi implores his fellow men to change their ways, to repudiate their crude customs to embrace a more civilized, more attractive national identity. The call for a change in habit, in manners, and in purpose is portrayed as winning over the hearts of women. New qualities will be needed, qualities which make truly masculine and blushingly feminine those devoted to change and progress.

The processual, developmental emphasis in these remarks is striking. To expect women to become Hungarian, Hungarian men must become desirable, honorable, worthy. Széchenyi's project of national improvement required a refashioning of the qualities of the Hungarian gentleman and gentlewoman and, more generally, of the national spirit. In this view, both national identity and personal qualities were to be im-

14. Széchenyi had a poor view of non-aristocrats. "The bourgeoisie was weak and foreign, the peasantry illiterate, while the gentry, in Széchenyi's aristocratic opinion, was a 'coarse lot' (*eine unwissende robe Bagage*), 'the mixture of the Spanish grand, the French *garçon* and the lazy Hottentot.'" Andrew Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary, 1825–1945* (Princeton, 1982), p. 52.

15. Janos, *Politics of Backwardness*, pp. 55–56.

16. István Széchenyi, *Hitel* (Pest, 1830), pp. 67–69.

proved, civilized, perfected. These qualities were necessarily gendered, and always entailed a hierarchy of superior aristocratic males to women and inferior classes. Curiously, in the above quotation, women appear not to have any qualities which would define them as Hungarian at all, in contrast to men, whose national qualities were roughhewn and crass. Like the lower classes, whom they often represented in Széchenyi's discussion of national development, women would have to have national identity bestowed upon them. They could then be nurtured in national sentiments by their betters.

Arguing against opponents, who viewed his reform programs as destructive of the very core of Hungarianness, Széchenyi spoke forcefully for a notion of national spirit which would grow and change:

It is indisputable, that spirit and character are sacred with regard to the most fundamental institutions of every nation, and their destruction speeds interminably the death of the nationality; . . . yet what is that national spirit and character? Does it come into the world complete like some kind of animal? Does it bake all at once like a bun? Or does it perhaps all of a sudden begin to breathe and live at a mature age, like the marble of Pygmalion? Or does it mature slowly, quietly grow and increase?<sup>17</sup>

The debate between a developmental vision of Hungarian identity versus an essential core would continue throughout the century. Here, Széchenyi is arguing against the notion of Hungarianness as expressed in the sanctity of aristocratic and feudal institutions; later the battle would be waged over increasingly embodied notions of blood, race, and kinship in line with the essentialized categories of nationalist rhetoric and practice. The difference between immutable feudal institutions and a vision of society progressing into new form is significant, and extends beyond the simple (yet protracted) debate about national character per se. Clearly, the project envisioned by Széchenyi and his reformist contemporaries was prefaced on a developmental trajectory, an image of change and progress so well known in the tracts of nineteenth-century modernizing reformers. Yet the processual emphasis in Széchenyi's conception was not restricted to the general pattern of national development, but informed his central concept of economic value, that is, the notion of use, benefit, or profit (*haszon*), made manifest in the acquisition and application of knowledge, the benefit of property, and the

17. Széchenyi, *Hitel*, p. 31.



manipulation of goods. So, too, new notions of manliness and femininity were to be developed and cultivated. Neither a cold Pygmalion nor a bun hot from the oven could satisfy Széchenyi's vision of the gradual maturation of intimate bonds between men and women, and the personal commitment of national community.

I think it quite provocative to consider the metaphorical implications of these allusions to courting and nationalist development. Széchenyi conceives of the process of national development as a courting ritual, of fondling, nurturing the bonds of intimate congress. So too, he offers the metaphor of a patriarchal marriage, a marriage premised on the superiority of the aristocratic male partner over the subordinate lower classes, represented as female. For Széchenyi, such a marriage would ensure class harmony and capitalist hegemony, corresponding as it did to the power relations of gender and class he deemed appropriate. After all, Széchenyi's reform platform was designed as an aristocratic endeavor; his disdain for the lower orders was well known. Although Széchenyi was critical of fellow magnates who refused to embrace his progressive vision of national development, he was even more critical of those elements who rallied to his cause: younger aristocrats and the gentry. By 1839 Széchenyi had become quite pessimistic about the future of reforms, especially when he considered his allies in the struggle, as his following comments suggest:

The lower estate [of the nobility] and the youth are dissatisfied with the progress of reform and demand more and more in their reckless intemperance. . . . In the counties, young and penniless agitators have appeared, whose fury and French sansculottism can hardly be restrained . . . These agitators want to transform the eight-hundred-year-old kingdom into a modern French republic where the people represent the highest forum, and where private property may become subject to redistribution.<sup>18</sup>

Hence Széchenyi's image of marriage as the model of national development conveyed in quite explicit terms his class ideology and political project. Holy matrimony, a sacred institution, was an appropriate model for the gradual development of intimate bonds of national progress; inferior classes would pledge their eternal fealty to the aristocracy, who would guide them to happiness. This vision stood in stark contrast to the radical politics of the French Revolution, storming the barricades

18. Janos, *Politics of Backwardness*, pp. 57–58.

of private property and advocating social equality, upsetting class relations, and possibly gender politics too.

Yet the image of woman in Széchenyi's prose is not exhausted by references to sexual partner and intimate conquest. Women are also mothers, as we shall see in Széchenyi's discussion shortly, an equally rich source of metaphorical allusion. Worthy of serious consideration, then, are the complex relationships and expectations which accompany images of motherhood, blushing bride, and desirable sexual partner in reference to the burgeoning nation. For these metaphors will extend not only to the ties that bind citizens within the nation, but even to the land which is possessed, indeed treasured, by its inhabitants.

Women inhabit many of the pages of Széchenyi's treatise, as agents and as metaphor. As I mentioned earlier, *Credit* is dedicated to "the more beautiful-souled women of our homeland." The full text of Széchenyi's dedication is:

Worthy Daughters of my Nation! Accept the dedication of my paltry work as a token of my respect and love. Take me, with gracious benevolence, under your patronage, although many would say this is more seemly for men to do. I speak of *Credit*, and that which issues from it: of honor, the sanctity of the given word, the rectitude of deeds. The subject cannot be more foreign to You than to us, since all that is Noble and Beautiful, which exalts Mankind, is the work of Your Sex. You bring to life on your arms the infant child, whom you raise to be a good Citizen; from your noble regard man absorbs spiritual strength and unflinching courage. And as his life in the affairs of the homeland declines, you weave a garland around his brow. You are the guardian angels of civil Virtue and Nationality, which, believe me, would never develop without You, or would soon wither away, because You draw charm and life around everything. You raise ashes to the skies and the mortal into immortality. Hail and thanks be to you!<sup>19</sup>

Széchenyi ascribes certain qualities to womanhood, though his dedication and remarks are restricted to the more "beautiful-souled women" of the nation, the "more worthy" members of this community, in other words, women of the aristocracy. This brief dedication illuminates an emerging consciousness of the role that women in the aristocracy would bear in constructing new strengths, new morals, in short, a national purpose to which all should aspire.

19. Széchenyi, *Hitel*, pp. v–vii.

Women are, in Széchenyi's words, "the guardian angels of civil Virtue and Nationality." A vast literature has arisen in recent years on women, family, and the bourgeoisie in Europe and the United States during the nineteenth century.<sup>20</sup> Széchenyi's comments surely convey a comparable ethic of womanhood, in which a household economy is built on virtue and national pride. This view of a household run by women to socialize children and nurture husbands is premised on a new division of labor, in which women are increasingly excluded from activities outside the home. Their position is to foster the private sphere—the site for building manly virtue—as the following plea by Széchenyi makes clear:

Be helpmates to a more beautiful, more sober beginning! Lead your sons, as once did the mothers of Sparta, onto the fields of merit and virtue! Develop in them during their tender years a desire for everything beautiful and noble. Teach them to be courageous, lovers of justice, keepers of their word, in other words, teach them to be men.<sup>21</sup>

The irony of entrusting women to make men manly while excluding women from all the activities which make men men should not go unnoticed. Clearly, the notion was that women of higher virtue could instill in their sons qualities which would transform the public sphere, qualities not to be lavished on daughters, who were constrained by the developing gender ideologies of public politics and private morality.

Széchenyi's constant focus on learning and on developing new attitudes is also illustrated in his discussion of the way aristocrats treat money:

Who among us throws bread away deliberately? . . . Don't we flinch, as if we had behaved poorly? Instead we toss it aside secretly, or stuff it in our pocket, rather than fling it away in front of someone else; and why?

20. Joan Burstyn, *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood* (London, 1980); Leonore Davidoff, *The Best Circles: Women and Society in Victorian England* (Totowa, 1973); Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850* (Chicago, 1987); Marion Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany* (New York, 1991); Mary Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1780–1865* (Cambridge, 1981); Bonnie Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class: The Bourgeoises of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, 1981); see also Elinor Accampo, *Industrialization, Family Life, and Class Relations: Saint-Chamond, 1815–1914* (Berkeley, 1989); Nancy Armstrong, "The Rise of the Domestic Woman," in Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, eds., *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays in Literature and the History of Sexuality* (New York, 1987), pp. 96–141; Sally Seccombe, *A Millennium of Family Change: Feudalism to Capitalism in Northwestern Europe* (London, 1992).

21. Széchenyi, *Hitel*, p. 73.

Because our nanny once told us that 'to waste bread is a sin'. . . . But it is curious, that he who recoils from tossing away a piece of bread will recklessly spend hundreds of thousands—with which one could buy at least as much bread—and will do so callously. And why? Because in later life he had no nannies, parents, or teachers or they did not tell him that 'to throw off money, property, is a crime.' Or if they told him, they did not do so with the manner and concerned kindliness of his first nanny's song resounding in his ear.<sup>22</sup>

Women—as mothers or as nannies—have an enduring influence on children, investing in them long-lasting moral lessons. The content of those lessons must change, must reflect the new national purpose of modernization, by instilling more responsible attitudes toward money and capital. Reformers would have to step into the hallowed role of nanny and teacher, to coax Hungarian aristocrats in the use of money and the benefit of profit. This was an important lesson for them to learn, for the consequences of economic modernization far exceeded improving financial affairs in the manor house, or even at court.<sup>23</sup> The material strength of the nation ensured its political integrity: "only a wealthy nation is free, . . . Franklin has said 'an empty sack collapses more easily than a full one.'"<sup>24</sup> Széchenyi thus portrays the reform elite as mothers of progress, guiding the infant nation into economic and political maturity.

The crux of Széchenyi's argument about credit is the centrality of honorable human qualities necessary to a relationship built on credit. In this sense, he anticipates Durkheim, explaining that credit—like all essentially contractual relationships—is built upon integrity and trust, that is, social bonds of the highest order. At the opening of his argument, Széchenyi includes an informational note, defining credit for his readers.

22. Széchenyi, *Hitel*, p. 50.

23. It is interesting to consider the relationship between new concepts of chastity and virtue demanded of women, and new relations in property and inheritance. In discussing the metaphors of marriage in Francis Bacon's work, Evelyn Fox Keller suggests (following Hayles) that issues of chastity, sexuality, and marriage are "crucially linked to the establishment of patrimonial lineage, legitimacy, and inheritance. Thus the meaning of chastity in Bacon's 'chaste and lawful marriage' needs to be understood in the context of the definition of 'lawful' that allows for succession and accumulation—finally, for inheritable progress" (Evelyn Fox Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science* (New Haven, 1985), p. 52). It is self-evident that relations of property, inheritance, and legitimate issue would be central to a capitalist economy; it bears emphasis that these relationships would be expressed in terms of womanly chastity and achieved through new social bonds of formality and morality.

24. Széchenyi, *Hitel*, p. 56.

So as to prevent obscurity and misunderstanding I consider it necessary to exhort the Reader that I take the meaning of Credit to be that which in everyday life "Creditum" means, which is none other than the trust and courage gained by means of certain obligations on movable property or real estate held by others.<sup>25</sup>

Speaking to an aristocratic audience, he was at pains to dispel attitudes which considered credit, and any financial dealings generally, as sullied, dirty, and disreputable. The prejudice among the aristocracy against financial dealings was fed by their disdain for lower classes and their fear and hatred of Jews. Usury was directly associated with Jews, who had been forced for centuries to provide financial services prohibited by religious sanctions to those of the Catholic faith. These specific prejudices, however, were only symptomatic of more basic attitudes which dismissed money and business activities as less than worthy of the aristocratic elite. Széchenyi hoped to correct the specific problems of acquiring credit in Hungary, where interest rates were often usurious and money was generally unavailable for investment. More generally, however, he hoped to alter attitudes towards money and the search for profit that prohibited modernization of the economy. Arguments about rehabilitating money and credit served Széchenyi's higher purpose: strengthening the nation. The economic fortunes of the nation, so necessary for the cultural renaissance of Hungarian life, had to be embraced and improved by a new community of aristocratic entrepreneurs. Széchenyi offered them trust and courage (*bizadalom* and *bátorság*), to replace the dishonor and indiscretion associated with money.

All throughout Széchenyi's argument, women play a crucial role. Their craft was virtue and honor, providing a moral education by exhibiting the qualities necessary for a credit contract. As he described in his dedication, women represent "honor, sanctity of the given word, the rectitude of deeds." It is precisely to refigure notions of credit and finance which moved Széchenyi to evoke the image of virtuous womanhood at the beginning of his treatise. For Széchenyi, then, aristocratic women are the fount of morality, civility, and integrity; they protect the hearth and refine sensibilities. These assumptions constitute the cornerstones of the "cult of domesticity" so well known in Western European and American writings on the bourgeois family and the gendered division of labor. Hence there is a direct and quite important link between

25. Széchenyi, *Hitel*, p. viii.

Széchenyi's image of bourgeois respectability and his argument about credit and national development. While my focus has been on the centrality of womanly virtue and notions of conjugal relationships to Széchenyi's argument about credit, the degree to which such arguments generate new relations within society warrants emphasis. Moreover, it is important to underscore the class basis of these views, notions which accord a privileged role to the aristocracy in developing the national purpose, in guiding and controlling the future of the nation. Not all women could contribute to the moral refinement of society, nor could all men participate in the public project of nationalist development. While Széchenyi yearned for a more inclusive category of citizenship and property ownership, the tasks of directing national development were properly delegated to the leaders of the nation and of the people: the aristocracy.

### **Gentlemen Farmers and the Intimate Bonds of Citizenship**

The capitalist period in Hungary dates officially from the abolition of serfdom in 1848. Former serfs acquired lands to farm, and the nobility were now required to pay taxes. The April Laws of 1848 also conferred the vote on adult men over the age of twenty, with various stipulations concerning property, education, and "ancient right."<sup>26</sup> With these laws, reformers saw the realization of their long sought goal: the free exercise of property by male citizens. New relations of politics and economics had been initiated, relations which were also explicitly gendered.

The political climate following the defeat of the War of Independence was gloomy, nationalists having been thwarted in their fight for sovereignty. Seen through the eyes of recently freed serfs and proponents of agrarian reform, however, the post-feudal era was full of promise and hope. Peasants were heralded as the "the fundamental element of the state" and agriculture was to be accorded sacred status within the economy.<sup>27</sup> "Without the flowering of husbandry . . . in Hungary there is no life—neither spiritual nor material. For this reason it must be placed on a high pedestal, like an idol, which has been erected in honor of the

26. Janos, *Politics of Backwardness*, p. 85.

27. *Gazdasági Lapok*, January 1, 1849.

well-spring of strength.”<sup>28</sup> In the minds of agrarian reformers, the practice of agriculture was now to be elevated to the highest purpose: building the nation. So, too, its practitioners would now enjoy a new status within society. Gentlemen farmers were to be respected for their work; peasants would now be esteemed for their property. A new player had stepped onto the stage of national development, alongside the aristocrat and gentry: the lowly farmer, a father, husband, and son dedicated to national purpose.

Citizenship and property ownership were joined in this period. The privileged category of property was land, which assured independence and political rights. Land was sanctified, nurtured, adored. Most importantly, it was now possessed by free men, whose privileges included both property ownership and citizenship. The political significance of national identity and landed property was frequently a topic of discussion among agrarian reformers and nationalist politicians. But while peasants shared the adoration of land voiced by their elite compatriots, they were indifferent to the nationalist project others held so dear.

The preoccupation among elite reformers with owning land and professing a national identity had already been emphasized by Széchenyi, who believed that Hungarian national economic development and a true citizenry could only be built upon property ownership. Kenessey, a well-known advocate of agrarian reform, shared these sentiments.

Property is a magic power which creates and feeds noble, patriotic sentiments—even in less cultured individuals, who can barely give expression to these kinds of feelings, . . . Indeed, we seek not only workers' hands, but patriotic hearts as well. . . .<sup>29</sup>

The possession of property, of land, would magically transform the rude, uncivilized villager into a truly upright citizen. Loyalty to the earth—expressed in a reformed agricultural regimen—would solve all the problems facing the nation. Improved agricultural production would ensure bounty “from the bosom of the homeland” and provide a solid foundation for the growth of manufacturing.<sup>30</sup>

28. Kálmán Kenessey, *Mezőgazdasági Munkaerő-Calamitás* (Pest, 1868), p. 6.

29. *Ibid.* p. 28.

30. The writings that form the basis of my discussion come from the agrarian camp, for whom national growth was synonymous with agricultural development. There were others, however, who advocated an industrial path to modernization. The particular character of nationalist rhetoric characteristic of those in the so-called mercantilist camp would be worthy of further study, to illuminate differences and similarities in the way the nation is figured, the state is portrayed, and native and foreign communities are represented during this period.

If the divided commons are eventually replaced by fields of fodder, then consolidated properties will concentrate the farmer's strength, the flowering of cattle-breeding will render the earth more productive, suitable machines will perfect work, and state principles, no longer pestering society, will lead the way back into the avenue of smart and thrifty housekeeping; so manufacturing should naturally develop on the bosom of the homeland groomed for multiplied productivity, and within two generations, grandchildren doubled in numbers will mature on the path of firm, straight progress to guard the dear inheritance saved for them, the holy tomb of their ancestors, the rich cradle of their children. . . . *The Hungarian must cling inseparably to the earth*; and the wider the space he can call his own, and the tighter and more durable the link that ties him to the earth, the deeper it is rooted, then the more luxuriantly will the national spirit flower. There can be no idea of a homeland without land, a national spirit without property. The freedom of a homeless person is not to be envied.<sup>31</sup>

Witness the construction of nationalism in its purest forms: the absolute inseparability of the possession of land and national identity, the grounding of identity in space, a terrain in which cultural identity flourishes the more deeply rooted it is in the soil.<sup>32</sup> Land is both the cradle of future generations and a shrine to the ancestors. In fact, the term used in Hungarian to refer affectionately to someone from one's own community or village is "of the land" (*földi*). This form of address draws one into a shared space of intimacy, conveying the idea that those who lived in spatial proximity (in the present or even in the past) were guaranteed a shared social and cultural identity of the most important and immediate kind. Hence the possibility that others of a different social and cultural character could invade the national territory became increasingly anathema; it violated the equation of space and society.

Yet not all wealthy landowners prized the relationship between land and national identity. Some owners of manors were far more worried about their economic future than about national purpose. In the immediate post-feudal period, when free peasants refused to engage in wage labor, as they often did, some desperate estate owners suggested bring-

31. *Magyar Gazda*, May 3, 1859.

32. The term *földönfutó*, which I have translated as homeless in the above quotation, actually means "one who runs across the earth." It describes quite graphically a condition of being without roots, not belonging in one space. This same notion is present in another term, *jöttment* ("come and gone"), which is also used to refer to outsiders or those within a community who have not lived there for at least a generation.



ing in foreign workers to solve the problem. To others, this rather cavalier attitude toward land and labor was disturbing. Fearing a deluge of foreigners, some nationalist writers suggested a quick mechanization drive as a solution, since their assumptions about possession and nationality precluded the incursion of outsiders:

The ownership of land stands in inseparable relationship to our nationality. We will conscientiously fulfill our responsibility to nationality which cannot be refused. . . . Historical data, especially from the present, verify that it is wrong for foreign peoples to immigrate, people who chew as a biting worm on the living body of the ancient mother country. They ridicule our national customs, and attempt to appropriate the independent position of virtually every race from the common homeland.<sup>33</sup>

Two themes of nationalist rhetoric are expressed in the above comments. The first theme is that of foreigners as vermin, eating at the mother's body and ridiculing national customs. The representation of others as sub-human, as disgusting animals or insects invading the sacred body politic, has long been a privileged mode of constructing communities based on a hierarchy of privileged insiders and despised outsiders.<sup>34</sup> The second theme is the representation of land as a woman, indeed as a living woman and a mother. This move toward anthropomorphizing land is central to the fetishization characteristic of capitalism, a process which was in its early stages at this time in the Hungarian countryside. Fetishization entails the confusion of subjects and objects; subjective qualities are attributed to objects, while persons are represented as objects. Workers become objects to be employed, and tools—such as land and machines—become working capital. So, too, markets and states become actors, reified as agents in the production of value, while workers are transformed into additional forces of production for the capitalist enterprise. In this world of misplaced concreteness, land acquires the qualities of a living being, hired by reformers to participate in the productive enterprise of agricultural modernization. “[T]hink of

33. *Falusi Gazda*, June 28, 1865.

34. For a recent version of such rhetoric, see Gyula Zacsek's explicitly anti-Semitic article entitled “Termites Gnaw at the Nation, or Thoughts on the Soros Regime and the Soros Empire” (*Termeszek rágnák a nemzetet, avagy gondolatok a Soros-kurzusról, és a Soros-bíradalomról*) published in September of 1992 in *Magyar Fórum*, which is a newspaper allied with the MDF, the ruling party of the present government coalition. Zacsek has since been expelled from MDF.

your property just like any of your animals, which we carefully tend if we wish it to work. . . . Just like any worker at rest, the land takes a breather under fallow so that it may work with renewed strength.”<sup>35</sup> All of the images—of a woman, an animal, a worker—underscore the centrality of land as an actor in the new capitalist economy, while conveying quite clearly its subordinate position to the master in the power relations of the workplace.

Just as Széchenyi built on images of marriage and conjugal choice to express his vision of a new bourgeois alliance for national development, so too do images of the land as female and of agricultural production as sexual congress arise in these texts. We see this very clearly in the following quotation:

Cultivating the land is a beautiful and noble profession, befitting and worthy of free men. . . . To spend the better part of our time on the bosom of nature, under God’s spacious sky, to sprinkle the sainted land of the nation with the sweat pouring off [our bodies], to plough the land into furrows, to strew seeds onto it, and to gather its blessings in our outstretched arms.<sup>36</sup>

The relationship between citizenship, national identity, and property ownership is clearly gendered in this period. Only men could become citizens, fully members of the national community of public actors. The relationship between a mother earth and her nationalist sons is clearly conveyed in the terms “mother land” (*anyaföld*) and patriot, which in Hungarian literally means “son of the homeland” (*bazafi*). Unfortunately, the nation gave birth only to sons, never to daughters.<sup>37</sup> So too it was men who possessed and controlled the land. Indeed, it was precisely by possessing and cultivating land that men could become free citizens and truly masculine, as the above quotation makes clear. The representation of land and soil as a woman renders intelligible the patriarchal schema in which men have full rein over the open fields, while women are to be confined to the limited area around the household and gardens.

35. Kálmán Kenessey, *A Szántóvető Arany szabályai. Rövid Utasítás a Kis Gazdák Számára* (Pest, 1858), pp. 7–8.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

37. A word does exist which refers to a “daughter of the homeland” (*honleány*). However, it is not commonly used and does not carry the generality of the term *bazafi*, which forms the basis for nouns such as patriotism (*bazafiság*) or adjectives such as unpatriotic (*bazafiatlan*). While in principle women could demonstrate patriotic qualities and so bear the title of *honleány*, this was a hard won honor, and rarely accorded. After all, women were denied basic citizenship rights in this period.

I wish to suggest that there is a strong sexual connotation to the concept of possession, one which underscores the power relationship between men and women both in civil society and within the household. The household, after all, was constituted through relationships of property and of sexual congress, both realms of fertility and productivity.<sup>38</sup> Men controlled the land, as they did their wives and daughters within the household. Accordingly, the image of the nation as mother and the land as wife is particularly suited to the project of national development, in which a productive, active, and fertile economy is central. Productivity and fertility, moreover, derive from the close and careful husbanding of its resources by men.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, nations were born from the union of the mother land with citizen fathers.

By the end of the century, the politics of empire were bowing gracefully to the politics of national ascendancy; now only certain kinds of bodies could inhabit the nation-state, while those of differing ancestries must be exiled to their own proper territory.<sup>40</sup> Racial arguments were commonly deployed during this period, juxtaposing the Hungarian race (*faj*) to groups who were seen to be alien to the national community. In simple terms, two communities endangered the nation, distinguished more clearly perhaps by class than by nationality: Jewish and German capitalists, and ethnic workers, be they peasants or craftsmen.<sup>41</sup> In neither case could one properly call these groups foreigners, since most of those grouped under the rubric of aliens had lived on territories claimed by Hungarians for hundreds of years. Concerns with “foreigners” within the nation were exacerbated by patterns of emigration, which raised the prospect not only of wealthy Jews acquiring land, but also of other ethnic minorities moving into areas depopulated by Hungarians, espe-

38. I was struck with this connotation of property ownership and sexual congress during my field work in a village in Transdanubia. I was told that some thought that collectivization would mean group sex. In other words, collective property would mean collective sexuality.

39. I would suggest that the metaphorical representations of the economy, of markets, of money, and of the body are worthy of further study in nineteenth-century Hungarian scholarship. I would mention in this regard Shuttleworth's fascinating analysis of the relationship between theories concerning flow and blockage in mid-Victorian England. Her comparison of economists and doctors elaborating theories of the flow of money and the flow of menstrual blood is quite provocative. Sally Shuttleworth, “Female Circulation: Medical Discourse and Popular Advertising in the Mid-Victorian Era,” in Mary Jacobus, Evelyn Fox Keller, and Sally Shuttleworth, eds., *Body/Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science* (New York, 1990), pp. 47–68.

40. Parallels should be obvious to the nationalist rhetoric and practice of ethnic cleansing in the war in the former Yugoslavia.

41. Although Gypsies would also be included in this group, I have not included them in the discussion, since they were outcasts from the agrarian community during this time (and since).

cially in Transylvania. Moving persons and properties across the body politic without any reference to race or nationality was particularly unsettling to neo-conservative nationalists. Ironically, this is a period in which workers were having to travel great distances to find jobs. While growing poverty forced agrarian workers to seek work all across the country, and even abroad, the image of the rooted peasant became more and more an ideal, and more and more of an icon in the nationalist pantheon.

The discomfort of wealthy landowners with foreigners also extended to the ethnic identity of the work force. In the immediate post-feudal period, the ethnic identity of workers was completely irrelevant to manor owners. What they wanted was "workers' hands" (*munkáskéz*). In the 1880s and 1890s, however, there was a subtle shift in agrarian reform platforms toward a concern for ensuring that the agricultural labor force be Hungarian. In the 1880s, politicians and state officials promoted settlement projects to redistribute laborers across the nation. The purpose of these projects was two-fold: to settle poorly inhabited regions, so that local manor owners could be guaranteed a local labor force, and to entice Hungarian workers back home from their travels abroad to secure employment. By the 1890s, these projects had changed their focus from an evenly distributed labor force to the ethnic composition of rural communities. Settlement advocates were no longer concerned primarily with providing manorial estates with labor, but with guaranteeing that Hungarian land be inhabited by Hungarian bodies. Thus the racist rhetoric so common during this period referred as centrally to the body of the worker as it did to that of the capitalist German or Jew. Nationalist writings developed an entire menagerie of embodied forms, forms which evinced categories of purity and danger underlying the politics of racism. Jews and other aliens, such as Romanians, Slavs, and Gypsies, were dangerous interlopers, while Hungarian peasants represented inviolate icons of stability and integrity. While Hungarian peasants may have been less concerned with the ethnic identity of their fellow workers, they nonetheless perceived their social identity to be carried in their body, as they sold themselves at "people markets" (*emberpiac*) across the nation.

Problems with national identity were directly linked to questions about economic progress, land ownership, and labor relations. The agrarian lobby had no illusions about the importance of keeping lands in their own hands: "whoever owns the land, he rules the country" (*a kié*

*a föld, azé az ország*”).<sup>42</sup> Outsiders were accused of “torturing the land” and exploiting workers mercilessly, as their modern agricultural techniques, unabashed use of money, and innovative contractual arrangements collided with ancient customs of farming and the paternalism characteristic of historical families of the aristocracy. The expression “land torturer” (*földkinzók*), which recurs in various writings, is particularly vivid. The image is ugly, especially when seen from the agrarianist position that Hungarianness is demonstrated in one’s love of the land. Aliens who insinuated themselves into Hungarian society were thought to undermine ties to the land and communal bonds, destroying true Hungarianness. “Ancient county mansions have more and more frequently ended up in the hands of foreigners and the uninitiated, who put the love of wealth above love of the nation, which is an ancient Hungarian virtue—so much so that, because of these property owners, Hungarian devotion to the soil has died out in entire regions.”<sup>43</sup> Immoral and devious interests not only broke ties to the land but also advocated rental contracts, monetary wages, and a mobile labor force. Aspersions, such as land torturer, cast on those introducing capitalist methods into agriculture were only thinly veiled anti-Semitic remarks. The agrarian camp feared wealthy Jews the most, perhaps because Jews constituted a serious threat to the political and economic interests of wealthy landowners.

The gender images of late nineteenth-century nationalist rhetoric represented workers as female; subordinate to wealthy elites, they occupied an inferior position in the symbolic construction of gender power and hierarchy.<sup>44</sup> This representation of the peasantry as inferior was also reinforced by the explicit ideology of the land as female, that is, peasants

42. *Magyar Gazdák Szemléje*, March 1896. This is a play on the expression, “He who owns the land also dictates the religion of his inhabitants” (*Akié a terület, azé a vallás*; in Latin, *cuius regio, eius religio*), the principle chosen at the end of the Counter-reformation to resolve problems between Hapsburg Catholics and the few remaining Protestants among the Hungarian nobility. Not only, then, is the reference important as it refers to a struggle with outsiders (the Hapsburgs), but also because of the reference to religious differences, e.g., Jews.

43. *Magyar Gazdák Szemléje*, March 1896.

44. The representation of the peasantry in the person of a woman was also quite common in socialist iconography. Alongside the male intellectual and male industrial worker often stood the “tractor girl,” the epitome of socialist iconography in the 1950s. This image often evokes the attempt to alter the gender categories of work characterizing Stalinist policies of the 1950s, but it also conveys the assumption, characteristic of socialist ideology during that period and later, that the peasant is backward, less advanced than the industrial worker. Hence the peasant is represented as a woman, evoking all the assumptions about women being the carriers of superstition, tradition, and religion. In other words, the specific domains of action and belief attributed to women have now become barriers to change.

were associated with mother earth. In other words, the use of gender imagery to convey particular relations of power and authority varied in different contexts. Marriages were repeatedly celebrated, although the bride and groom changed: male citizenry to female nation; male landowner to female earth; male aristocrat to female peasant. The image of the nation as a woman coded the particular relations of political hierarchy being enforced by nationalist male elites, for whom the control of central states and national agendas would ensure their ascendancy. So too the representation of peasants as women—constituting the true integrity of the nationalist body—would consign the peasantry to the beauty of drudgery in a countryside forsaken by elites for the pleasures of the city and the privileges of the parliament.

### **Paternalism, Domestic Order, and the Discipline of the State**

In the long battle to abolish feudalism in the early decades of the nineteenth century, Hungarian reformers often evoked the image of the English yeoman farmer, whose diligence was assumed to issue from his owning property. An upright citizenry, faithful to the state and industrious in agriculture, was anticipated once feudal institutions were abandoned. This radical transformation in the work ethic of peasants did not occur, at least as far as manor owners were concerned. Peasants were loath to perform service of any kind for their former masters, demonstrating a newfound independence not envisioned by nationalist theorists. Refusal to work for one's betters was portrayed as sloth and insubordination, qualities not associated with national peace and tranquility.

Debates among wealthy landowners flourished about the inherent laziness of the Hungarian peasant, while some criticized the peasants' strange attitudes toward work and money: "The curse of the life of the common people is this: *our people's inclination that if they have something to eat, they would rather laze around home than*—in their estimation—*go to work for measly wages.*"<sup>45</sup> Disagreements arose concerning the role of wages in agriculture. Some landowners resented having to pay for labor they used to extort free; others considered money to have a pernicious influence, undermining traditional relationships between masters and

45. Kenessey, *Mezőgazdasági Munkaerő-Calamitás*, p. 47; italics in original.

servants. "Most landowners are forced to hire harvesters for cash; this innovation has cast aside the old, patriarchal character of harvesting work, has severed the cordial tie which existed in the past between the landowner—usually the peasant—and the harvester."<sup>46</sup> In the new economic environment, the character of social relationships—between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children, farmers and merchants—was hotly contested. Altering power relationships in society and in the home were foremost in the minds of many.

Harmonious "traditional" relationships between servants and masters, lauded as the true form of authority and propriety, were frequently a topic of discussion. Without question, the character of traditional authority was patriarchal and paternal. Nonetheless, women were considered central players in the construction of authority, decency, and discipline. They were frequently admonished to examine how they treated servants within the household. "Very frequently mistresses themselves are the cause for their not having good servants. The proverb, 'as is the master, so is the servant' is indeed true."<sup>47</sup> The solution to labor unrest, then, was to re-incorporate servants into the household, to remind servants of their membership within the family.

For a long time servants were saved from proletarian disorderliness by living within the family. One of the splendid qualities of the Hungarian nation was, at least in our ancestors' time, that they regarded their domestics and servants as members of the household. Now that servants are constantly moving from one position to another, they have become wandering mercenaries. To all intents and purposes this has effaced our national glory, because . . . the true genuine patriarchal relationship of the loyal servant to the family had always been the glory of the Hungarian nation, . . . Along with his increased wage, the servant has become family-less and homeless. . . . In our days, therefore, the major reason for the corruption of servants is to be found in those circumstances by which employers expel servants from the family; the family itself disdains good morals, to which the servant was devoted in times gone by, and which made him feel so comfortable.<sup>48</sup>

The association of movement from one household to the next with disorder in relationships between masters and servants reveals much about the strongly grounded notion of morality, service, and nationhood. The parallel between home and the nation is explicit. Homeless

46. Ibid., pp. 43–44.

47. *Falusi Gazda*, February 1, 1865.

48. Ibid.

(*bontalan*) meant both without a house and home, and without a nation or homeland. Money, the motor of movement, rendered servants “family-less and homeless.” True integrity arose from stability, a commitment to living within the properly delineated boundaries of the nation. Movement away from communities in which one was born should be avoided at all costs, since it broke ties with one’s natural, rooted family (*földi*). Within the home, women as parental figures disciplined and punished children, as well as servants, whose position was comparable to that of children. Indeed, the unruly character of the proletariat was often described in terms of poorly behaved children, illustrating the strong metaphorical association between power relationships of the household and forms of social control over class conflict in the national community.<sup>49</sup>

Women were enjoined to foster a moral community within the household, to build familial ties with servants and workers which would bind them to their masters in work. Yet the guiding moral vision wealthy women possessed was also to be extended beyond the immediate boundaries of the home, to aid the dispossessed, the poor, and the endangered in society. During the nineteenth century in England and in the United States, movements to reform wayward women and assist the needy—sometimes religious, sometimes secular—were common phenomena.<sup>50</sup> These interventions were far more than the innocent offering of assistance. “The ideology of domesticity thus provided the initial impetus for what would become a class intervention, the movement of reformers into the working-class neighborhoods and the households of the poor. . . .”<sup>51</sup> In Hungary, women’s organizations, such as the Association of Hungarian Homemakers (*Magyar Gazdasszonyok Egylete*), were devoted to raising money for the poor and improving moral education. Their activities included feeding the indigent at Christmas time, distributing clothing they had sewn for the needy, and providing employment for poor women. Moreover, the association planned the founding of a benevolent institution, to the following ends:

49. Susanna Barrows, *Distorting Mirrors: Visions of the Crowd in Late Nineteenth-Century France* (New Haven, 1981).

50. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Religion and the Rise of the American City: The New York City Mission Movement, 1812–1870* (Ithaca, 1971).

51. Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789–1860* (Urbana, 1987), p. 65.



These angels of charity have applied to be able to establish an asylum for women servants. The goal of this institution is to see to the needs of servants coming from the countryside and those in Pest who have lost their situation through no fault of their own, until they receive a position or the institute acquires one for them. The asylum will also be open to those servants who are unable to work due to illness. Here servants will receive not only temporary housing, but also moral teaching and practical training tailored to the rank of their service.<sup>52</sup>

Providing for the less fortunate reinforced the nurturing provenance of women's social and political actions, however limited. Furthermore, it sustained the new, self-conscious class project of providing moral guidance and social respectability to those unable to reach the heights of virtue and integrity bestowed on the privileged classes. Since the nation was considered the wider home of the ruling elite, wealthy women could enter the houses of the poor and the subservient as mothers the rooms of their children. Unfortunately, the standards imposed were often at odds with the views and experiences of the women affected.<sup>53</sup>

The rise of the modern state as the administrator of the nationalist project has in every instance been a complex and convoluted story. In Hungary the relationship between the nation and the state is further complicated by a colonial history of dominance by the Hapsburgs. The imperial forces of Austrian rule were increasingly seen by the Hungarian gentry and reform aristocrats as inhibiting national expression and development, a clash over politics and principles which eventually resulted in the War of Independence in 1848–49. Indeed, the rise of an ideology of national identity corresponded with the troubled battles between the Hapsburg throne and Hungarian elites, initially on the battlefields of 1848 and then in the chambers which gave birth to the Compromise of 1867. Even after the ostensibly favorable settlement between the Hungarian state and the Hapsburg throne in 1867, many in Hungary considered the nation and state to be quite distinct entities. Yet they could not deny the altered character of the Hungarian state, which had become an administrative organization and ideological force of real substance. Hence the refiguring of relations between state and nation became an important project, preoccupying writers and thinkers

52. *Falusi Gazda*, January 25, 1865.

53. See also Lucie Hirata, "Free, Indentured, Enslaved: Chinese Prostitutes in Nineteenth-Century America," *Signs* 5:1(1979), pp. 3–29.

for decades to come. During the 1870s and 1880s—precisely when state and nation were being refashioned—there was a subtle shift in the discussion of social problems, away from the household and into the public sphere of state institutions. Questions about women's roles and about relations with servants disappeared from agrarian publications, replaced by social relationships in more complex institutional forms, such as ministries and parliaments. In simple terms, the paternalism offered as a solution to agricultural disarray in the 1850s and 1860s has been displaced from the family to the state, whose job it now becomes to distribute bounty and reconcile tensions within the body politic.

Following the Compromise of 1867, the Hungarian state grew substantially, achieving with time a modern administrative character suited to the national project it was charged with fulfilling.<sup>54</sup> But great debates raged about the exact nature and degree of state intervention in social and economic affairs. Clearly, these were questions of great political import, but they also carried tremendous economic weight. Many interests were poised to take advantage of development projects mounted by the state to modernize the economy. Large state contracts, private ventures, or other organizational structures were established to build railroads, reroute rivers, and pursue important infrastructural projects during the 1870s and 1880s. So, too, a variety of political ideologies, from the individualist strain of J. S. Mill to the state-engineered projects envisioned by socialists, were promoted to offer new visions of political institutions. Károly Keleti, in one of his articles on national development, raised the question of the state's role very clearly:

Until now, however, very few industrial plants exist in the country. They must be created. Who should do this? The state? This is not its mission. Magnates? Yes, but for that one would need a century of normal economic progress, which at present we cannot boast of; or an association to establish factories with humanistic goals which would languish on the breasts of the state, or perhaps the newly proclaimed society for the promotion [of factories]?<sup>55</sup>

Keleti is painfully aware of the inadequacy of both the institutional frameworks and community cultures needed to redress the backward economic and political context of Hungarian society. His disdain for the

54. Janos, *Politics of Backwardness*, pp. 92–118.

55. *Nemzetgazdasági Szemle*, January–March 1877.

manufacturing association is clear, conveyed in the rather startling expression “languishing on the breasts of the state.” It appears that certain functions or qualities of the state could be represented by female body parts. In this case, humanistic tasks are described as projects feeding off state resources, for example, the breasts of the state. The image of a breast conjures up visions of nurturance and sustenance. In other contexts, the image may be employed to suggest that an unselfish and giving community is being exploited; the wrong persons are taking unfair advantage of its resources and good will.<sup>56</sup> The point is to illustrate how specific gendered images may be employed rhetorically to convey one’s position in political debates. By deploying a diverse and complex set of gendered images while making arguments for the structure and functions of the state, one could build very effectively on a rich panoply of association and also evoke deep emotional responses.

I argue, then, that in debates about social order, the state is seen as properly assuming the role of adjudicating social conflict during the 1870s and 1880s. This had been the task assigned to women in the paternalistic family of earlier decades.<sup>57</sup> The association of men with politics, power, and public office may incline us to assume that the state is always and only represented as male, alongside the female image of the nation during the nineteenth century.<sup>58</sup> In fact, one may find, as one does in the quote from Keleti above, that certain aspects of state projects are most successfully envisioned by rendering them as female, demonstrating qualities or tasks usually assigned to women in the gendered

56. This is certainly the case in another quotation that uses a comparable image, with reference not to the state but to the farming community: “The large proportion of the daily press—with one or two exceptions—is an enemy of the Hungarian race. Another enemy is Hungarian narrative literature, which has fed on the breasts of Hungarian farmers and landlords and which has managed to exist by the grace of land owners.” *Magyar Gazdák Szemléje*, September 1896.

57. This is a different argument than that made by Mosse, suggesting that the family “was a cheap and efficient surrogate for the state, . . . the family was the policeman on the beat, an indispensable agent of sexual control as directed by physicians, . . . educators, and the nation itself.” Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*, p. 20. Clearly, this view of the family as an arm of the state and the nation does not contradict the manner in which the state is understood in terms of family power relations. In fact, they complement each other as the state becomes more intrusive and the family is expected to pursue social agendas stipulated by the state toward its members. See also Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families* (New York, 1979), and Katherine Lynch, *Family, Class, and Ideology in Early Industrial France: Social Policy and the Working-Class Family, 1825–1848* (Madison, 1988).

58. In current parlance, the state is most frequently represented or addressed as male, i.e., Uncle State (*állam bácsi*).

division of labor. Such has certainly been the case with welfare functions in other modern state contexts.<sup>59</sup> If we appreciate the rise of the modern state as a complex organizational form, then the diverse projects drawn in under its rubric—from the military, to schooling, to policing, to taxation, to hospitals, to social policy—can be variously represented, and variously experienced by members of the national community as complex and multiply gendered forms.<sup>60</sup> The role of the state in some contexts will be portrayed as masculine, in others feminine. In other words, the representation of the state or nation as a woman does not lessen the degree to which these communities or institutions reinforced patriarchal relationships, be it within the family, the workplace, or civil society. But representing the state as a woman in some contexts may convey quite successfully how tasks within the state were being apportioned and addressed, and so would be effective in arguing for or against these developments.

The homology between the household and the state has been a recurring theme in the writings of political economy, from the Greeks and Romans to the founders of modern economic theory in the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries. Debate flourished over how the analogy was to be applied, for example, which functions, whose tasks, what goals were appropriate both conceptually and functionally.<sup>61</sup> Nonetheless, the link between these two domains enjoyed a long pedigree in political and economic writings during the early modern period. In Hungarian the conceptual relationship between the household and the national economy is well illustrated by the nineteenth-century usage of the term *gazdászat*, which can be translated variously as household economy, agriculture, or the economy in general, with the emphasis in all three terms on the process of managing these activities. So, too, the term *gazda*, which is often translated either as head of household, farmer, or peasant, means both owner and manager, collapsing into one person the

59. Linda Gordon, ed., *Women, the State, and Welfare* (Madison, 1990).

60. I owe this insight to Joanna Goven, whose study of gender politics in Hungarian socialism made clear to me the way that welfare projects could be represented as female attributes of the state. I was also enlightened by a discussion with Takashi Fujitani. In his study of power relations among the ruling elite in Japan of the nineteenth century, Fujitani has explored the differing gendered identities the Emperor embodied. He argues that images of the state and nation are gendered in quite complex ways, the contradictory character of which provide insights into power relations being constructed through these forms. See also Alice Kaplan's study of French Fascism, *Reproductions of Banality: Fascism, Literature and French Intellectual Life* (Minneapolis, 1986).

61. Keith Tribe, *Land, Labour and Economic Discourse* (London, 1978).

role of proprietor, head of household, and economic manager. Central to the image of household economies and nationally administered economic systems, then, is a patriarchal figure in dominance, whose authority is necessary to the efficient and proper running of affairs. But I hasten to add that as far as the image of the household dominates models and practices of state economy, then additional family members will be present along with the dominant father figure. After all, many tasks were delegated to the housewife ("wife of the master" or "female master"; *gazdasszony*). Indeed, it is precisely during this period that the preeminent role of the mother, wife, and mistress of the household is articulated so forcefully. Accordingly, it would be surprising to find that the only figure who appears in the guise of state authority—delegating tasks, reconciling difficulties, providing guidance—was the father figure. And we do find references to female qualities or body parts. Moreover, since women were admonished in the post-feudal period to manage their servants within the calm of the bourgeois family, then it should not be surprising if the particular concerns with social order, with an unruly and disobedient proletariat, would be associated with maternal functions of the state as benevolent guardian of peace in the national household. The gendered identity of the Hungarian state varied in writings of the period; certain tasks were more clearly feminine, others more explicitly masculine. Hence the state reproduced the gender division of labor of the household, reinforcing in another realm of representational labor and political practice the rise of gendered roles within society at large accompanying capitalist development.

## Conclusion

This has been an exercise in illuminating patterns of gendering relationships, ideologies, and persons in the early nationalist period in Hungary. Sauntering through these pages have been the hearty companions we know as patriarchy, capitalism, and nationalism. While patriarchy has long been with us, nationalism and capitalism are fairly recent innovations in social life. It is thus enlightening to examine how patriarchal relations have been refigured in the transition to new forms of politics, economics, and culture. In other words, how has patriarchy been maintained, sustained, and renewed during the transition to modernity?

While I have focused my attention on gendered images of the nation,

I have also been arguing that the images deployed to convey new relations of politics, economics, and society structure those relationships in very fundamental ways. Images of society contribute to its form, just as the relations which structure social action constrain the character of representational work done on their behalf.

What sort of representational work about gender is being done in Hungary today, and on whose behalf? During the 1990 election, posters celebrating women's domesticity and motherhood adorned city walls, themes which have recurred frequently in party speeches. Policy options suggesting that women leave the wage labor force to return to the household have also been raised. These images and the politics they support are hauntingly familiar from the nineteenth-century materials. So too are recent claims that social chaos and conflict can be traced directly to women's irresponsible propensity during the socialist period to work outside the home, to the serious detriment of their families. A new image evoked in party speeches, essays, and everyday conversation is the angry feminist, set on destroying domestic bliss, eagerly undermining her husband's health, and devastating the natural landscape of nationhood. One may ask on whose behalf these images have been fashioned? Do they capture the sentiments of Hungarian women, who struggle day by day to feed and clothe their families? Do they convey the fear and bitterness of men forsaken by the capitalist miracle? Have they been painted by the nation's (predominantly male) leaders, sitting easily in the hallowed halls of Parliament? These are questions best answered by others. But the lessons arrayed before us in the nineteenth-century transition to capitalism may assist us now when confronting a new transition, and the problems it engenders.