

**Gendering Cemeteries:  
Nationalist, Religious and the Cultural Space of Two Cemeteries in  
Budapest, Hungary**

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## Abstract

This essay will try to establish a link between the urban cemetery space in Budapest, Hungary and patriarchal ideas of power and strength. It will also connect the national museum as a comparable example of the inclusion and exclusion based on the national legacy which mirrors the cemetery space, as well as its evocation of traditional folk culture. Christianity also plays a significant role in Hungarian history which closely correlates to national and/or religious symbolism, partially maintained through women's role as mourner in contrast to the warrior hero. Women's role in this religious, cultural and politically driven space of the cemetery is reduced largely to those traditional roles of the family and household domesticities, stereotypically linked to women. The semi-public space of the cemetery does not necessarily afford greater openness and liberalism either since its role as a semi-private space as well has specific codes of conduct. The cemeteries of Kerepesi and Farkasréti in Budapest taken as examples for this research, has to a great extent maintained its role as a potent patriarchal national space, which could be because debate, would have exposed not only the omission of women from national history but the link between state, church and culture to maintain it.

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## Introduction

*“People experience their connection to infinity by visiting certain places. Places become symbolic containers of one’s relationship with other generations.” –Tuan (Cerwonka 2004:27)*

A deep, permeating national consciousness is an integral element of the Hungarian national identity. It can be summarized as "we are all alone" and is based on historical reasons and the "otherness" of the language and the origins of Hungarians. We are alone, does not mean on one’s own but a whole nation collectively alone, meaning unique, a collective individuality. While the consciousness of "we are all alone" was dormant during the socialist period (1948–1989), it still remained a recognizable and crucial part of the national identity. With that said there is little room for change for women against a collective uniqueness which promotes patriarchal lineage.

The aim of this thesis is to introduce a topic largely abandoned by Gender theorists: the urban cemetery as a representation and symbol of patriarchal nationalism within the larger context of the city cemetery. This essay takes the specific case of urban cemeteries in Budapest, Hungary and their link to issues of masculinity, heroism, mourning, motherhood, the rural morality, religion, museum, the body and the cult of death in Hungary. The study takes place in a post-communist environment, in which historical heroism, the culture of death, and religion play an influential role in nationalism and patriotism. The cemetery as a socio-political arena has multi-layered influences from religious and national history which codify gender relations of the space. The patriarchal nationalist spaces – environmental and geographical – and places – military monuments and dedications – are important to understand in the context of the larger gender relation in present day Budapest.

However, this essay does not seek to prove any one specific hypothesis, especially not the link between nationalism and gender and why it might emanate such a strong influence in the cemetery, but rather brings the space of the cemetery to the forefront of the already largely debated issues of domestic gender roles in the home, and to how national and religious symbolisms encode the cemetery space. The cemetery's semi-public as well as religious space adds a new dimension to "place". The essay also does not seek to attribute a passive role to woman and neither an agency per say, but rather to suggest that the naturalization and normalization of the cemetery space as a hierarchy of class and nobility, through religious codes of behavior and heroic respect, is largely unconscious. It is also an effort to question the elevated ranking of the city as progressive, which seeks to maintain its role in the democracy order.

The city is constantly changing its visual appearance as a mode of political and social influences in time. However, the visual appearance of the cemetery has a different time/space continuum; because while death is eminent, the cemeteries rather than replace graves – although this is also an infrequent practice in Budapest – it is rather expanded. This means that there are older and more recent parts to the cemetery; it is a kind of walk through national history and is comparable to the national museum's role as the educator of, although not the most objective conveyor of information about nation's history. Although "ordinary people" are present in the space, their lives are not part of the national rhetoric as such; they rather connect to the history through their national association which becomes part of their identity. This is how museums convey a larger rhetoric that appeals to the "untouched" larger populace; a nation is one large family, in which one's accomplishments – acts which support and help the nation's western ideas of progress – triggers down to self-identity. The buried body of the

aristocracy and public figures, through national commemorations and representation of heroism, can be compared to traditional religious practice of housing relics of saints in churches. The sense of “aura” present in the cemetery is fraught with mythological implications of religious rituals and practices. These relics in the churches would be preserved and treasured, and brought prestige to the barer (parish), much like the elevated prestige of the cemetery which houses public figures of the nation.

This thesis will try to outline the most important factors which reflect how the cemetery space in Budapest is gendered. The first section will deal with the city and the cemetery’s importance as a space of male domination; nationalism as its determining factor. The second section will play with the notion that the cemetery is a kind of national museum, which seeks to illustrate national identity and consciousness. Section three will deal with the enormous task of bringing in religious practice and showing the connection between religion, the nation, and gender (family) through folk culture. And the fourth section will show how the “cult of death” in Hungarian mythology, is alive in the modern context in relation to nationalism and heroism through historic events, holidays and ceremonies, the reburial culture, and the warrior mentality, analyzed in the cemetery space. The overarching theme of nationalism in the context of religious and cultural histories influences gender relations in the cemetery. The national ideology through war, the (soldier) hero, and its representation through monuments, makes women’s “natural” role of “serving” and “mothering”, as the mourner, the decorator, and the caregiver creates an imagined space of brave historical lineage, which omits women and relegates them into the “feminine sphere”.

# I. The Nationalist Cemetery in Hungary

Nina Yuval-Davis claims that intellectuals – which were in most respects of the male sex – were responsible for creating and reproducing nationalist ideology and blames writers such as Hobbes and Rousseau for placing too much attention on the transition from nature to orderly society, which constitutes the difference between the rural and the urban (Yuval-Davis 1998). The orderly society in the works of these writers assumed an aggressive nature and the capacity for reason as characteristically masculine. After which, these assumptions were not only accepted to be male qualities – where woman was the opposite – but as superior traits.

Pierre Bourdieu writes that “countless oppositions observed in every area of existence can all be brought down to a small number of couplets which appear as fundamental”(Bourdieu 1993:118) in language. The language used to describe rituals and practices are terms based on body movements, created around opposites (left hand, right hand), and as such our interpretation of other factors such as inside and outside, going up and going down, also bear positive or negative connotations. Derived from the language used to describe the body, this is also linked to the gendered body: women as inside while men are outside (women has sexual organ inside while man on the outside). Bourdieu states that this is the language of natural science and the tool by which the opposites of male and female essentialism are justified (Ibid.:114-124).

Nira Yuval-Davis’ conceptions about gender and nation will be considered, with specific references to the dimensions of Staatnation, which deals with state citizenship and its references to territory; Kulturnation, in the realm of culture and/or religion; and, Volknation, with focus on the ideas of origin and race, as she outlines in “Gender and Nation” (1998). These three conceptions will be outlined and discussed in the context

of the cemetery space as a place of territoriality, culture and religion, and national origin, and its significance to nationalism in the space of the cemetery in Budapest, Hungary. While Yuval-Davis separates these three concepts into different categories, possible in some parts of the cityscape, the cemetery uses all these to create a potent space in which the study of gender becomes significant. This is why national, cultural and/or religious symbols are often ambiguous and cannot be separated and studied apart, but only through their correspondence and significance to each other.

The Kerepesi and Farkasréti cemeteries of Budapest used for this study employ a visual truth to forge, validate, confirm, shape, and perpetuate ideas of place, space, time, and self in order to create a sense of unity and identity. Mark Haworth-Booth wrote that the sense of the landscape is based on a displacement from the land, that we live in a symbolic landscape through metaphors and similes of language (Haworth-Booth 1975:9). A national landscape can be created through national narratives, to fit the image of a higher national heroic ideal for commemoration. Political rituals create differences between state and nationalist ideologies expressed in the symbols of ritual ceremony, and commemoration days created by state and nation, expressed László Kürti in “People vs. the State: Political Rituals in Contemporary Hungary”, days such as the liberation day, or military parades (Kurti 1990:5).

The root of nationalist sentiment outlined in “Gender and Nation” separates citizenship, culture, and origin as markers of the nation. The first distinguishing feature of a nation according to Nina Yuval-Davis is *Staatnation* or citizenship, which deals largely with territoriality. The dualistic nature to female citizenship, on the one hand is women’s inclusion in social, political and legal policies, and on the other hand “special privileges” controlled by a separate body of legislation which applies solely to women,



writes Yuval-Davis (1998:27). “The integrity and viability of the ‘community of citizens’ thus defined is very much dependant on clear-cut definitions of who belongs and who does not belong” (Ibid.:26) in which case women are relegated solely to their biological role as mothers and wives, through the representation of family. If within a larger framework of the state women are reduced to their biological role, what can be expected of the society at large?

Territoriality means to possess land, to have power over the use of that land, to enact laws which have to be followed when on that landmass, and to outline proper conduct or socially accepted normative behavior, to survey the land, this also meant the inclusion and exclusion of persons through citizenship, markers that state a claim on a bounded territory. This could explain the reconstruction of geographical boundaries between the insiders and outsiders (Ibid.:25). Aerial study of the landscape was first used for scientific purposes: archaeological surveys, map making, military reconnaissance, the search for water or oil, the study of forestation patterns, (Mora 1998:43) etc... They speak of the humans’ relative tiny-ness and isolation within the vastness of the environment, and are not unlike early uses of aerial mapping: to control and survey the land.

Often the mapping of the land also implies mapping the body. Much of the discourse on landscape has been linked to the female body, the penetration of the untamed land and the untamed body of the woman. Lucy Lippard has commented that the “gaze” used to look at nature is the same as the one used to look at women, (1990:40) that they contain the same use of words, such as fertile, fragile, mother, etc... This could explain the association of the female nude and mourner in monumental form in the space.<sup>1</sup> It is evident that the building of the cemetery falls into a masculine,

public domain but the upkeep and care of the cemetery falls into the feminine and private domain, there was many evidence of this at the cemetery, the most noticeable was on a weekday, when women would visit the cemetery irrelative of holiday of weekend “trip”.<sup>2</sup> The women’s role is obvious; to supply and maintain the nation through their biological role as mothers, but not just any children but the desired ‘national race’ (Yuval-Davis 1998:31).

As it follows, the cemetery’s iconography does not seek to change stereotypes or stigmas but follows in the tradition of anthropological, pictorial and documentary traditions (Ramamurthy 1997:151-198). These traditions favor certain views that are linked to the heroic and mythological traditions of the nation. Not only are these notions nationalistic but they are based on patriarchal hierarchies of worth. It is after all symbolically the men who go to war and the women who stay at home, the men who fight for freedom and the women who give birth to future freedom fighters, and it is men who die for their country and women who remember them.

These territorial boundaries were in constant flux in Europe, over the course of the first millennium, as a consequence of wars and conquests. The population was also affected by these wars, fought on their land and sometimes in their backyards. This was a game between men, among men and for male ego and power. The cities were built for the control, and the commemoration of territory; a showcase of heroism and might, but most significantly triumph: the arch de triumph in Paris is one very public example. The city was the space for control over the larger territories, which were rural, and services in the city developed out of the need for those living and/or working in the city. Since the city became a showcase for power, the urban cemetery was likely to follow this tradition.

The burial place, tomb, crypt or grave signified the status of its barer. During Egypt's high reign, the most grandiose and astonishing architectural feats represented burial crypts dedicated to the Gods, the most well known of which were the Egyptian pyramids in Cairo, of which the largest and oldest (Giza) was completed in 2560BC. Ninety-one Popes are buried in St. Peter's, and Kings are put to rest in the most prestigious temple in their country. This most religious affiliation meant that their place of rest was as important as their place during life. In the public cemetery, the mapping of the dead is based on the status of the dead and the prestige of the cemetery. The cemetery became a space that was and still is ranked based on hierarchy of its residence; it then becomes clear how the cemetery can claim its status in the larger national landscape.

Among all the territories of the Carpathian-Basin, the Farkasréti cemetery houses, by far the largest number of distinguished Magyars (Tóth 2003:1). However its prominence is in large part due to the extensive national flavor of the Kerepesi cemetery. Built over a century ago and opened in 1849, it is the final resting place of Hungary's wealthiest and most prominent men and women. The sculptured monuments scattered among the trees followed Western European classical revival. The most notable personages built themselves huge mausoleums, which were decorated with red stars during state-communism, which now stand alongside heroes of the Revolution. Half the streets in Hungary are named after people buried there, including Batthyány Lajos, Deák Ference and Kossuth Lajos, known for their role in the 1848 Revolution (Ibid.).

The Farkasréti by comparison remained a public cemetery, its location in the Buda hills, meant that most of the population would not be inclined to visit. The strict

regulation and control over the Kerepesi cemetery as a reaction, left Farkasréti to flourish into an “artist” cemetery. Not only does it have a spectacular view over Budapest, the cemetery combines historical and modern areas; to be buried there was also an act or rebellion against the communist regime after their close control and surveillance of Kerepesi. In 1958, a Mausoleum for the Labour movement was created in the Kerepesi cemetery, the most highlighted part of the cemetery during Socialism from 1948 till 1989. After the change of regime, it was still considered by some as a Communist cemetery, the son of Bartók Béla forbade for his father's ashes to be taken there, and is buried in the Farkasréti cemetery.

Bartók Béla was buried in a New York cemetery in 1945; he had left Hungary for the United States, declaring that he could not live in a country that he believed would soon succumb to German Fascism, in 1940. In the summer of 1988, Bartók's body was returned to Budapest, and this event mobilizing thousands of “politically disenchanted” people. The socialists used the reburial to reclaim their place in Hungarian politics; they have lobbied for the return for his body for several years, and could now claim their support of a national hero; “allegory, decontextualisation, and myth were used to reinforce and recreate the image of Bartók as a national hero” (Gal 1991:440).

Bartók's reburial followed that of Count Batthyány Lajos in June 1870, Kossuth Lajos in 1894 (Ibid.:450), Thököly Imre, the leader of the 1670s and 1680s uprising against the Habsburg Empire, in 1906, and Rákóczi Ferenc, the leader of the 1703-11 uprising, also in 1906, before the First World War. The reburial during socialism consisted of Rajk László and three other communist leaders in 1956, and Count Mihály Károlyi, the first president of Hungary in 1918, in the 1960s. Nagy Imre was to follow

in 1989, and Horthy Miklós in 1993 (Rév 1995:15-39). The history of reburials in Hungary, attests to a “cult of death” in a larger historical framework. Susan Gal wrote that “death recasts the role of the mortal who has died: it gives his or her life a new interpretation” (Gal 1991:27) to cleanse impurity, and be fit for the funeral (Ibid.). These figures are again part of the national discourse, and they are again part of larger history. A funeral brings the “hero” back to historical life.

The Socialist brought back Bartók Béla’s body, the composer, to create a link between a “hero” of the nation, which they compiled, and the legitimacy of Socialism. Since “representation of Bartók relied on a much older set of images and arguments about the relationship between Europe and Hungary, images and arguments that have constituted Hungarian identity and pervaded Hungarian political and economic life for at least 200 years” (Ibid.:440-441) writes Gal. During the two weeks that separated the exhumation and reburial, the Hungarian media ran story after story, on the life of the musician: interviews with figures linked to Bartók, newspaper spreads, pictures, and essays (Ibid.). Bartók became a népi (folk) scholar and artist, an urbanite, European, the son of Transylvania, an antifascist, a victim of Stalinism (his art was banned in times of Stalinism), and an uncompromising, pure, universalist humanitarian (Ibid.). The links made between Bartók, and Hungary meant that these assumptions would seem natural or given, and contribute to the nationalization of dead heroes.

Hanák places Budapest on a “Revivalist Historicism” (Hanák 1998) between 1848 and 1914. Along with national revival, the civilization project marked Budapest on the path with the rest of Western Europe. Budapest followed suit with the rest of Western Europe in the technological innovations it took on in the late nineteenth century, which went hand in hand with progressive and aesthetic architectural

endeavors, some of which include the underground metro system, the parliament building and the opera house all built around 1896, around the time of Hungary's millennium celebrations. The city was by now oriented towards an ideology of prosperous industrial innovation influenced by Western ideology of progression. This brought new dwellers to the city, but also many tourists who came for amusement and leisure. Hanák writes about these influences in shaping the “administrative, legislative and cultural center” (Ibid.:3) of the nineteenth century metropolis. The cemeteries along with the other innovations in architecture was built not only to house the deceased but to follow in the nationalist tradition of monument building to infuse an imagined historical lineage through dead martyrs of the nation.

The cemetery kept socialist signifiers such as monuments and plots after 1989, because they no longer represent the fear of state reprisal, but a testimony to the survival of the Hungarian Nation from another oppressor. The association of the “survivor” has as much relevance in Hungarian history as ‘conqueror’ in other nations because history is built on the legacy of foreign oppression and victimization, and its fight to overcome it, which explains Hungarians affinity to heroic death of the warrior (suicide), which lives on in the museum and the cemetery space. In 1874, a special parcel was established for those who were denied a church funeral (those who committed suicide and those executed) at the Kerepesi cemetery. Until World War II, several tombs were removed to this cemetery from other ones in Budapest – for example, it is the fourth resting place of the poet Attila József (Tóth 2003:1-53).<sup>3</sup> The burial of suicide victims in the cemetery is one example to strengthen Hungarian's historical association to executions, exiles, and political suicides, which can explain how funerals and reburials

instead of victory parades have become representative of normal public rituals (Rév 1995:15-39).

The second feature of a nation written about by Yuval-Davis is *Kulturation*, this includes (national, state, popular) culture (and religion, which will be dealt with in part III). There are identifiers linked to specific cultural codes, expressed in styles of dress, behavior, customs, literary and artistic modes of production, and language. According to Yuval-Davis it is the woman who transmits cultural traditions, customs, songs, cuisine and language. The influence through language is often a very powerful weapon to control or oppress a nation, which relies on national language as a source of historical consciousness and a reading of history. These also include national songs, speeches and poems. Before World War II, German was the most important and frequently used second language in Hungary, because of the large German speaking population. During the socialist period, Russian was mandatory in all schools and universities. Hungarian has survived many attempts at its abolition, and as such constitutes one of the most significant national symbols. The difficulty of learning the Hungarian language for the foreigner as well as its worldly uselessness further illustrates for the Hungarian the “uniqueness” of its culture.

Much like rewriting history, the Soviet Union rather than destroying the previous monuments, reframed its history to fit their cause. The peasant and the working class, for example, were written into public history as the true heroes of the 1848 revolution, expressed, for example, through the visual redesign of the Kossuth monument outside the parliament building in Budapest, which since 1952, not only represent Kossuth the hero, but the working class, peasants and soldiers that fought along side him (Glatz 2000:677). This changed the whole composition of the

monument form a one point perspective to a triangular composition; it diminished Kossuth's contribution to the Revolution and gives it to the people. Malcolm Miles wrote that sometimes the desire for change is to "purge the unclean, abolish the mess and complexities of the past" (Miles 1997:23).

The Kerepesi cemetery was entirely closed after the Second World War until 1952 by communist leaders. After 1952 there was little danger of cemetery destruction, but it was not until the change of regime in 1989, that the cemetery again opened for burial to national figures. During communist rule the cemetery was used for atheist congregations, and burials had to be approved by the authorities. It was not until 1988 that any religious ceremonies could be performed in the space. However, despite secular ideology, the communists erected and placed heroic monuments to their cause, not only in the cemetery but throughout the city of Budapest. While communism was spreading the advantages of equality and freedom from western ideals of capitalism, it followed in the monumental tradition of heroic building, which depicted man and woman as muscular and strong figures of the nation, and at the same time did not recognizing the social constructs of gender in their own territory. The communist state apparatus was one, but by no means the only political actor to try to influence and rewrite cultural and religious ideology through monument building.

The recent incident in the Kerepesi cemetery, concerning János Kádár and his wife's remains, can only testify to the importance of the national urban cemetery in Budapest, as a symbolic and nationally driven space. János Kádár's grave, was dug up and his bones stolen along with his wife's urn on Wednesday May 2, 2007. On the same day, and authorities believe by the same people, a message was written on the Workers Movement Pantheon (built by the communists) in the same cemetery, the



words were taken from a song by a Hungarian nationalist rock band from Transylvania: "*Gyilkos és áruló szent földben nem nyugodhat*"<sup>1</sup> (Bárkay & Fekete, 3 May 2007, <http://nol.hu/cikk/444987/>). Kádár János who died in 1988, was seen by some as a reformer, a leader who sanctioned trade with the west (although under strict state control), and is seen by most Western analysts as a lenient and economic savvy leader of Communist Hungary, from 1956 onward. However, he is also viewed as a traitor, who made a pact with the Soviet Union during the 1956 Revolution and gave the orders to execute many of the revolutionaries including Imre Nagy in 1958. Such graveyard incidents are highly uncommon however, which does not attest to its insignificance but rather its importance, as a symbol of a specific national pride, and its claim for a "purified" Hungary.

The unearthing of Kádár happened a day after May Day. In 1948, the first of May was reconfigured to fit the new state hegemony, with pictures of Marx, Engels and Lenin, as well as Stalin, Mátyás Rákosi, Khrushchev, Brezhnev and János Kádár according to the period. It was a socialist ritual, in which rested state power and legitimacy. The street was filled with revolutionary songs, red banners, flowers and iconography, appropriated by radical workers and trade unions to symbolize the Communist State. The aim was a peaceful alliance of the masses with the state, and the redirection of popular energy and discontent into non-threatening public channels. The backlash is hardly surprising, writes Foote et al., "given the close connection between public art and political propaganda in the twentieth century and earlier" (2000:301-334).

The third and final important feature of a nation according to Yuval-Davis is *Volknation*, the origin of a people often referred to as race. The nation (people) must

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<sup>1</sup> "A murderer and traitor, cannot rest on holy ground" (Translated from Hungarian by Bernadett Báll)

believe in the myth of a common origin for its survival. This often follows exclusions in the form of either forced integration or assimilation to create an imagined “purity” of a race (Yuval-Davis 1998:30). Hungarians in Hungary constitute about 90 per cent of the population; statistics tend to fluctuate around this number. However the population of the Roma is a much more contested issue in Hungary, some statistics put it around 2 per cent (The CIA World Factbook, 2004-2006, <http://worldfacts.us/Hungary.htm>), while others claim it is closer to 5 per cent. The census can be used as an excluding measure. Their absence from the more prestigious national cemeteries in Budapest is also a testament to their status as an under-class in Hungary. It is also very interesting to mention that the Jewish cemetery space within the Farkasréti and Óbuda Cemetery, implies a link between the nation and the cemetery, rather than it directly referring to a religious space, their segregation also alludes to a larger historical legacy of Hungary.<sup>4</sup> The Kerepesi is further interesting since the eighth district which is inhabited by a large segment of the Roma population in Budapest, is next to the cemetery. So there is an interesting dichotomy between the people who live next to the cemetery and cannot be buried there, and the notoriety which rest there, divided by a high wall.

The status of well known women in the cemetery is also very insignificant, a list of best known dead in Kerepesi on one website (Answers Corporation 2007. <http://www.answers.com/topic/kerepesi-cemetery>) had 2 females, both actresses out of a list of 63 men who represent all areas of socio-political struggle to the arts.<sup>5</sup> It is important to remember stated in Floya Anthias and Yuval-Davis’ “Introduction” to their book *Women-Nation-State* that “the roles that women play are not merely imposed upon them. Women actively participate in the process of reproducing and modifying their roles as well as being actively involved in controlling other women” (Anthias & Yuval-

Davis 1989:11). Women also contribute to patriarchal nationalism, biologically, culturally and symbolically, through the construction of collectivities written about by Levi-Strauss (Yuval-Davis 1998:24). These roles are, according to Floya Anthias and Yuval-Davis, as biological reproducers for the nation; as reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic/national groups; as participants in ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of its culture; as signifiers of ethnic/national difference; and finally as participants in national, economic, political and military struggle (Ibid.:24). While some of these roles, might imply that women have more agency then previously thought by contributing to and even disseminating national and ethnic signifiers, the creation of these signifiers are produced according to George L. Mosse by the rise of eighteenth century nationalism, most significantly controlled by the male sex, which also produced the ideas for the ideal bourgeoisie family morality in Europe, which larger society now accepts as normal (Ibid.).

As a result, while women play a role in creating national space, the message is based on patriarchal principles which largely go unquestioned. It is also relevant to note that the roles which were allotted to women served a larger agenda controlled by men, such as wars, states, armies, the breadwinner or husband, and so on. So while the contribution of women has been significant, the control over the dissemination of relevant cultural information has been little. This does not imply in any way that women's contribution is secondary but rather that, when it comes to national imagery in many European cultures, including Hungary, the emphasis is on the male's heroic contribution to the maintenance of the nation, rather than the females' role in the spreading of those heroic acts. Not all women were the followers of a larger male agenda, however, but it became a marker of "normality".

## II. The Urban Cemetery as Museum

Nationalist ideology according to Yuval-Davis is a rediscovery of collective memory, a transformation of popular oral traditions and language into written form, and the portrayal of a ‘national golden age’ in the far – mythical or historical – past, which becomes the construction of nationalist rhetoric (Ibid.:28). Michel Foucault in his “Of Other Spaces” describes both the cemetery and the museum as heterotopias, which he defines as counter-sites, “a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (Foucault 1986:24). Foucault outlines six principles of heterotopias: all societies have them; they have a precise and determined function in society; and it has several spaces in one single space. Fourth, heterotopias are slices in time; they function as a “public space” is an illusion; and they have a function in all the other spaces that remain outside of heterotopias (Ibid.:22-27).

The first three principles seem to show that these spaces conform to the specificities of a certain society which creates them. Although, all societies can claim heterotopias they all function differently. The National Museum functions to glorify the past for the future and while the cemetery seeks to do the same, its religious affiliation and its direct representation of the *momento mori* creates a different function. They also both function in the realm of the nation, representing it, contesting it and inverting it at the same time. The artifact in the museum and the “hero” buried in the cemetery compliment each other through their cognitive representations of national symbols. They contest the nation through the use of the individual to represent the collective, and invert it through the semi-public, semi-private space.

The three later representations of heterotopias reveal its function in a different time/space continuum. The cemetery's representation of multiple times in a single "time", its illusion of "public space" and its infection to all other areas, reveal that these spaces are not confined to a territory, and that its value dissemination is a cause of human contact with the space. The space does not function on its own, but like a virus it is spread from person to person, to create codes of behavior and attitudes to space.

The representation of the linearity of history in the cemetery and museum space seems to follow a specific path of heroic accomplishments. The emphasis on nation became very important after the French Revolution when many of the countries started to look within their country for identity markers. In the past class was the connection between societies, an aristocrat had more in common with aristocrats in other countries than with their fellow countrymen (Zmora 2000). But this was about to change, not only was there a flourishing of philosophic consciousness but political ones as well, a national army was created, composed of the citizens of the country rather than for hire and they often fought for causes that would inspire change in their societies, evident in the 1848 revolutions. Many of the National Museums were born in a significant era for the country, usually a major historical event, a flourishing of new ideas or as a need to preserve their cultures. What is most interesting is that while museums flourish at a time of relevant peace and prosperity, they are built on legacies of war, conquest, imperialism and colonialism.

In large part the written works of the enlightenment period, with writers such as Rousseau and Hobbes introduce civil freedom in a society that enforces it through patriarchal right, and as a result its exclusion of women, states Yuval-Davis (1998:24). Not only did these museums play a considerable role in preserving the past but they

imprinted a man made future as well. These architecturally aesthetic buildings were not only buildings which housed artifacts of great importance for the nation but they became themselves a representation of the nation. The building itself was located on the main streets of the city, where society interacted. During the nineteenth century the Hungarian National Museum was in front of a bustling market of vendors and craftsmen selling their goods (Gratz 2000:395). A prominent street even today called the Museum Boulevard; paid homage to the building.

The location of the cemetery in the middle of the city meant that it became part of the city landscape. It was not meant to be ignored; it did not bring regret or fear but rather pride and honor. The cemetery is a type of national relic museum. In Farkasréti Cemetery alone there are over 10 000 well known Hungarian celebrities, politicians, musicians etc... This lineage is present in the cemeteries' representation of past glories, triumphal wars, and great leaders, these are all present because one of the aims of any cemetery and museum is to collect and preserve representations of the country's past and preserve it for the future. This might seem obvious and a little trivial but in the nineteenth century – when many of these cemeteries were erected – they were an act of national pride in an era when nationalism was just flourishing and coming into its own. The cemetery is a walk through the national history, which the museum depicts, its display of mausoleums, monuments and obelisks, shows its emulation of the West at a time of the civilization project during the country's "golden period" at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The national museum, not only expresses national consciousness but an "imagined community" (Anderson 1991:1-65) in which national history was either under oppression or sentenced unfairly. Duncan Cameron goes as far as to say that

“museums have a social responsibility to present the public with an objective view of controversial subjects” (Cameron 1971:11-24). Although no one can ever be completely partial, these national museums have a specific role to play in society. The cemeteries and museums both present a revised history which is then presented to the population, and most importantly to the outside world in a way that creates acceptability through its link to Western cultural ideals which fosters a kind of “civilized” acceptance. The Museum and cemetery spaces are in fact a subjective way to represent history especially ones own. “Members of a community will often wish to show only the positive aspects of their culture, and may present or expect a romanticized vision of the past” (Simpson 2001:68). As a result many of the museums took on the role of not only collecting and preserving artifacts but safe-keeping as well, this is also evident in the preservation of religious relics and national heroes deceased, exemplified by the reburial projects of 20<sup>th</sup> century Hungary.

The civilized city often meant improvements in its infrastructure, political ideology (according to the times) and cultural facilities. “The environment in its raw, alien, undisciplined state was an embarrassment, an unacceptable image in an improving world” (Osborne 1988: 166). And much like the conquest of the New World by Europeans in which the bare landscape was seen as opposing the civilization project of colonialism, Central Europe also sought a place in the Western World of prestige and power. City building was a great way to show affinity to Western traditions and practices and receive approval from Western visitors. Most of these changes took place in the larger cities with a significant population and highly educated citizens. Budapest is no exception to the rule and although different divisions bear unique and often

opposing views, the advancement of better housing, job opportunities, and restoration of old and the creation of new environmental spaces is a commonly agreed upon view.

Museums not only help to preserve national culture but play a role in national consciousness and identity, and have become symbols for liberty and independence. Building a national museum in the nineteenth and early twentieth century was a clear message that the nation will not be oppressed, that there are powerful people that support such policies, whom will not be ignored; that culture is the nation. This meant that there had to be wealthy patrons who believed in its importance to the extent of funding it and donating their collections and artifacts. The artifacts that were donated were also selections from a heroic history, a heroic past and displayed to retain it in the future.

Many of the most important artifacts were in private collections – and although they might have disappeared in other hands, art's extremely hierarchical system in elite hands meant that the public could never have access to them. The first step in creating a national museum was often a person or person's donation of their collection to the nation; men such as Hungary's Count Ferenc Széchenyi, who donated his entire collection of books and artifacts in 1802, creating not only a national museum but a library as well (Gratz 2000:358). These figures rather than believing in the future of the state, believed in the future of a nation and its culture: their own. Art was no longer only subjected to private collections; they were displayed in public institutions, often in prominent locations in the capital city. The more accessible the museum was the more people would recognize it as a symbol of their national heritage.

If the simile of the family is used for the nation, then the cemetery and the museum would be cousins, which sprang from the same grandfather, both in the



business of preserving and representing the past (dead) as a public service for the living, while complimenting the lived experience of the hero (a kind of birth) in the museum, with the death, this way it comes full circle, a beginning and an end, according to selected histories, to make it appear as a linear form of history, which these spaces are already promoting. However, among the many similarities between these two national institutions, one of the most sticking differences for the cemetery is its unquestioned place in society, as a barer of “the dead”. What I mean by “the dead” is “the end” of that history. Not only does “death” in language use provoke silence, but a belief in “the end” can mean history is closed, often connected to respect for the dead, which means an uncritical view point. It is only once someone is dead, that they can become part of the national fabric, because of the control over “the end”, which gives power to reconstruct and reconvene history. Bartók Béla, in his will specifically outlines that he does want a pompous funeral, and especially not while the streets have foreign names, but in all his protestation his wishes were ignored, and his funeral was a tool for Socialist legitimacy at a time of political turmoil in 1988, Hungary (Gal 1991:440-458).

Although National Museums are seen as representing and to some extent creating a national consciousness there are several things that should not be ignored. National Museums as well as cemeteries are in the “business” of presenting “authentic” cultures in a way that suits their purposes – for the museum the display of civility in the nineteenth century and post-communism, when museums were under national control, and the cemetery as a playground of great men who made all that is now presented in the museums possible to be proud of – but often excluding facts which do not fit into their lineage of heroic pasts such as Magyarization in the late nineteenth century, or legacies of World War Two, which are often absent from the National Museum as well

as the cemetery. It is interesting to point out that much like National Museum, Hungarians are presented as the victims in socialist past, and little is mentioned about Hungarian involvement in the deportation of Jews, except the Arrow Cross, which are seen as radicals, such as the SS in Germany, which deviates from and is an exception to “ordinary” history.

While analyses of the museum have created debates over its exhibiting practices, over the omission of gender and minority works, the cemetery has seen little debate over its elitist practices of omission. The famous question proposed by the Gorilla Girls due to the lack of female artists in the Metropolitan Museum of Art was: Do women have to be naked to get into the MET?; Referring to the many naked paintings done by men of women. A similar question can be put forward in the cemetery space: Do women have to be naked (statues) to be noticed in the cemetery? This question is even more politically infused, since monuments in the cemetery, unless overtly political, go unnoticed. More so, the open space of the cemetery, unlike the enclosed museum, creates a false sense of consciousness. The city view from the hill of the Farkasréti cemetery further creates a sense of freedom, democracy and hope in the form of religious affiliation. Female figures in the cemetery depict women as either overtly sexual, the mourner or the saint.

What is the value of art in the cemetery? While the museum protects its artifacts from the curious public visitor, by encasing them in glass, the cemetery is open to public spectacle, whether patterns and interaction in a kind of voyeuristic space. Public artworks mean little to market capitalism, because rather than making money as painting might over time; public works need constant attention and funding to upkeep. Public monuments, unless under very specific circumstances, do not have the ability to

make money. The appeal of monuments in the cemetery comes down to political and/or economic status. According to Malcolm Miles public art differs from art in the museum exactly because of its absence from the commodified world. When something does not have a monetary value, how can it be assessed according to capitalist measures?

However, the cemetery plots have to be paid for, first the funeral and then fees paid every ten years. This is primarily the reason how; the cemetery can be viewed as a private space (with monetary value) as well as a public space without that value. This reveals that the living visitors to the cemetery are coming into a private space (visiting the plot) in a public setting (of the cemetery). The cemetery becomes an interior as well as an exterior.

Another important deviation and similarity between the cemetery and the museum is surveillance. Again the cemetery seems more open, without camera surveillance and extensive security. However, surveillance in the cemetery is self-imposed and imposed by other visitors, through expected codes of behavior; it feels as though control is in the hands of the visitor. This is why women in the cemetery space do not feel directly surveyed by a paid employee but that does not mean that surveillance is not taking place. The code of conduct is partly as a connection to religious practice, as well as respect for the nation. It is for many elderly women a place where they meditate, picnic, talk to other women, do gardening, and pray.<sup>2</sup>

Malcolm Miles outlines the importance of the “Planned Gaze” in public works, he states that the “viewpoint of height is critical to conventional urban planning and represents power” (Miles 1997:37). The Farkasréti cemetery is located in the Buda Hills; it is a cemetery with a view over the whole of Budapest. It is noted for its

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<sup>2</sup> Personal observation over an extensive period of about three months at the Farkasréti cemetery, between the months of February-May 2007.

spectacular sight towards the city, several people wanted it more to be a resort area than a cemetery during its planned phase in the mid-nineteenth century; the Buda hills are known for its natural spring water, and caves. The Kerepesi Cemetery during the Socialist period imprinted the symbol of the star on the museums of the three 1848 dignitaries, as well as erecting an enormous monument to the Workers' Movement. These monuments sought to provoke fear of the state, not unlike the religious figures which sought to provoke fear of "the inferno" to control behaviour.

Over the last thirty years museums have taken over roles not previously associated to them: revitalization of the arts, increased access to archives and collections, and addressing social and political issues. But they are also in the business of research and preservation, artifacts they deem worth while. National Museums have contributed greatly to the preservation of material culture and the revival of traditional practices by establishing programmes of restoration and a re-creation of significant pieces requiring knowledge of traditional skills and artistic conventions (Simpson 2001:250). However, social responsibility in a National Museum and even more in a cemetery is highly politically controversial in view of a respectful nationalism and a faithful citizen.

While the space of the museum, in its message and in part function, can quite easily be compared to the cemetery, the cemetery unlike the museum is also a representation of the history of Christian religious practice. Christianity has played a critical role in Hungary's national history. The legitimacy of the Magyars in Europe in the first century rested on the acceptance of Christianity by the first king of Hungary. The Kerepesi and the Farkasréti cemeteries in Budapest are not only a religious and

national space but also a social and culturally constructed one, most revealing through its association to the national departed figures.

### III. The Urban Cemetery, Religion and Decoration

The history of Hungary or at least its fore into “civilized” culture came in 1001, with the crowing of King Stephen by Pope Sylvester II in Rome, whether he was in reality directly crowned by the pope is uncertain, but the holy crown, which symbolically represents the Hungarian people and nation is its greatest treasure. The crown, a symbol of the nation and religion was smuggled in and out of the country, for it symbolized a kind of legitimacy. It was returned in 1978 by President Jimmy Carter. “Emigrants Hungarians in the US were outraged that Carter would thus legitimize a Communist government” (Finnes 1999:20). King Stephen has a controversial accession to the throne and one that is embedded in a deep seated national consciousness. Not only is Stephen the first King of Hungary but he is also its Saint. The very popular and modern rock opera, also called King Stephen (István Király) testifies to the legacy of historically recognized events in popular culture.

The cemetery as a “holy ground” is based on religious connection to nature, the family and faith. Christianity is a direct connection to power, territory and conformity in Hungarian history. While the state knew the importance of using religious and cultural symbols in its pursuit of a collective national identity when it suited them, the church also knew the importance of using historical and cultural symbols connected with religious ones, to create a link between, the people, the nation and Christianity. New monuments today are being sponsored by political, social and religious organizations, local government, veterans’ and survivors’ associations, businesses and private individuals, and the national government are no longer its sole supporters (Foote et. al. 2000:301-334).

The urban cemetery's national references are very politically and economically driven spaces. The Kerepesi cemetery in Budapest, which was declared a "disztemető" (cemetery for show) since 1885, only accepts distinguished figures for burial and is known for having over 3000 representatives of national history, mostly prominently political figures. Its "forced" sibling, the Farkasréti cemetery in the Buda hills, writes Tóth Vilmos is, and has always been a public cemetery. Built on a hill and away from city officials it became the desired destination for burial, where private Christian ceremonies could be arranged during the Communist era forbidden by the state (Tóth 2003:1-53).

As the population increased in Budapest, so did the shift in ideology, writes Hanák. The population became condensed on the periphery of the city, creating an increase in social and national imagining that took on a new Christian belief of exclusion and an increase in church building. The importance of language, worship and housing became a cause for further nationalism; the importance of religion can be seen in the multitude of churches built from 1880 to 1914 (Hanák 1998).

Religious Holidays were suppressed by the socialists in 1948, and August 20<sup>th</sup> was declared Constitution Day. Implemented to mute the attraction of the pre-socialist, religious holy day, St. Stephen's Day it consequently conflicted with its previously peaceful Catholicism with a massive military parade (Kurti 1990:5-8). The Felvonulási (Parade Ground) Square, was used by the Socialists for military and workers' parades. In 1951, a monument was erected to Stalin in the Square, which was cut down during the 1956 revolution, but to make way for the twenty foot monstrosity, a church was toppled. The Regnum Marianum (Madonna's country) church was built during the

Christian-nationalism in 1931, under Admiral Horthy Miklós (Bókay, Aug.-Sept. 2006, [magazine.ujember.katolikus.hu](http://magazine.ujember.katolikus.hu)).

Socialists also knew the importance of the cemetery space for national and religious sentiment. The Kerepesi cemetery became one of the targets for “reintegration” after the Second World War. Kerepesi is located in the center of Budapest, it houses the national heroes of Batthyány Lajos, Kossuth Lajos and Deák Ferenc in separate mausoleums. Before the First World War, this cemetery, along with the Farkasréti was considered largely secular and was rather a “liberal-nationalist” (Tóth 2003:5) cemetery for historical figures. It started to develop a more “Christian Nationalist” (Ibid.) feel after the signing of the Trianon Treaty in 1919, when Hungary retained only one-third of its previously historic territory during Hungarian Empire. Admiral Horthy was to lead the country into a Christian nationalist fervor after his defeat over Béla Kun’s communist regime in Hungary, and would rule the country as a dictator. He used the country’s disenchantment over its lost territory as a means to legitimize his power; he evoked Christian symbols as a direct contrast to communism. It was at this time that national and military symbolism in the cemetery took on a secondary role to Christian symbolism (Ibid.).

Cities are continuously being reshaped to fit the present political expectations, and one of its visible representations of this is the cemetery. While the city changes outside the cemetery, the time inside retains only those historical wins and losses which seem to convey a slower linear historical line of historical tragedies and triumphs through the representation of graves and monuments to them. Also partly due to the conformity of religious/moral practice within the cemetery, the landscape has a mystical and even somewhat idyllic landscape, a kind of *Et in Arcadia Ego*; the sense that even



in a most perfect and tranquil landscape, such as Arcadia, we are reminded of human mortality. What adds to the cemetery's idyllic landscape is its representation of an idyllic history, of its representation of life rather than death. The religious setting also speaks of death, as a beginning rather than an end. But this landscape of death and history bares upon it certain codes of respectability and spirituality beyond everyday experiences, and has the ability to reiterate patriarchal ideals of conformity, tradition and order.

The combining effect of national and religious symbols and their transference into the cemetery space, through the use of King Stephen as king and saint, means that national ideologies are hard to separate from its religious counterpart. This exemplifies how the cemetery as a space of national and religious fervent creates a double bind in which both conform to a tradition/historical representation of national identity. While many public figures rest in the cemetery, their direct connection to nationalism (links to a national heroic past of political revolts/wars) is not evident in the span of their life. However, actors, singers, composers, and engineers, for example, are associated with a past that is rooted in such conflicts. Many of these figures are seen to have contributed to the national image; the contribution of one person from a designed group is a reflection on all, and this is evident not only from within the nation but also from without. A person does not have to live, or work in their home country to be claimed a national figure, historical lineage is enough, which is worked into a historic legacy of a severed and misunderstood Magyarország through the need to emigrate, but most profoundly to flee from reprisal.

The cemetery is not only a national space, which is endowed with masculine driven symbols of war, but it uses "folk" tradition (peasant), classical references

(civility), and national symbols (flag) to maintain a gendered historical imagining.

“Culture is Ordinary” wrote Stuart Hall (1999:33-44), who believed that culture derives from every day lived experiences. Objects used for lived experiences contribute to the culture of the nation. Craft is one such artistic expression. Arts and Crafts writings are full of nostalgic images of the good peasant, the faithful peasant, who devotes his/her time to the work of God. Peasant churches decorated in folklore symbolism was very common in Hungary; they were colorful and elaborate to create spiritual enlightenment. These designs and others inspired the Arts and Crafts movement in Hungary and national cultural revival. Crafts in Hungary are often derived from folklore, which symbolized religious fervent and devotion, decorating objects were often done to give thanks to God (Crowley 2004:281).

Elizabeth Silva, in her article *Gender, Home and Family in Cultural Capital Theory*, writes that “together with the domestic sphere, the Church, and the educational system [along with] the state, are the key sites for the maintenance of naturalization” (2005:84-85) the naturalization of gender roles in which sexual identity, or more specifically biological essentialism, determines social identity, in the social environment, which creates gendered spaces. “The female space is that of the house and its garden” writes Silva using Bourdieusian theory, “all that pertains to sexuality, procreation and death and the world of intimacy” (Ibid.:86). The “family” is being produced and reproduced, and although it is an illusion it is a well founded one. Nina Yuval-Davis writes in her article “Gender and Nation” that nations are viewed as a natural and universal phenomenon which is an “‘automatic’ extension of kinship relations” (1998:23). The legitimacy of children are based on the construct of the

family through legal means, the control of women as national reproducers relates to her biological capacity to bear children (Ibid.:30).

The difference in gender relations and cultural ideals about masculinity and femininity is a wide spread problem, the differences lie in its degree of importance and its effect on limiting society's movements. The gender roles in Hungary seem to play a primary role in defining moral standards. The definition of good wife and mother versus a bad one rests on their ideals relating to traditional roles of the private and public spheres, expressed Judit Acsády in her article "Shifting Attitudes and Expectations in Hungary" (1995:22-23). Even if the family is a fictitious classification of gender disparities, it nevertheless has a very real purpose, says Pierre Bourdieu, and that is to transform love into a loving disposition, which falls upon the woman (Silva 2005:88). To love is very closely associated to decoration, as a symbolic form of remembrance, for example the hanging of photographs on the wall. In the cemetery, flowers are often used to decorate the grave. Flowers are closely associated to the woman's sexuality, not only in the arts such as Georgia O'Keefe's paintings, but in words like to bloom (into a young lady) or to flower (into ...).

Wild flowers have also been linked to graves as a kind of symbol of new birth, and symbol of fertility, linked to the reproductive system of the female. Laying flowers on a tomb by a woman can be interpreted as a kind of promise of giving new life, and by the state, the promise to keep the nation prosperous. Nationalism rhetoric has used the "flowering" of the nation as the role of women to reproduce, and bear sons for the nation. Theodor W. Adorno wrote that modernity has made the city so unlivable, that decoration has become necessary in the home (Lewis & Cho 2006:69-91). Although

homes have always been decorated to either show status or for function, Adorno is writing about the obsession today with decorating television series in Western societies.

If Adorno's ideas about home decoration, are considered, it become evident that decoration is associated to a more "livable" space in the drudgery of the modern urban home. If decoration is needed to make the home more livable, then the unlivability of the home without decoration is also suggestive of the dysfunction of city life, and the advantages of reverting back to nature. If a comparison is created between the need to decorate the home and the need to decorate the cemetery a direct link is made to the domestic roles of women in the home and their transference to the cemetery. There is a kind of irony in decorating the cemetery to make it livable, but in all respects the cemetery is for the living rather than the dead. A previously undesirable space is made desirable and acceptable through decoration. The idea that life is brought to death through decoration is not at all unusual considering that the dead are never really dead as long as there is someone who remembers them. Flowers are symbolically representational of life, the fragility of life, the shortness of life: of humanness. It become evident how Heroes of the Nation, will never die and as such remain immortal; no longer part of the living human but the heroic (superhuman).

What does it mean for the cemetery to be decorated? Pierre Bourdieu wrote in *Masculine Domination*, that "within the division of domestic labor women quite naturally take charge of everything concerned with aesthetics, and more generally with the management of the public image and social appearances of the members of the domestic unit" (1998:99). "Gender and reproduction ... are being discussed as moral and natural categories rather than social ones" as part of the shift from post-communism in Hungary, writes Susan Gal, in her article "Gender in the Post-Socialist Transition: the

Abortion Debate in Hungary” (1994:257). She writes that one of the major oppositions to communism in the 1980s came from populist groups, with a concern over population decline and the worry over the “imminent death of the nation” (Ibid.:269). Population is very much a national discourse where women’s biological reproductive role has led to debates about the future of the nation. Women have become the source and the product for a declining population” (Ibid.:271). Homi Bhabha claims that it is repetition that reinforces preconceived notions which foster stereotypes. He questions the validity of stereotypes, because of its need for continuous repetition. He writes that the protection and preservation of history requires that “authenticity” and fixity remain (Bhabha 1994:66-84). It seems as though it is the nation’s role (national rhetoric) and the women’s role (reproduction) to keep these memories alive, while it is the state’s role (dissemination of message) to preserve it.

The landscape of the cemetery creates the nation of historical past which infuses into the present, a nation of heroes, myths and legends; a people whose identity is based on the deceased and their connection with the land. The promotion of the collective historical consciousness within the cemetery creates alternative pasts and imagined narratives for the nation. Benedict Anderson wrote about the nation as an imagined community that created its own narrative. Benedict Anderson calls nations “cultural artifacts” which replaced religion as the center of being and created homogeneous myths of nationality in the form of “imagined communities” (Anderson 1991:1-65).

By the 1900 isolated and primitive regions had new appeal, for their “authenticity” of representation, the non corrupted traditions of a lost time. Many nations including Hungary had a great interest in reviving their national symbols, in the late nineteenth century. They looked for inspiration in the “backward lands” of what is

now Romania, at the time part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Interest in the ordinary was a “product of a strongly-felt understanding of the past” (Crowley 2004:282). The prospect of emotion was in modern art only a consequential reaction to a work, while craft sought a legacy in emotion, emotion from a past, for the present. Emotion is also a legacy of religious art, historical art, and national art.

A very significant representation of folk culture in the cemetery is the grave pole. These poles were outlawed during communism and have become extremely fashionable after 1989 (Foote, et. al. 2000:301-334). They have appeared outside of the cemetery as well, in most cases to signify the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. One example is in front of the Mammut Shopping Center in Budapest. The grave posts with stars and tulips were incorporated into a living folk tradition, during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the Arts and Crafts movement in Hungary. The “grave-post is one of the ancient symbols of life” (Keserü 2004:196) very different from “Rest in Peace” often heard in North America. It could mean that although death has come to one, there is still life in the rest of the group. Since the rural community would often be like a close family, sharing life and death. The symbol of life with death has a very real consequence for women. Women are reminded that they are responsible for the life, for the future, for the nation. Cynthia Enloe has pointed out that it is apparently for the sake of the “women-and-children” that men go to war “the embodiment of the collective ‘honor’ (Yuval-Davis 1998:29). Otto Bauer’s conception of “common destiny” states that members of a national group believe their futures to be interdependent with the collective and do not only maintain within boundaries because of historical lineage.

The grave-post also alludes to the “creative forces of mankind” (Keserü 2004:196) in its revival form. The grave-post, floral motifs, customs, poetry, tales,

myths and ballads were part of the national folk revival. “We have to arouse the ancient symbols slumbering deep in the consciousness of the nations and we have to revive them in some new form...That is the task of Hungarian art” (Ibid.:196) the most influential folk artist Körösfői declared. The rise of the Second Reform Generation in Hungary, in the early twentieth century, combined cultural and political issues, uniting all the social classes around the idea of the “house”. It was related to folk culture, and it sought the discovery of the inner life of man. Körösfői put into his art, his life philosophy: Love, knowledge, Virtue, and Honesty, with Christ at the helm (Ibid.:188-201).

Folk art was seen the most harmonious and purest type, that could convey a distinctly national, radical character (Ibid.:192). The grave poles in the present day cemetery still convey the symbols with which the national revival sought to infuse them: the home, family, and reproduction through religious symbolism. But there is an added symbol that is the ribbon symbolizing the national flag. These ribbons are either tied around the grave stone itself, or the many wooden grave poles throughout the cemetery. Through these grave-poles are infused religious, folk, and national tradition, which all promote the prosperous nation, through symbols of patriarchal control, such as the family, and through the family, biological reproduction, mothering and mourning.

The merits of utility, so much rejected in art were one of the cornerstones of the Arts and Crafts movement. William Morris in 1885 wrote in “Useful Work Versus Useless Toil” that, “everything that was made by man was adorned by man, just as everything that was made by Nature was adorned by her”(Crowley 2004:281). Craft was part of nature, but nature as a ‘she’. The association of craft to women meant that

recognition for craft was appreciated for the skills of a craftsman rather than an artist; a manual pursuit rather than an intellectual one.

Traditional art's link to national revival and emotion, does not exemplify the acts from which the symbols derive, such as wars, but those symbols become part of an imagined past. These imagined pasts are gendered, because while acts of war are represented as masculine traits of violence and courage, their representation in the folk culture are brought about through the "feminine" arts of craft. Craft's link to emotion also exemplifies mourning and remembrance (keeping memory) through handiwork, as part of the tradition of decorative arts. These decorative arts of craft are also closely associated to nature, through the use of natural materials, such as wood, wool, cotton, silk, beads, and natural dyes (the exceptions were incorporations from other regions and were often not considered original).

It seems that national symbols, and in most cases the Hungarian ribbon, signifying the national flag: three stripes from top to bottom of red white and green, is the most widely used symbol of nationalism in the cemetery. The ribbons are tied around the grave stones, and do not reveal any specific pattern, but are rather common signifiers in the cemetery space. Reefs can be purchased with the red, white and green ribbon as well. But the most significant signifier of national identity was the grave post, with the Hungarian ribbon: the traditional with the modern. The grave posts is an ancient symbol of "purity" and "authenticity" while the flag is a very modern symbol of revolution and nationalism. The combination of these two symbols exemplifies the coming together of past and present in a religiously coded space, combining nationalism, religion and (folk/national) culture.



Despite the fact that Hungarians are not devout church goers, cemetery visits are a frequent occurrence and are common on every holiday including mother's day, labor day, military commemorations but most especially Christmas, Easter and with the most turn-out: All Saint's Day (November 1). Hollow's Eve is not celebrated but the following first of November, brings the whole of the Christian population out to the cemeteries to pay tribute, lay flowers and light candles by the graves of their loved ones and national heroes. Streets are closed down, bus routes are expanded and more frequent, and police officers line the cemetery routes to control traffic.

The Hungarian grave polls with the ribbon were a very common site in the cemetery. Some of these grave polls did not signify a grave at all but were simply placed, by a grave stone or between graves.<sup>6</sup> This implies that the grave posts have other signifiers beyond the marking of the grave. This symbol of traditional and "authentic" Hungarian culture revived in the cemetery, is a phenomenon after 1989, and is associated to the fallen of the 1956 revolution. While other graves exhibiting the grave post, without specific national reference visible in the cemetery, it is unlikely to see a 1956 dedication without a grave-pole and a ribbon,<sup>7</sup> in the Farkasréti cemetery. A specific monument dedicated to the 1956 revolution, in the Óbuda cemetery also bore this symbol.<sup>8</sup>

## IV. The Culture of Reburials, Revolutions and Mourners

In 1989 the reinterment of dead heroes denied proper burial became the number one issue. These ‘undead’ culture heroes, in particular Imre Nagy, were set against the living communist anti-heroes, namely Kádár János. On October 23, 1989, the day the revolution began in 1956, Hungarians held candles and flags as they sang the national anthem at the first officially sanctioned rally in Budapest commemorating the 1956 uprising against Soviet rule. It marks the first day of the 1956 uprising, acquiring mythical proportions and stirring collective sentiments.

The return of the body of Bartok Béla was the socialist answer to the body of Imre Nagy. Critical and opposition intellectuals had asked for the body of Nagy Imre, the executed leader of the 1956 revolution (Gal 1991:452). On June 16, 1989, Nagy Imre was laid to rest on the exact day of his execution, after first being buried in the courtyard of the prison, and then in an unmarked grave for over thirty years. The bodies were secretly buried in the cemetery under pseudonyms, but rumors spread that Nagy and the others were in Plot 301 of the largest public cemetery in Budapest. In the beginning of the 1980s flowers were placed on the ground in the darkest corner of the cemetery. After 1982, the police closed this part of the cemetery on the commemorative occasion of October 23, the first day of the revolution and July 16, the day Nagy was executed in 1958 (Rév 1995:15-39).

Excavation started just a few months prior, when it was revealed that Nagy and four other dissidents of the 1956 revolution were buried in Parcel 301 of the Rákoskeresztúr Public Cemetery in Budapest. “In 1989 the reburial ceremony held for these political prisoners set the stage for the collapse of the Communist government” (Foote et. al. 2000:303). Ironically, János Kádár died the same hour Nagy Imre was

legally rehabilitated by the Supreme Court of Hungary, a month after his reburial. The funeral took place at the Hero's Square where the Christian Holy Crown connects to the heroes of the Magyar past.

The search for the body of Petőfi Sándor in 1989 continued the legacy of obsession with the “cult of death” in Hungarian history. Petőfi Sándor is one of the greatest and most beloved poets in Hungarian history. He was not only a poet, but a national figure of great importance, who is cited as the person, that brought together the greatest event, which gave the start to the revolution, on the steps of the National Museum on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1848. This was the mass meeting, the greatest starting event of the revolution, gathered in front of the National Museum where Sándor Petőfi recited the “National Song” (Lázár 1995:88) almost as important as the national anthem; it has been called the Hungarian “Marseillaise.” After this event the National Museum came to represent human and national liberty along with social progress (Ibid.:88). After the failed revolution of 1848, a compromise was reached with Austria in 1867, which gave Hungary control of over half of the Austro-Hungarian territory. National revival was one of the gifts/consequences of Hungarian political power.

“Death makes the martyr, and his death rewrites, reinterprets, his whole life. A martyr is a martyr from the height of his death. He can be reburied, but he cannot have a new death, a new version of death; he cannot live after which made him a martyr” (Rév 1995:35). The use of “he” throughout his quote can quite easily testify to the sex of such a martyr. If men are the martyrs what is the role that the women play in the nation? These events and their symbols are rooted in European political iconoclasm of masculine strength and the heroic martyr. The historical monuments and shrines

dedicated to these causes are imbedded in the timelessness of traditional national holidays (Foote et. al. 2000:306).

On March 15, reefs are laid on the graves of the heroes of the nation, the ones that died for the revolution, and the ones that would never be forgotten. It was also the only national holiday to survive Stalinist reorganization. The 1848 revolution was redefined as a class war and an international struggle by the socialists. March 15<sup>th</sup> became a series of rites known as “Revolutionary Youth Days.” This synthesis merged the 1848-49 symbols with those of the Bolshevik Council of Republics of 1919 in order to avert the dangers of nascent nationalism and anti-state sentiments (Kurti 1990:7). “The care of the dead has always been one of the most important instruments in establishing and reestablishing the bonds of a community” (Rév 1995:30). This carried an influence into the growth of national identity displayed in cemetery monument building. As a semi-public place it became a space where the nation rested, not died, and came alive when it was visited or remembered.

Kossuth Lajos’ Mausoleum in the Kerepesi cemetery features an “allegorical female figure representing Hungary, draped in mourning, immersed in the memories of the past and meditating upon the woes of the homeland”(Ibid.:22) wrote István Rév. Mourning is a kind of catharsis through which the nation “reintegrates the dead into [the] social communion” (Ibid.:30).

Over the course of time and space everything changes, alters, is reinterpreted and this includes the cemetery, but rather than this being a linear change it is a multi-layered one, there is never a “truth” but rather a fragment of reality in a representational package. Cemeteries follow pictorial conventions of pastoral scenes – a middle state between the wilderness on the one hand, and urban civilization on the other (English

1979:5) – which displays the mixture female sensitivity towards nature and its counterpart, the masculine pursuits of an intellectual city. This is an overt generalization but it shows the very real link many people make in connection with gender roles, presented in literature and the arts.

Women's reproductive role plays a central role in associating woman to the preserver of memory and mourner through "the mother". Caregiving and "mothering", links women to the role of the peacemaker, the peacemaker in the home; the role of the peacemaker is a symbolic one for national growth and survival. The cemetery acts as a mediator between the sender and the receiver in which the caregiver is governed by a set of social codes. Since caregiver is often associated to female work and since the vast majority of personal care of the cemetery plot is done by women, these social codes apply mostly to women as well through their association to the family and to the home. Although men have social codes in the cemetery as well, the few men who do visit the cemetery are rarely found spending as much time there as women, who use the space to meet with other retired women, talk and even picnic on the grounds.

This is solely from a three month observation of the Farkasréti cemetery, and more research needs to be done however very important presumptions can be gathered. First, the space is used as a park, as a recreational space, where people jog and ride their bikes. Second, it is a very crowded and condensed space, even without people, and Third, that older women seem to use this space to combine home and work; the cemetery space in which they care for their husbands and/or other family members, much like they have had to do all their lives. This implies the naturalization of women and care. Women preserve memory, through the preservation of the graves, as they might have preserves their family, through other chores, such as cooking or cleaning.

It is also a very interesting point, by Yuval-Davis that cultural differences are often more noticeable by the distinctions between women (1998:28), their place in society, culture and politics. This implies that it is the male's behavior towards women in society, through legal and social means, which distinguishes the perimeters of different cultures. The integration of new legal measures for women is often politically driven however, and is often based on essentialist concepts of woman, as mother or wife.

On observation for three hours on Wednesday May 2, 2007, I found that only one out of ten came empty handed, and these were younger women with families. Many of the elderly women also had potting plants, potting soil and watering cans with them. While it is obvious that the majority of the visitors to the cemetery are women, does that necessarily mean that they are in control of the space? Yes and No, because while it is a place largely relegated to women and they are not obliged to take care of the graves, they are still functioning in a space which codifies their conduct, through national and religious markers. For example I found that in the cemetery, the pace of walking was much slower, and it was not due to their inability. This implies contemplation and respect for the deceased.

These reactions to space can best be described by using Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the "body hexis" (Bourdieu 1993: ...). He states that body hexis is an emotion that is embodied without being forced to concede to the "natural", essentially unconscious. That it is engrained in the body through learned habits and dispositions. These habits have a gender element in so far as they code such things as walking, talking or even eating.<sup>9</sup> These emotions are not a repression or a suppression in men, they are the creation of women, writes Catherine Lutz et al (1990). However, the representation of

emotion by women, for example crying, is seen as irrational and antisocial, which legitimates a need for control (Ibid.:87).

Emotion is seen as women's work (Ibid.:82-83) and everything associated to it, especially mothering. According to Nancy Chodorow, women are segregated to the role of the mother because it is central to the "sexual division of labor" (2000) in which men preside. Women's role is part of their biological makeup, is one argument, their closeness to nature as bioevolutionary is another. She concludes that it is seen as a natural fact, whether this be so or not (Ibid.). So while the cemetery is a space that evokes feelings, it is also the place of rest for those that put on a brave face, the courageous, brave and strong as well. The "gaze" is present in the cemetery, through religious/ national ideas about proper behavior. However is largely unconscious and goes unnoticed, it become a natural way to "feel" in that space. Space determines that actions and feeling of the person present, whether those people who transgress the space can alter the space's mechanics is not so certain, because they have become so customary and approved, that they are imbedded in the consciousness of the nation, no longer recognized as practices but truth, a symbol for heroism (Shapiro 1988).

What must really be understood about many cultures is that they are not dead or even in hibernation but are living entities of everyday life. History lives in the present as well as the past. Issues with a reference to nation-building do not belong exclusively to the past but play an important part of the socio-political present, with significant influence to its citizens. In light of this, it would be a mistake to overlook the contribution the cemeteries have made and still have in contributing to national consciousness and their role in the maintenance of masculine/ feminine gender roles.

## Epilogue

We look at a thing and think we have seen it, and yet what we see is only after what our prejudices tell us should be seen, or what our desires want to see. Very rarely are we able to free our minds of thought and emotions and just see for the simple pleasure of seeing, and so long as we fail to do this, so long will the essence of things be hidden from us.

– Bill Brandt (Strong 1975:7)

The quote above perfectly exhibits the often misleading ideas about space. First that objective observation is the ideal way of seeing and second that there was (somewhere, somehow, sometime) a single essence to a space. Supposing first that there is an essence to space which is hidden behind our normalization of place, we can start to think of how we see and construct essence, and how that itself influences perception, often through our national, cultural and historical pasts. The cemetery even more so is a place where cultural change comes even slower than within the confines of the city. This can be explained by its use as a national landscape of heroes, its function as a burial ground, which deserves respect, and its codified religious iconoclasm which seems locked in time.

The cemetery reveals that gendered spaces are present in every-day life, that they reveal something about a society, and that they have certain reproductions. The cemetery in Budapest has a long historical past, which is plagued by nationalism, religion and culture. The space has revealed that there are several ways to interpret and analyze the space. Hungarian history's legacy of reburials influenced the national rhetoric, and political rhetoric. Commemorations and holidays are the celebrations of the dead, the celebrations of a legacy, a celebration of the past. The national hero is the apex of positive masculine traits, the warrior is the nation. The women within the cemetery often follow a preconditioned embodiment of the nation as the reproducer,



mother, mourner and care-giver of the nation. The cemetery reinforces these gendered roles through its “timelessness” in a space that reinforces certain codes of behavior.

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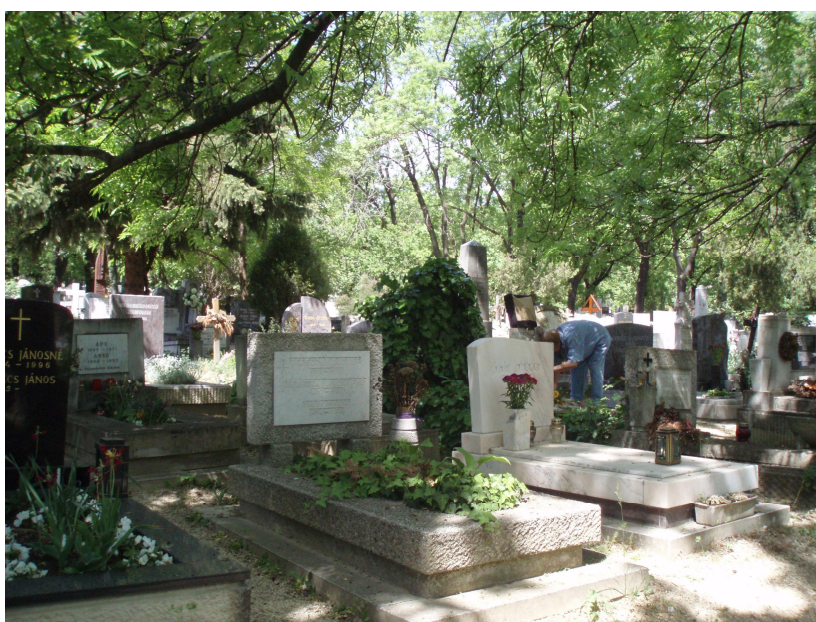
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## Appendix

<sup>1</sup> Farkasréti Cemetery, May 2, 2007. Photograph taken by Bernadett Báll.



<sup>2</sup> Female attending the grave on May 1, 2007, flowers are also very visible on many of the graves due to the May First celebrations. Photograph taken by Bernadett Báll.



<sup>3</sup> Poem by József Attila, who committed suicide at the age of 32.

**With a pure heart. (1925 Tisza Szél)**

Without father without mother  
without God or homeland either  
without crib or coffin-cover  
without kisses or a lover

for the third day - without fussing  
I have eaten next to nothing.  
My store of power are my years  
I sell all my twenty years.

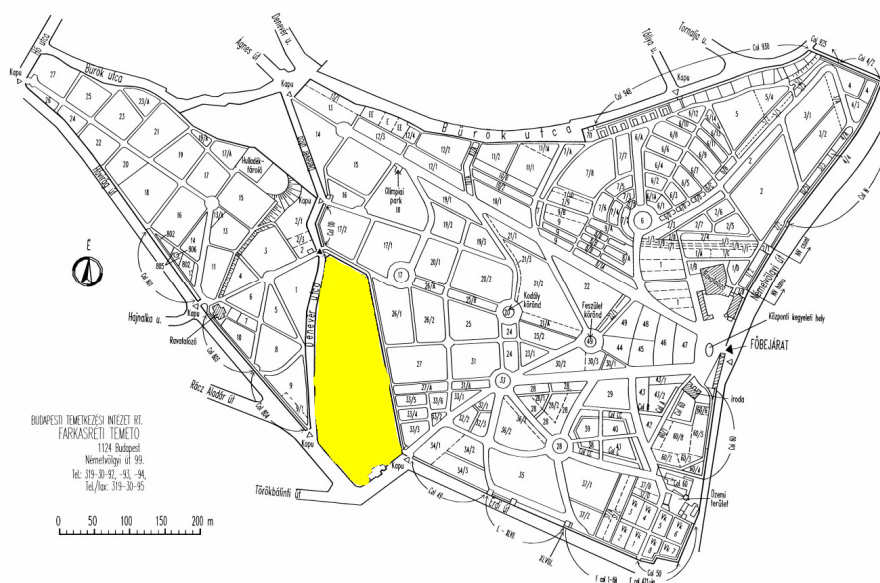
Perhaps, if no else will  
the buyer will be the devil.  
With a pure heart - that's a job:  
I may kill and I shall rob.

They'll catch me, hang me high  
in blessed earth I shall lie,  
and poisonous grass will start  
to grow on my beautiful heart.

*Translated by Thomas Kabdebo*

Thomas Kabdebo (Ed.) (1966). *József Attila Poems*. London: The Danubia Book Co.

<sup>4</sup> Highlighted in yellow/grey is the largely abandoned and overgrown Israel burial space at Farkasréti Cemetery.



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<sup>5</sup> Partial list of celebrities resting there

- 1) Endre Ady (poet)
- 2) Ignác Alpár (architect)
- 3) József Antall (Prime Minister, historian)
- 4) János Arany (poet)
- 5) Mihály Babits (poet)
- 6) Béla Balázs (writer, film aesthete)
- 7) Miklós Barabás (painter)
- 8) Jenő Barcsay (painter)
- 9) István Bethlen (Prime Minister)
- 10) Lujza Blaha (actress, "the nightingale of the nation")**
- 11) Ottó Bláthy (electrical engineer)
- 12) Tivadar Csontváry Kosztka (painter)
- 13) Gergely Czuczor (linguist, poet)
- 14) Béni Egressy (composer)
- 15) Loránd Eötvös (physicist)
- 16) Ferenc Erkel (composer)
- 17) János Fadrusz (sculptor)
- 18) György Faludy (writer, poet, translator)
- 19) Károly Ferenczy (painter, along with Béni Ferecgy and Noémi Ferenczy, his brother and sister)
- 20) János Garay (poet)
- 21) Artúr Görgey (general)
- 22) Alajos Hauszmann (architect)
- 23) Jenő Heltai (writer)
- 24) George de Hevesy (Nobel Prize winner chemist)
- 25) Miklós Izsó (sculptor)
- 26) Mari Jászai (actress)**
- 27) Mór Jókai (writer, 1904)
- 28) Attila József (poet)
- 29) János Kádár (Socialist leader)
- 30) Pál Kadosa (composer)
- 31) Kálmán Kandó (inventor, engineer)
- 32) Mihály Károlyi (President)
- 33) Karl-Maria Kertbeny (writer, translator)
- 34) Károly Kisfaludy (poet, dramatist, painter)
- 35) Dezső Kosztolányi (poet, writer)
- 36) Gyula Krúdy (writer)
- 37) Ödön Lechner (architect)
- 38) Lipót Fejér (mathematician)
- 39) Károly Lotz (painter)
- 40) Georg Lukács (philosopher)
- 41) Viktor Madarász (painter)
- 42) Ignác Martinovics (Franciscan, leader of the Hungarian Jacobin movement)
- 43) Ferenc Medgyessy (sculptor)
- 44) László Mednyánszky (painter)
- 45) Kálmán Mikszáth (writer)
- 46) Zsigmond Móricz (writer)
- 47) Mihály Munkácsy (painter)
- 48) Karl Polanyi (economist)
- 49) Tivadar Puskás (engineer, inventor)
- 50) Miklós Radnóti (poet)
- 51) Frigyes Riesz (mathematician)
- 52) Ignaz Semmelweis (doctor, "Saviour of Mothers")
- 53) Imre Steindl (architect)
- 54) Alajos Stróbl (sculptor)
- 55) Antal Szerb (writer)
- 56) Leó Szilárd (physicist)



- 
- 57) Mihály Táncsics (writer, politician)
  - 58) Ármin Vámbéry (linguist)
  - 59) Mihály Vörösmarty (poet) – his tomb is one of the oldest extant tombs: he was interred in 1855
  - 60) Leó Weiner (composer)
  - 61) Sándor Wekerle (Prime Minister three times)
  - 62) Miklós Ybl (architect)
  - 63) Mihály Zichy (painter, graphic artist)

<sup>6</sup> Grave post between cemetery plots at the Farkasréti Cemetery May 2, 2007. Photograph by Bernadett Báll.



<sup>7</sup> Plaque reads: Édesapánk: A “Véres Csütörtök” Áldozata / Atyám a te kezeidbe teszem le az én lelkem (Our Beloved Father: the victim of “Bloody Thursday” / I place my soul into your hands dear Lord), the victim of 1956, with grave-post and ribbon. Photo taken on May 2, 2007 by Bernadett Báll at the Farkasréti Cemetery. “Bloody Thursday” happened on the third day of the revolution when communists shot into the crowds gathered at Kossuth Square on October 25, 1956.





<sup>8</sup> Plaque reads: A 1956. évi forradalom és szabadságharc hősi halottai (the heroes and freedom fighters of the 1956 revolution) marked by the wooden grave post and the Hungarian ribbon representing the national flag. Photo taken on May 6, 2007, by Bernadett Báll in the Óbuda Cemetery in Budapest.



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<sup>9</sup> Elderly women picnicking in the Farkasréti Cemetery May 1, 2007. Photograph taken by Bernadett Báll.

