

**Kereszty, Orsolya. *Nőnevelés és nemzetépítés Magyarországon 1867-1918*. Sopron: Novum Publisher, 2010. 364 pages; [*Women's Education and Nation Building in Hungary in 1867-1918*], Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag, 2008. 72 pp.**

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Orsolya Kereszty's first book titled "*Nőnevelés és nemzetépítés Magyarországon 1867-1918*" (Women's Education and Nation-Building in Hungary 1867-1918) was published in Hungarian by Novum Eco in the autumn of 2010. By writing this book, her aim was to examine the history of women's education, mainly at the secondary level, during the given period, relying on the methodology and theoretical approaches used by gender studies, which to date have hardly have been applied in Hungarian works dealing with the history of education. The author was looking for an answer to the particular question of what role women's education played in the nation-building processes in Hungary in the era of dualism. In order to answer the question raised she also applied the theories and methodology of cultural history and political science.

The close to four-hundred page book, contains three longer and eight shorter chapters analyzes the theories of women's role in the conception of the Hungarian nation of the time, as well as on the role of women's secondary education in nation-building, from various viewpoints. The author starts from the statement that in the era of dualism, the road to becoming a member of the middle-class for Hungarians was through education, and to be more exact, through earning a high-school graduation certificate. To achieve this goal she raises two questions: what role the state assigned to girls' schools in nation-building; on the other, how women responded to this role, and how they imagined themselves in the Hungarian nation.

The first chapter introduces the theoretical and historical background of the era of dualism, drawing a detailed picture of the views expressed by current eminent social scientists about the question whether there were assimilation policies and aggressive efforts to turn ethnic minorities into Hungarians during the given period, or whether assimilation in nation-building proceeded exclusively in a "natural way" (meaning without pressure, by everyone's own choice). Concerning women, the chief goal of Hungarian nation-building was to educate girls in a Hungarian national spirit regardless of their nationality. The view was that mothers play a determining role in families and thus are important participants of nationalisation. After the *Ausgleich* of 1867, Hungarian society, like other European societies, was also undergoing a change, where there was an increasing demand that women have access to general education and to secondary schools. The upper-level (secondary schools) education of women was becoming more and more pressing as, after the re-structuring of the Hungarian society, more and more single middle-class women were driven to finding long-term employment to make a stable living, and most of the jobs, keeping with their social status, were tied to secondary qualifications. In this time period, girls could pursue studies at higher than elementary school level at three kind of schools, a four-years practical schools, which aimed to prepare students for practical life in addition to providing general education; grammar schools and at girls' upper schools (similar to grammar schools without graduation certificates) which could be classified to fall into either to public primary education or to secondary education at the time. The main goal of girls' upper schools, the operation of which was changed through decrees several times during this period, remained unchanged, that is to train girls for the "female professions" such as social work, teaching, etc. Girls' upper schools played a significant role both in nation-building and the national policy. Upper schools were subsidised by the state to a great extent, and, in turn, they endeavoured to fulfil the requirements of the cultural policy

set by the government. The “mission assigned” to them in the national policy is reflected by that state sponsored girls’ upper schools were established primarily in towns, where ethnic minorities lived.

The second longest chapter is a further and more detailed analysis of the role played by secondary-level education for women in nation-building, where “the Hungarian nation was imagined as a metaphor for family”, implying a clear division of labor: women worked in the family, while men worked in outside the home.

In three shorter chapters, the author explains how and at what rate girls’ practical schools, upper schools, and grammar schools participated in the nation-building. While the majority of male students in the public schools (polgári iskolák) came from lower class christian families, the majority of the girls attending public schools came from middle class families. This was partly caused by financial factors, as for families who had children of both sexes, the priority was for the boy to continue his studies, because from 1883 office jobs were tied to school leaving certificates and thus paving the road for social advancement for the family. Social advancement for lower class girls was often tied to „good marriages”. As tuition was expensive, if the boy(s) education was paid for, the families could often only afford public schools for their daughters. Only well-to-do families could send their daughters to upper schools or high schools. Although the government wanted the girls public schools to provide education for the lower classes, this was often unaffordable for them. In the high schools that did not provide students with school leaving certificates the majority of the female students came from the middle class as this cost significantly more than the public school.

The third main, and maybe most interesting, chapter of the book introduces, at the macro-level of Hungarian nation-building, all the processes detailed in the first two chapters by school types. Through the history of the establishment and operation of the Local Upper School for Girls in Cluj-Napoca, the Girls’ Upper School of Erzsébet Women’s School in Budapest, and the Practical School for Girls in Komárno, Kereszty, shows how these girls’ schools fitted in the then current nation-building ambitions. At the end of the book, there are several interesting charts on how the students of girls’ practical and upper schools were divided by language and religion and on their choice of career.

Orsolya Kereszty’s monograph, which studies the history of girls’ education in the era of dualism from the view gender, adds to the literature of the history of education and, within that, of women’s education, in Hungary. Further information on the author’s scientific works can be found both in Hungarian and English in her homepage: <http://www.keresztyorsolya.com>.