

Effacing the Male:

Gender, Misrepresentation, and Exclusion in the Kosovo War

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Published in *Transitions: The Journal of Men's Perspectives*, 21: 1-3 (2001).



ABSTRACT

The Kosovo war of 1999 offered an excellent opportunity to analyze the representation of gender and violent victimization in the mass media. The present article focuses on the motif of "gendercide," or gender-selective mass killing -- in this case, of "battle-age" ethnic-Albanian men. A broad sample of media commentary is presented to demonstrate that "unworthy" male victims tend to be marginalized or ignored entirely in mass-media coverage. A trio of common marginalization strategies is discussed, and a theoretical framework of "first-order," "second-order," and "third-order" gendering is proposed to clarify the deficit in coverage. This deficit is then contrasted with the attention given to the victimization experiences of "worthy" victims, such as women, children, and the elderly. Finally, the small handful of responsible and insightful media reports on gender-selective atrocities against Kosovar men is evaluated for the alternative it may offer to "effacing the male" from coverage of war and violence.

I. Introduction

The war in Kosovo between March and June 1999, tragic as it was, offered an ideal opportunity to analyze the representation and rhetoric of gender in western mass media. An overriding Serb strategy in the conflict was "gendercide" against non-combatant men -- the same strategy Serb forces had followed from the outset of Yugoslavia's war of dissolution.⁽¹⁾ From the first day of the war in Kosovo (24 March 1999), and indeed long before, the Serbs overwhelmingly targeted "battle-age" men for the most severe atrocities, although women, the elderly, and children were also exposed to a wide range of abuses and war crimes, ranging from killings to rape and forced expulsion (Jones, 1994). The report issued after the Kosovo war by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was emphatic in pointing to these gender- and age-selective strategies:

Young men were the group that was *by far the most targeted* in the conflict in Kosovo ... Clearly, there were many young men involved in the UCK [Kosovo Liberation Army] ... but every young Kosovo Albanian man was suspected of being a terrorist. If apprehended by Serbian forces -- VJ [Yugoslav army], police or paramilitary -- the young men were at risk, *more than any other group of Kosovo society*, of grave human rights violations. Many were executed on the spot, on occasion after horrendous torture. Sometimes they would be arrested and taken to prisons or other detention centres, where, as described afterwards by men released from such detention, they would be tortured and ill-treated, while others would simply not be seen again. Others were taken for use as human shields or as forced labour. Many young men "disappeared" following abduction.⁽²⁾

The present article, based on a broad sampling of media coverage during and after the war, explores how this reality was conveyed -- or not conveyed -- by major western news media. It is my conviction that the strategies are of relevance far beyond the Kosovo case, and indeed beyond the theme of gender and international conflict; they speak to the typical means by which male victims of violence are marginalized or "effaced" from the prevailing media and human-rights discourse. The sources consisted of the following:

Internet Newsgroups: [\(3\)](#)

clari.news.conflict.misc
 clari.news.crime.war
 clari.news.refugees
 clari.news.photos
 clari.world.organizations.misc

(On 19 April 1999, ClariNet created a special newsgroup, clari.hot.a, to collate posts about Kosovo. It proved indispensable.)

Electronic newspapers/broadcasters:

[The Globe and Mail](#)

[The National Post](#)

[The New York Times](#)

[The Washington Post](#)

[The Guardian / The Observer](#) (UK) [\(4\)](#)

[The Christian Science Monitor](#)

[BBC News Online](#)

Some readers may be skeptical of the electronic versions of newspapers, and it is important to point out that certain areas of content -- notably op-ed columns and letters to the editor -- were for the most part not sampled. Nonetheless, the range of materials available through these sources was impressive. *The New York Times* alone standardly posted between half a dozen and a dozen feature stories on the Kosovo conflict daily. Coverage in several other key sources (*The Washington Post*, *The Globe and Mail*, the BBC, *The Guardian*) was only slightly less extensive.

I do not pretend to have read every word of every article posted these sources -- far from it. Rather, I was confident that I could zero in on a sufficiently wide range of material to generate some propositions about the coverage of events within war-torn Kosovo. The task was made easier by print and electronic media's "pegging" of content through headlines. Many of the claims made here pertain to media "focus," which in such a news culture I see as reducible to the headline and "lead," that is, the opening paragraphs of the standardized news story. (These opening paragraphs are ever more important, as news is chopped into smaller bits for the benefit of advertisers and, allegedly, readers with low attention spans.)

Although the article does not operationalize its arguments via a formal content analysis, it is my belief that the vocabulary and frameworks presented here will be useful in developing more statistically-based and methodologically-rigorous studies of this type. In a late section of the paper, I also explore some of the more accurate and responsible media coverage of male victimization in the Kosovo conflict. Although such coverage appeared like rare nuggets, and was swamped by the more distorted and exclusionary variety, it provides important and constructive exceptions to the rule -- and hence an indication that alternatives existed to "effacing the male" from the media agenda.

II. "Including Women," Excluding Men

In their groundbreaking work, *Manufacturing Consent*, Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky devoted a chapter to the subject of "Worthy and Unworthy Victims" in media coverage. (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 37-86.) They presented a comparative treatment of the intensity and character of media coverage of victims who were convenient for U.S. policymakers -- Cambodians under the communist Pol Pot; the Polish priest, Jerzy Popieluszko, murdered by Polish security agents -- contrasted with inconvenient victims, such as the slaughtered and systematically starved inhabitants of East Timor (invaded by a U.S. ally, Indonesia), or one hundred religious workers killed by U.S.-sponsored terror regimes in Central America. Comparing directly the coverage of the priest Popieluszko with the mass of "inconvenient" religious workers (including a Salvadorean archbishop and four US nuns raped and murdered by Salvadorean soldiers in 1980), Herman and Chomsky concluded:

For every media category, the coverage of the worthy victim, Popieluszko, exceeded that of the entire set

of one hundred unworthy victims taken together. We suspect that the coverage of Popieluszko may have exceeded that of all the many hundreds of religious victims murdered in Latin America since World War II, as the most prominent are included in our hundred ... [W]e can also calculate the *relative* worthiness of the world's victims, as measured by the weight given them by the US mass media. The worth of the victim Popieluszko is valued at somewhere between 137 and 179 times that of a victim in the US client states; or, looking at the matter in reverse, a priest murdered in Latin America is worth less than a hundredth of a priest murdered in Poland. (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 39.)

The concept of "worthy" versus "unworthy" victims seems a fertile one in analyzing the treatment of the victims of the gendercidal atrocities in Kosovo, and male victims of violence more generally.⁽⁵⁾ In this section, I sketch some of the predictable, even ritualized, means by which "unworthy" male victims were excluded from the analysis, and "worthy" ones - notably children and women -- privileged.⁽⁶⁾

The effacing of male victims in mass media is generally accomplished by three interrelated strategies. The first might be called *incidentalizing*. Modern news, as noted, is a hierarchical creature. It generally "leads" with the dominant theme of the article, which the headline is also meant to convey. Many newspapers, printing or reprinting an article or wire-service report, will include only (a version of) the headline and the first several paragraphs of the story. Thus, to relegate an important theme to passing mention in the middle reaches of the article, or to introduce it only at the end, is effectively to render it incidental and inconspicuous, if not outright invisible.

Consider, for example, the strategy adopted in the following Agence France-Presse dispatch (emphasis added):

The Death March of the Kosovo Refugees

MORINA, Albania, April 18 (AFP) -- Among the thousands of refugees fleeing Kosovo, *none suffer worse* than those forced to travel for days and nights on end on foot. While many cross the border into Albania and Macedonia in cars or open trailers drawn by tractors, the rest have had to walk, harried by Serbian troops on what for some became a death march. Staggering up to the red barrier marking the frontier, carrying children and baggage, and supporting the elderly, they sob as they gulp down food offered by humanitarian organisations. Their accounts, consistent, precise and detailed, describe a Kosovo that has been turned into a hell, criss-crossed day and night by columns of refugees expelled from the Serbian province in ferocious "ethnic cleansing." "We walked almost without stopping for four days and four nights," groaned Hysnije Abazi, 22, from Kladernica in central Kosovo. "We were escorted all the time by Serbs in vehicles or on foot. We were not allowed to drink, stop, rest or shelter from the rain. Before we set off they set fire to our cars and tractors and ordered us to march in columns." *They also took away all the males aged 15 or over [!]*. Crinkle-haired Afertita Kajtazi, 23, her eyes ringed with fatigue, said their [i.e., the refugees'] treatment was deliberately harsh. ... (emphasis added)

Here the "genocidal cull of ethnic-Albanian males"⁽⁷⁾ takes place in the blink of an eye, amidst a torrent of frankly lachrymose descriptions of the convoys of helpless "worthies."

A second strategy is *displacement*. Here, the male is defined by some trait or label other than gender -- even when gender obviously, or apparently, is decisive in shaping the experience or predicament being described. During the Kosovo war, typical displacement terminology included designations such as "Kosovars," "ethnic Albanians," "bodies," "victims," and "people." In this context, consider Daniel Williams' report in *The Washington Post* on the mass murder at Istok prison, a facility bombed by NATO planes in late May 1999. After the last of three bombing raids, the Serbs paraded 19 male corpses before western media, declaring that they were the bodies of prisoners killed by NATO. It now appears likely that many of these men, along with up to 100 others, were massacred by the Serbs in one of the war's larger acts of gendercide. Here is how Williams reported the Serbs' propaganda show:

Bodies of dead *prisoners* were shown to reporters lying around the prison courtyard Saturday [22 May], and on Monday [24 May] another group of *corpses* inside a foyer entrance to a cellblock. ... Despite the presence of 1,000 mostly *ethnic Albanian prisoners*, [NATO] bombed it twice Saturday and once early Sunday. No one seemed to take into account the possible extra danger to the *prisoners* ... 19 *bodies of prisoners* lay in and around the courtyard, and on Monday those *bodies* lay in the same spots ... An inspecting magistrate said the *bodies* were left outside because he had not had time to carry out his work, what with all the bombing. ... Then there was the *new group of dead* on display Monday ... *Twenty-five bodies* in the foyer, some lined up on top of one another domino-style, many with streaks of blood on

their bodies ... These *corpses* were not dusty. ... No one seemed to know why the *19 Saturday bodies* were left outside, but ... (Williams, 1999, emphasis added.)

There was precisely one reference to "men" in the story: to the "masked [Serb] men with rifles" hovering around the facility. Males as agents of violence were visible, and gendered; as victims, they were effaced from the discourse.

Perhaps the most bizarre example of the displacement strategy employed during the war came in mid-April, when the subject of Kosovar men used as forced labourers surfaced in press briefings and subsequent media coverage. The BBC began its report on "Kosovo 'grave gangs'" with the claim that "*Kosovo Albanians dressed in red* [were] being forced to move dead bodies and dig graves" -- a strange emphasis, given the subsequent acknowledgment that these crimson-clad Kosovars were all "men and boys." (BBC Online, 1999a; emphasis added.) By the time the story reached the Press Association, the gender variable had disappeared completely: "Chilling new evidence has emerged of Serbian attempts to cover up massacres of *ethnic Albanians* in Kosovo. Armed Forces Minister Doug Henderson said he had received 'disturbing reports' of *unarmed civilians dressed in red* transporting bodies away from atrocity sites." The story quoted Henderson as stating: "To cover up atrocities, the Serbs are using *civilians dressed in red* to clear up massacres. They are clearing bodies well away from where massacres have occurred." (Press Association, 1999; emphasis added.) As the Kosovar men buried the dead, so were they largely buried in the policy equation and public discussion. The Press Association report managed to go its entire length with the gender of the chain-ganged gravediggers unmentioned, although the colour of the prisoners' dress was noted twice, and the children, mother, and grandmother among a group of refugee landmine victims (the main focus of the story) were carefully designated.

The third marginalization strategy is simply *exclusion*. The trope most commonly adopted here can be summarized in the little-examined phrase, "including women" -- or, equally commonly, "including women and children." The trend has been persistently evident in media coverage of the Bosnian war, as a report as recent as October 1999 makes plain (duly emphasized throughout):

Bosnian forensic teams have exhumed 251 bodies, mainly of *Muslim civilians*, in the Serb-run half of Bosnia in the last two weeks ... The *bodies, victims* of the 1992-95 Bosnian war, were exhumed from more than 14 mass graves each containing up to 15 corpses, as well as individual graves ... The majority, *including 12 women and five children*, were executed by Bosnian Serb forces who had captured these regions at the beginning of the war ... Some 3,000 *people*, mainly *Muslims*, were still missing in northwestern Bosnia. (Agence France-Presse, 1999a.)

Ninety-three percent adult male casualties. But this fact passes unmentioned in the rush to draw attention to the "worthy" victims. Literally dozens of examples of this strategy could be cited from the wartime and postwar coverage of Kosovo:

In Velika Krusa, Dutch soldiers yesterday reported finding charred remains of around 20 ethnic Albanians, including women and children, and said they expect to find more nearby. (Dan, 1999.)

Splashes of blood are still visible on the lower portion of a door at a pizzeria in Suva Reka, where up to 50 people, including women and children, are believed to have been slaughtered. (Lynch, 1999.)

Since starting work on 18 June, the UK forensic team has exhumed over 260 bodies of Kosovar civilians from mass graves, including women and the remains of 21 children ... (British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook). (Kirkland, 1999.)

Let it be stated plainly: "*Including women*" *excludes men*. To get a better sense of the origins and implications of the phrase, substitute "including Europeans." (Indeed, the systematic exclusion of one category of victims, and the implicit prioritizing of the minority category, is very similar to colonial discourses in Victorian times.) The trope is particularly misleading when the phenomena described -- such as the massacre at Velika Krusa and the campaign of mass killing in Kosovo as a whole -- are so disproportionately and methodically slanted against males. *In virtually all cases, the phrase "including women and children" can be translated as "including a majority of adult men and a minority of women and children."* But men remain the "absent subjects," entering the narrative only indirectly and by inference, if at all. ⁽⁸⁾

A more subtle version of the exclusionary strategy can be seen in the following passages:

Several dozen Kosovo Albanians, many of them women and children, were hiding there in the hills when

about six Serbian paramilitaries found them and shot the men, demanding to know where they were hiding their weapons, villagers said. (Fisher, 1999a.)

And this, from the aftermath of the Kosovo war:

Air Marshal Sir John Day, deputy to Britain's Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Sir Charles Guthrie, said NATO was "within days" of making a formal decision on a ground invasion and was confident NATO would have approved. Guthrie told the allies the Yugoslav army was "overrated" and "bully boys good at killing women, children and old people." (United Press International, 1999.)

The emphasis in the first passage is on the presence and newsworthiness of "many" women and children (which is, after all, what one would expect in any demographically-representative population). In the second, the cowardliness of the Serb forces is exemplified by their murder of every element of the civilian population *except* "battle-age" males. *The manifestly most vulnerable demographic is the only one not represented in the formulation* -- except insofar as the killing of defenseless battle-age men is seen as a legitimate test of the Yugoslav army's power and machismo.⁽⁹⁾ (As R.J. Rummel put it in a different context, "One would think that murdering an unarmed man was a heroic act." [Rummel, 1994: 323.]

The analytical befuddlement to which this strategy rapidly leads was exemplified by a 22 April 1999 story in *The Washington Post*, "Accounts of Serbian Atrocities Multiplying." As the headline suggests, this was one of the *Post's* major attempts to confront the scale and patterning of the Serb rampage in Kosovo. The article featured several examples of the displacement strategy mentioned above, referring to "scores of accounts of Yugoslav forces killing small groups of *ethnic Albanian civilians*" and the "summary, random executions of *small groups*," although the vast majority of the atrocities specifically mentioned in the article were not at all random -- they fit the standard gender-selective pattern.⁽¹⁰⁾ But the most astonishing reference in the *Post* story was to "the [Yugoslav] government's role in the massacre of dozens of women and children at the Kosovo village of Racak" in January 1999. This is the prewar massacre for which international monitors gave a breakdown of 31 victims as follows:

Twenty-three adult males of various ages. Many shot at extremely close range, most shot in the front, back and top of the head. ... Three adult males shot in various parts of their body including their backs. ... One adult male shot outside his house with his head missing ... One adult male shot in head and decapitated. ... One adult female shot in the back ... One boy (12 years old) shot in the neck. ... One male, late teens (shot in abdomen). (*The New York Times*, 1999.)

The standardly-cited death toll for the Racak massacre (the investigators arrived after more than a dozen autopsies had been completed) is 45. I have found specific mention of one female killed -- 18-year-old Hanushune Mehmeti (apparently the "adult female shot in the back"), who was described by one witness as having been "shot when she tried to come to the aid of her brother." (Bird, 1999.) Other sources cite two other women among the total of 45 victims, thus three in all. The one child victim was the twelve-year-old boy "shot in the neck." Thus, at the outside: forty-one adult men executed in cold blood, and three women and one boy also killed, in this massacre of "dozens of women and children." The *Post's* eagerness to find "worthy" victims among the carnage leads to their conjuring by the dozens out of whole cloth. Nor is this a matter of simple historical accuracy. It amounts to a misrepresentation of the *essence* of the slaughter at Racak -- which was a harbinger of the hundreds, possibly thousands, of individual acts of gendercide against Kosovar males between March and June 1999.⁽¹¹⁾

The point can be buttressed with a further example from Kosovo reporting. One of the most widely-noted acts of gendercide during the war was the massacre at Izbica in early April. *The Christian Science Monitor* (1999) related the events in only slightly less distorted a fashion than did the *Post* in reporting Racak: "The *Monitor* tracked down three men who in separate interviews insisted they were among 60 or 70 people who helped to bury the dead. One gave the number of *victims* as 148, with two survivors; the others spoke of 150, *including several women* ..." (emphasis added). Remarkably, in the entire *Monitor* story, it was nowhere stated that this "worst massacre known in Kosovo" was a truly towering act of gender-selective slaughter.⁽¹²⁾

III. "Emptying" Kosovo

One of the most intriguing and revealing motifs deployed during the Kosovo war, both in policy statements and media commentary, was the notion that Kosovo was being "emptied" of its ethnic-Albanian population. There could hardly be a more blatant contradiction between this theme of emptying/expulsion and the numerous passing references to mass detentions and executions of "battle-age" males. Take the following examples:

Kosovo Could Be Emptied Soon. A complete emptying of Kosovo appears possible as the expulsion of ethnic Albanian refugees resumes with brutal force, the UN refugee agency said Friday. "The effort by the Serbian authorities to expel the entire ethnic Albanian population of Kosovo is again underway," Kris Janowski, a spokesman with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) told journalists. (Agence France-Presse dispatch, 16 April.)⁽¹³⁾

Britain accused Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic Monday of trying to empty Kosovo of its entire ethnic Albanian population as NATO examine ways to help refugees on the run within the Serbian province. ... "From reports overnight, it is clear that Milosevic is once again trying to empty Kosovo of all ethnic Albanians," [Tony] Blair told the annual meeting of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development ... (Agence France-Presse dispatch, 19 April.)

Expulsion of Kosovars to Be Total, U.S. Says. ... New evidence indicates that Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic intends to sweep all of Kosovo and not allow ethnic Albanians to remain even in the province's most sparsely populated areas, the State Department's top authority on atrocities said on Wednesday. ... (*The New York Times*, 22 April.)

A moment's thought reveals the fallaciousness of the framing. Quite clearly, Kosovo was being "emptied" in manner that was highly selective according first to ethnicity -- as was generally acknowledged -- and secondly to gender, which rarely was. Rather than being allowed to seek refuge, a substantial portion of the civilian male population was falling prey to a "genocidal cull," and tens of thousands of others were in hiding, at mortal risk of roundup by the Serbs. Any who attempted exit with the refugee populations usually ran a gauntlet of Serb paramilitaries and/or regular forces that were prone to strip them selectively and *en masse* from refugee columns and lead them away to detention or summary execution. In the light of these manifest realities, the "emptying" motif seems nothing short of Orwellian -- an excellent example of the kind of conceptual vacuum into which Kosovar males fell during the war.

IV. Rape Worse Than Death?

Another phenomenon in public discussion of the Kosovo war and the Balkans more generally has been the privileging of rape or mass rape of women over the slaughter or mass slaughter of (non-combatant) males. The implicit prioritizing of sexually-assaulted women, often on ambiguous or scanty evidence, reflected both age-old biases and more recent feminist activism on the issue of mass rapes in Bosnia and elsewhere. While feminist research in this area is to be commended and learned from, it has also contributed to a one-sided depiction of the atrocities of war that tends to consign the male victim to oblivion. Consider the evaluation of the Bosnian war by Bogdan Denitch, otherwise one of the most clear-eyed appraisers of Yugoslavia's collapse:

It is there [Bosnia] that by far the worst atrocities have taken place. Not only have there been vast and well-documented massacres of mostly Muslim civilians by Serbian militias, but concentration camps and massive forcible population transfers, known as "ethnic cleansing," have also been used to change the demographic realities of Bosnia. *The worst of the horrors has been the systematic use of organized, repeated mass rape* by Serbian militias of non-Serbian, mostly Muslim women as a part of "ethnic cleansing." To be sure, there have been cases of rape by all sides, and the UN has documented that Croats and Muslims have committed massacres and run concentration camps. What was unprecedented was the organization of mass rape as a matter of policy in a manner that could not have been unknown to the highest military and political authorities of the so-called Serbian Republic of Bosnia. One obvious victim is the prospect of a tolerable and decent life together after the war. (Denitch, 1994: 124; emphasis added.)

The gendering of the massacre victims and concentration-camp inmates was fairly well established by this point (1994), but Denitch reserves the very "worst" designation for the mass rapes of women, rather than the "vast and well-

documented massacres of mostly Muslim civilians," overwhelmingly males.⁽¹⁴⁾

This dubious hierarchizing of human suffering was implicit throughout much of the discussion of the rape controversy during the Kosovo war. For example, James Rubin on 13 April called for Yugoslavia to "take immediate steps to punish the perpetrators of *rape and other crimes ...*" (Rubin quoted in Agence France-Presse, 1999c.) Reporting David Scheffer's comments on the massacre at Velika Krusa, where (as the story notes) "Yugoslav troops gunn[ed] down more than 100 men and boys between ages 14 and 50," *The Washington Post* added: "At the Pentagon, Defense Department spokesman Kenneth Bacon revealed that U.S. officials had received reports of *an even more ghastly crime of mass rape followed by executions*" -- i.e., up to 20 deaths at the alleged "rape camp" near Djakovica. Twenty raped and murdered women was "even more ghastly" than 100 men shot and burned to death -- some indication of the relative value of the worthy versus unworthy victims. (Loeb and Smith, 1999; emphasis added.)⁽¹⁵⁾

For an especially interesting example of the trend, we can turn to an article by Tommaso di Francesco and Giacomo Scotti, published in *Le Monde diplomatique* at the midpoint of the Kosovo war. The authors wrote that in the "process of vicious mutual ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia-Herzegovina,

physical and psychological terror stemmed largely from the barbaric treatment inflicted in the prison camps created by both Croats and Serbs -- particularly, in the case of the Serbs, *the notorious Omarska camp with its raping of women*. (di Francesco and Scotti, 1999.)

This depiction of the horrors of Omarska -- one of the three concentration camps closed after international protests in late 1992 -- is a mind-bogglingly casual inversion of the gendered reality. Helsinki Watch gave the population of Omarska as 2,000 men and 33 to 38 women. In an article for *International Affairs* on "The Crime of Appeasement in Bosnia," Ed Vulliamy, who witnessed the release of Omarska's survivors, wrote:

Omarska had been a place where a prisoner was forced to bite the testicles off a fellow inmate who, as he died of pain, had a live pigeon stuffed into his mouth to stifle his screams. The guards responsible for this barbarism were described by one witness as "like a crowd at a sporting match." Another man was forced to bark like a dog and lick at motor oil on the ground while a guard jumped up and down on his back until it snapped. Prisoners, who survived by drinking their own and each other's urine, were constantly being called out of their cramped quarters, by name. Some would return caked in blood, bruised black-and-blue or slashed with knives; others would never be seen alive again. Special squads of inmates were ordered to load their corpses on to trucks. (Vulliamy, 1998: 74-75.)⁽¹⁶⁾

Helsinki Watch wrote in Volume II of their study of *War Crimes in Bosnia-Herzegovina* that Omarska indeed "appears to have been the most brutal of the four Serbian-operated camps that were discovered by the press during the summer of 1982. Almost all former Omarska detainees interviewed by Helsinki Watch claimed that they had been bestially beaten, that scores had died from the beatings and that some were executed." There is no evidence that any of the women at Omarska were killed.⁽¹⁷⁾ The rape of the small number of women at the camp was certainly generalized and atrocious. But by what standard is Omarska "particularly ... notorious" for the rape of its women detainees, when thousands of civilian males were viciously tortured, hundreds killed -- and almost certainly a great many more raped and sexually abused than women, given the unbridled sexual sadism that pervaded the camp?

V. Orders of Gendering

Let us try to bring additional structure to this discussion by distinguishing between *first-*, *second-*, and *third-order gendering*. These can be seen as analytical "rings" spreading outwards, progressively drawing into the analysis greater territorial reach, longer historical time, and broader applicability to the gender group under discussion.

A first-order gendering is focused at the level of the *individual person, case, or event*. In the Kosovo context, this might be a reference to the rape of a particular Kosovar woman, or a given case of mass rape; for Kosovar males, it might be a reference to the gender-selective execution of a man, or a given mass execution.

A second-order gendering of the same subject seeks to isolate a *pattern* of victimization. In so doing, it directs the audience to broader conceptual and experiential similarities that bind individual persons, cases, and events -- though

the pattern is still restricted in its territorial reach, geographical scope, and historical time. In the context of the Kosovo conflict, this could mean isolating a pattern of rape of women in the conflict, or a pattern of gender-selective executions of men.

A third-order gendering extends the analysis beyond the boundaries of the immediate conflict, region, and contemporary time-frame. It usually seeks to make broad generalizations about regional, global, and/or historical trends. Again to use our Kosovo examples, this might involve placing the rape of Kosovar women against the broader backdrop of rape as a tool of war in the Balkans in the 1990s. It might go further still, and examine the sexual assault of women as a feature of warfare across civilizations and throughout history. A similar perspective on gender-selective executions of men would seek to place these killings against a regional and global-historical backdrop.

I take it as a normative and analytical "given" that while first-order, second-order, and third-order treatments may be entirely worthy in and of themselves, *second-order and third-order framings are necessary if an effective gender analysis is to be mounted*. That is to say, the analysis cannot remain stuck at the level of individual cases or conflicts if it is to contribute to a sophisticated understanding of gender. Indeed, *any* conceptualization of "gender" is inconceivable without a second- and third-order framing. A scholarly analysis that confines itself to first-order analyses may turn up extraordinarily useful and important material. But such analyses cannot buttress reality-claims *beyond* their own pre-set boundaries.

If, then, we find that there is a consistent and systematic according of second- and third-order framings to the experiences of one gender group, and a near-total absence of such framings for the other, there may be grounds for intellectual concern. If we find the particular experiences of suffering and victimization similarly treated, there is grounds for additional - normative and ethical -- concern. If we find, for example, that the torture of males is widely acknowledged and discussed, but the widespread rape of women is ignored, then we might legitimately object. Likewise, we may find that the rape of women is prominent in media discussion and/or policy initiatives, and contextualized internationally and historically, while the torture and even the mass murder of males is rarely noted and virtually never accorded a second- or third-order framing. If so, we should have the courage to acknowledge that there is a yawning gap in the analysis; and that the disadvantaged or systematically excluded group deserves greater consideration than it has traditionally received.

Let us now consider the press coverage of Kosovar men according to this framework. It can be said with confidence that only the barest fragments of first- and second-order framings emerged in this coverage. One can see glimmers of comprehension in the occasional references to a pattern of male-selective killing in the Balkans conflict, and the attention paid to the phenomenon of male detentions and disappearances after the release of the inmates from Smrekovnica and Liplje prisons in May 1999 (see below). But the coverage in no way approximated the kind of nuanced historical analysis that imbued treatments of Kosovo's women rape victims. For the most part, the civilian male victims of the slaughter were buried in a slew of other designations -- "Kosovar," "ethnic-Albanian," etc. -- and their specific vulnerabilities were thereby blurred into the larger backdrop of ethnic conflict.

Neither *The New York Times* nor *The Washington Post* -- the two major "agenda-setting" newspapers in the United States - published a single story or editorial focusing on the phenomenon of gender-selective mass executions. The closest the *Times* came to a meaningful "second-order" and "third-order" gendering of the slaughter, to my knowledge, was a story by John Kifner, early in Operation Horseshoe: "What is striking about the refugees is that they are largely women, children and old men. The young men, they say, are either hiding in the mountains or have been separated out by the Serbs and taken away to some unknown fate. While there is no way to verify independently the accounts of killings ... their similarity suggested that they were credible. Earlier Serbian efforts to remove Muslims from parts of Bosnia were accompanied by numerous massacres." (Kifner, 1999.) The excerpts came eight paragraphs into the story, and the "striking" subject was then dropped. Certainly it was never deemed worthy of a story in its own right. The flicker of a higher-order gendering (that is, the isolation of a pattern, and the citing of the Bosnian precedent) was about as faint as could be.

The Post, for its part, did publish an editorial, "Captive in Serbia," pointing out that "Many Kosovars, particularly men, are being held captive," and referring to "the imprisonment of some Kosovo men" as "undoubtedly part" of a "planned ... destruction of ethnic Albanian Kosovo as a working society." But the editorial appeared on 1 July, more than three months after the outbreak of the war and weeks after its end. It concerned itself, moreover, only with the thousands of prisoners transported alive from Kosovo to Serbia at the end of the Yugoslav occupation. (*The Washington Post*, 1999.) Might some concerted attention to the pattern of gender-selective detentions and mass killings *earlier* in the conflict

have changed the course of the gendercide? But the reader was again confronted, in *Post* coverage, with only glancing references to "men missing" and "summary executions of men," except on the rare occasions when policymakers stressed the particular vulnerability of "battle-age" males. [\(18\)](#)

The contrast with the coverage of women rape victims was striking. We have already seen that on regular occasions the rape of women was privileged over the murder of non-combatant males. Furthermore, virtually every news outlet ran at least one story on the subject; second-order and third-order framings, placing the crime against the backdrop of the Balkans war and even the whole history of human conflict, were standard. Consider, for example, the following reports:

Yugoslav forces use ancient ways to break civilian spirits

Throughout history rape has been one of the most common but least documented acts of violence committed during wartime. Yet it has been an inescapable aspect of many conflicts, from the rape of the Sabine women in Ancient Rome to the allegations that the Serbs set up 'rape camps' during the recent war in Bosnia. ... Few reliable figures exist for the incidence of rape in wartime before the Balkan wars this decade but anecdotal evidence suggests that it was widespread. It has been alleged that Nazi troops indulged in mass rape during the second world war, particularly on the eastern front where Jewish, Gypsy, Polish and Russian women were all subject to systematic sexual violence. ... The Japanese army was notorious for its sexual torture of Korean and Chinese women during the second world war. ... More recently, Pakistani troops were alleged to have raped 200,000 Bengali women during the battle for Bangladeshi independence in 1971. ... In Bosnia, according to United Nations estimates, 20,000 women were raped by Serbian army units, apparently as part of a systematic policy. (Kettle, 1999.)

Rape as a Weapon of War

... While fleeing Pristina on April 1 ... ["B."] said she was torn away from her family and raped in a garage by four masked soldiers. They then freed her in time to board a packed refugee train that took her and her family into exile. Similar stories are starting to emerge from ethnic Albanian refugees who have crossed from Kosovo into Albania and Macedonia in recent weeks. Western officials and human rights groups say that scores of women have reported being raped since the Belgrade government started waging all-out war in Kosovo against separatist rebels and ethnic Albanian civilians supporting rebel demands for independence. ... During [the Bosnian] conflict, Bosnian Serb forces carried out a systematic campaign of rape against Bosnian Muslim and Croat women, resulting in several indictments by the international war crimes tribunal at the Hague. ... (Smith, 1999.)

US probes Serb rape allegations

The United States is investigating reports that young Kosovo women are being systematically raped at a Serb army camp and that up to 20 of them have been killed. Pentagon spokesman Ken Bacon [said] ... "This is a very eerie and disturbing echo of documented instances of rape and killing of women in Bosnia during the Bosnia war and it is obviously outrageous that this is occurring." ... During the 1992 war in Bosnia-Herzegovina thousands of women were forced into "rape camps" by Serbian militia. The accounts received by the Pentagon are backed up by similar reports of systematic rape now emerging from Kosovo refugees who have fled the province. ... Consistent accounts are emerging of soldiers separating women from groups of refugees, apparently with the intention of raping them. (BBC Online, 1999b.)

Albanian Tells How Serbs Chose Her, 'the Most Beautiful One,' for Rape

... Few other issues have become as highly charged as rape in the former Yugoslavia. During the war in Bosnia, Serbian forces were accused of systematically raping women as a deliberate tactic of war, a particularly cruel means, human rights investigators said, of terrorizing and demoralizing one's enemy. Bosnian Serbs were accused of operating "rape camps" where Muslim women were held captive and repeatedly assaulted by Serbian soldiers. (Rohde, 1999.)

The framing of the first excerpt is notable. The experience of women rape victims is placed against a backdrop, not only of the Kosovo war and the wider Balkans conflict, but of humanity's "ancient ways." (Note also the headline referring to "rape as a weapon of war.") The second-order framings in all of the excerpts are powerful and detailed. And what these brief extracts do not capture is the nuanced and highly-personalized treatment generally given to the individual female victims. The reader cannot help but be drawn into their stories and suffering, and respond with moral outrage, which is presumably the intent.

In stark contrast, I have *never* seen a detailed third-order treatment of the gendercidal killings of males in Kosovo (my own aside), let alone one with a historical scope comparable to the first excerpt. But the slaughter of "battle-age" non-combatant men is at least as prominent and enduring a "weapon of war," in the Balkans and throughout history, as is the rape of women -- and a more brutal and severe one, by any reasonable standard. Even second-order framings were exceedingly rare and usually fleeting.

My sample of media coverage was broadest and most rigorous between 26 March and 25 April. This month-long period surely encompasses weeks when intimations of humanitarian disaster and "gendercide" were widespread, and confronted western governments and organizations, as well as media observers, with critical moral and practical choices. During this period, the sample set turned up only the most fragmentary glimpses of a crisis in Kosovar male ranks. Perhaps the most consistently attentive media outlet was the Agence France-Presse, which regularly issued dispatches citing David Scheffer's (and later the U.S. Information Agency's) estimates of 100,000 or more men "unaccounted for." As early as 26 March, the AFP delivered a succinct second-order framing of the "disturbing reports of mass killings trickl[ing] out of Kosovo." It cited U.S. State Department spokesperson James Rubin's reference to "ominous indications that men of fighting age were separated from their families," as did a number of other sources; but it went further, with a brief third-order reference to the fact that "Such separations of men from women was [*sic*] commonplace in massacres carried out during the 1992-95 war in Bosnia between Moslems, Serbs and Croats." (Agence France-Presse, 1999d.) To be sure, this is not a very extensive or sophisticated third-order framing, and the depiction of gendercide in Bosnia as the result of a "war ... between Moslems, Serbs and Croats" rather blurs the primary agents of the slaughter. Indeed, it is pathetic that such passing references have to be unearthed like precious jewels in the media coverage, and presented as examples of what should have been a generalized and much more in-depth media treatment. But the AFP, with many lapses into blindness and banality like other media, nonetheless stood out for the frequent attention it paid -- virtually alone -- to the fate of Kosovo's men.

Speaking of the entire month-long sample, I found only *one* article, by Alan Freeman of *The Globe and Mail*, that actually focused on the mass detention and apparent gender-selective killing of Kosovar males. By "focusing," I mean with both a headline and a lead that alludes to the subject. It appeared in *The Globe* on 6 April, and deserves to be cited at length:

Missing: Kosovo's young ethnic-Albanian men

Women, children, aging men pouring over the borders; reports say 17-to-45 year olds massacred or in hiding

KUKES, Albania -- As UN aid worker Laura Boldrini surveyed the steady stream of refugees flowing over the border from Kosovo at the remote Qafa Prush border post, she thought she had been transported to another planet -- "a planet without men, only women and children."

"It was unbelievable," she said yesterday, estimated that 90 per cent of those crossing at the border point on Saturday were women, children and aging men. "There were no men. The old men were there, but I'm talking about young men between 17 and 45."

Kosovo's young ethnic Albanian men are missing. They are believed to have been massacred by Serbian forces or to have fled to the Kosovo hills, possibly joining the Kosovo Liberation Army.

Eyewitness reports collected from refugees show a pattern of killings of young male Kosovar Albanians. They are reported to have been gunned down with automatic weapons, stripped naked and used as human shields or, in a case alleged yesterday, had their throats slashed at a mosque. Most of these reports cannot be verified.

One international aid worker, who asked not to be identified, said he fears that Kosovo has been turned into a giant killing field. "This is going to make the My Lai massacre look like a Christmas party," he said, referring to an infamous killing of Vietnamese villagers by a U.S. Army platoon. ...

Belzat Tertini, 62, said that as many as 80 people were killed at a Muslim place of worship in the centre of the city. Many were young men who had gone there for a prayer service, he said. ...

"Everybody is in the mountains," [Ramadan Gashi] said. But Mr. Gashi worried that many are marooned without food or arms.

Sixteen-year-old Banan Kadria, who fled to Kukes with his family from the village of Lumarsh, said the danger came when they encountered Serb police checkpoints.

"When I entered the checkpoints I was covered with blankets at the end of the tractor, and they didn't see me," he said, adding that his family travelled at night. "During the day, many young men were arrested." ... (Freeman, 1999.)

One other *Globe* article, by Geoffrey York, deserves honourable mention for a forceful second-order gendering. York zeroed in on the firestorm that had descended upon Kosovar males:

Most of the refugees who arrived yesterday [4 May] were women, children, and the elderly. Young men were conspicuously absent. Many of the refugees were exhausted, crying, and obviously in shock. They said Serb police had taken away hundreds of young men from the refugee convoys. Aid workers said the refugee accounts strongly suggested that the Serbs have massacred more of Kosovo's young men. "The common thread in their stories is that a lot of young men have been taken off the tractors or taken away before the tractors left," said Ray Wilkinson, a spokesman for the United Nations refugee agency. "They're talking about killings again. A wide area of Kosovo is being cleaned out. Men are being taken away and possibly killed." Some refugees spoke of a massacre of dozens of men in northern Kosovo about three days ago. Others said the Serbs only allowed one man to remain in each refugee wagon -- the driver. (York, 1999.)

From a more random sampling of reports on English-language electronic media during this period, one other article eventually turned up from *The Los Angeles Times*, using two of the same principal sources as the Freeman piece just quoted (U.N. refugee worker Laura Boldrini and the humanitarian worker with the My Lai analogy). After citing Boldrini, John Daniszewski wrote: "Like many aid workers and journalists, Boldrini has observed that the overwhelming majority of refugees streaming in from Kosovo are female, and that those males who have made it through the gauntlet of Serbian checkpoints have tended to be the old and the very young. ... Along with persistent reports of summary executions and mass internments of young men inside Kosovo, the low number of ethnic Albanian men making it over the border since the exodus began last month has raised fears here. 'There's a story happening over there that's going to make the My Lai massacre look like a Christmas party,' one humanitarian worker warned Monday." There followed a crystalline passage of analysis and speculation: "Where have Kosovo's young men gone? To hear refugees now in Albania tell it, many have been killed, often gruesomely. Others reportedly have been arrested and held in undisclosed locations, or have been forced to serve as 'human shields' against strikes by NATO or by Kosovo Liberation Army guerrillas. But many say they believe most military-aged men are hiding in the forests of Kosovo, either because they have joined the KLA or because they dared not accompany their families through police checkpoints for fear of being arrested or killed." (Daniszewski, 1999.)

Good as Daniszewski's piece was, though, it again limited itself to the Kosovo context, failing to place the gendercide in regional, let alone global-historical, perspective. This largely exhausted the attempts to conceptualize and report the "genocidal cull of ... males" in Kosovo during the critical first month of the slaughter. *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, the BBC, *The Guardian* -- all appear to have published nothing comparable to the tiny smattering of articles sampled above. Even the provision of one or two counter-examples -- an editorial here, a column there -- would hardly offset the general impression of a conspiracy of low-key mumbles, if not outright silence, on the gendercidal assault against ethnic-Albanian males. [\(19\)](#)

The release of about two thousand men from Smrekovnica and other Serb detention facilities, in late May 1999, marked the one occasion on which victimized males came to the forefront of the discussion. The result was some solid and nuanced reporting of the men's experiences. This came very late in the game, however, and it was notable how infrequently terms like "torture" were applied to the men's experiences. More common were phrases like "mistreatment," "maltreatment," "beatings," "abuse" -- all of which seems inadequate to capture the sadism of the Serb jailers (akin, perhaps, to describing rape as "unwanted sexual attention").

It was equally striking that what second-order gendering there was of the prison releases -- that is, coverage referring to a *pattern* of gender-selective detentions and disappearances in Kosovo -- suggested that a quandary or "mystery" somehow had been solved by the release of the men. Thus John Ward Anderson, in perhaps the best article on the released, wrote in *The Washington Post*: "It was feared that many [men] were dead, locked in camps, or being held by the Serbs as human shields against NATO bombings. ... Thousands of female refugees have told of being expelled to

neighboring countries while their husbands, sons and brothers were ordered out of cars and convoys at gunpoint and forced to stay behind. Little has been heard of the men's fate, but human-rights workers and other observers have feared the worst. ... There was good cause for concern." (Anderson, 1999.) The *International Herald Tribune*, for its part, declared that the "Gaunt Men Arriving in Albanian Provide[d] Answers to a Chilling Puzzle" and "One of the Scariest Questions" in the Kosovo war. "What happened to the thousands of ethnic Albanian men -- from boys barely of fighting age to grandfathers -- who were separated from their families in recent weeks in Kosovo and shoved into trucks, and who then disappeared?" (Fisher, 1999b.)⁽²⁰⁾

The comments, and similar ones, invite two questions. First, where were the specific expressions of "fear" and "concern," the posing of "one of the scariest questions," the references to the "chilling puzzle," *two months or one month earlier*, when they might have made a difference? And how did the release of a mere 1,000 men (later increased to 2,000) obviate, or even meaningfully mitigate, the possibility that "many [men] were dead, locked in camps, or being held by the Serbs as human shields," as *The Washington Post* put it? The releases were used as an excuse to declare a general relief and go home, analytically speaking. The men still left behind, at Smrekovnica and elsewhere, would become subjects of analysis and concern only *after* the war, when thousands of them were spirited away to unknown fates in Serbia. Then, suddenly and rather bizarrely, there was a spate of high-sounding articles and expressions of concern, such as this editorial from *The Washington Post*:

For a sizable but unknown number of [Kosovars] ... return still is not possible. Many Kosovars, *particularly men*, are being held captive inside Serbia. Serbian officials have told the Red Cross that they are holding more than 2,000; according to other estimates, the number may be 5,000 or even greater. Some have been prisoners for many months ... Others were studying or working in Belgrade when NATO began bombing in March and were promptly rounded up. And many are believed to have been trucked across the border as Serbian forces retreated earlier this month. Given the Serbian torture chambers NATO troops have discovered in Kosovo, no one can feel easy about the detainees' condition.

A few days ago Serbian authorities released 166 of these prisoners, gaunt but alive. The rationale for the small release is as unclear as the motivation for keeping the larger number. Mr. Milosevic seems to have planned the destruction of ethnic Albanian Kosovo as a working society. *The imprisonment of some Kosovo men, like the killings and forced expulsion of others*, was undoubtedly part of this plan. ... The war is not over until Mr. Milosevic accounts for the Kosovars he has kidnapped and allows them to go home. (*The Washington Post*, 1999b; emphasis added.)

Again, where was the editorial on the "imprisonment of Kosovo men" and the "killings and forced expulsion of others" two months earlier, when it might have helped to arouse concern and influence the policy agenda?

This analysis should not close without attending to one of the most extraordinary English-language media commentaries during the war -- one that stands, given its author's prominence, somewhere between an opinion-editorial article and an insider contribution to the policy discussion. This was a piece by Daniel Ellsberg in *The New York Times* -- the daily which in 1970 had broken one of the biggest political stories of the postwar era by publishing the "Pentagon Papers" that Ellsberg, a renegade Defense and State Department official, fed it. Ellsberg's article was entitled "Contemplating A Fatal Mistake." (Ellsberg, 1999.) It was unique, in the range of materials I consulted, in focusing on the situation *within* Kosovo; examining the specific vulnerabilities of men, among others; and arguing that these considerations should govern NATO policymaking.

Ellsberg applauded the passing reference to the situation within Kosovo in a pro-intervention "open letter" signed by luminaries including Zbigniew Brzezinski, Saul Bellow, and Susan Sontag. The signatories had stressed the necessity of "saving the lives of the nearly one million Kosovars now facing death from starvation and murder within Kosovo." The question, he argued, was "whether a ground invasion would serve that goal or whether, as I believe, it would be a death sentence for most Albanians remaining in Kosovo." From there, Ellsberg moved into analytical territory charted by no other prominent commentator in the English language, to my knowledge:

By all accounts, it would take weeks to months to deploy an invasion force to the region once the decision to do so was made, and Slobodan Milosevic already has troops there fortifying the borders. Wouldn't the prospect of an invasion lead him to order his forces in Kosovo to kill all the military-age male Albanians and hold the rest of the population as hostages rather than continuing to deport them? We do not know how many male Kosovars of military age -- broadly, from 15 to 60 years old -- have been killed already.

But even if the number is in the tens of thousands (NATO has conservatively estimated 4,600 civilian deaths), that would still mean that most of the men were still alive. Facing invasion, would Mr. Milosevic allow any more men to leave Kosovo to be recruited by the KLA, or to live to support the invasion? The Serbs could quickly slaughter 100,000 to 200,000 male Kosovars. (In Rwanda five years ago, an average of 8,000 civilians a day were killed for 100 days, mostly with machetes.) Obviously, Mr. Milosevic and his subordinates are brutal enough to do that. If they haven't done it already (and there is no testimony that they have on that scale) it may well be because they fear that such annihilation would make an invasion inevitable. A commitment now to ground invasion would remove that deterrent, just as the commitment in March to begin bombing in support of an ultimatum and the consequent withdrawal of international monitors removed an implicit deterrent against sweeping ethnic cleansing and expulsion.

"As for the remaining civilians in Kosovo -- women, children and old people," wrote Ellsberg, "tens of thousands of them could be used as human shields, in a way never before seen in warfare":

Fighting in built-up areas, NATO troops would probably be fired on from buildings that were packed on every floor with Kosovar women and children. Using the traditional means -- explosives, artillery and rockets -- to destroy those buildings would make NATO forces the mass executioners of the people we were fighting to protect. I believe these reasons alone are enough to rule out the option of a ground invasion. Merely preparing for such an invasion, which many have urged as a way to threaten Mr. Milosevic, would give him an urgent incentive to exterminate remaining male Kosovars in Kosovo. Carrying out the threat would eliminate most of the women and children. ... Distasteful as it is to bargain with Mr. Milosevic, the fact is that he holds a million hostages. There is only one way for NATO to stop the ethnic cleansing, avert even worse slaughter and permit refugees to return safely. That is to negotiate as quickly as possible the immediate, unopposed introduction of a large international security force into Kosovo, capable of protecting the Albanians there as long as needed.

However one evaluates the accuracy of Ellsberg's analysis of the situation inside Kosovo (and I believe it will stand as very accurate), and whatever one thinks of the recommendation to open negotiations with Milošević, there was nothing remotely comparable to Ellsberg's sophisticated analysis and insight in any other commentary sampled for this study. A full sensitivity was evident to both the gender and age variables as they had shaped the atrocities so far. Something of the *process* and *periodicity* of slaughter that often occurs in these cases was acknowledged (i.e., with the reference that the destruction of Kosovar civilians could proceed in two phases, the "threatening" males first, then the "women, children and old people"). Ellsberg understood that enormous numbers of people (tens if not hundreds of thousands) were at mortal risk. And most importantly, *he argued that these factors were sufficient in themselves to rule out certain policies and warrant the adoption of others*. In so doing, he briefly raised factors, issues, and options above the din of meaningless and misleading chatter in media and policy circles.

VI. Conclusion

Some generalizations may be advanced on the basis of this extensive, if not rigorously systematic, sampling of Kosovo coverage. The first is that males tend to assume the status of "non-persons" in analyses and reportage of conflict and genocide. Most commonly, they are effaced from the picture. If their presence is noted at all, it is likely to be obliquely, with the gender variable subsumed by others (e.g., race/ethnicity, nationality, abstract "victim" status, colour of clothing). Campaigns aimed at the gender-selective killing of males will tend to be ignored or underemphasized in media coverage, in favour of a focus on secondary policies that target "worthy" victims (e.g., rape and harassment of women, forced expulsions). If the character of "gendercidal" strategies is noted, it will tend to be relegated to the later and less prominent reaches of coverage. All of these strategies can be isolated not only in media coverage, but in the humanitarian equation (e.g., the reports of organizations like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International) and in policy statements by national governments, although there is no space to enter into a detailed discussion of these themes in the Kosovo context. Very similar patterns reasserted themselves during the slaughter in East Timor (September-October 1999), which followed upon the Kosovo war by a matter of mere months.⁽²¹⁾

The conclusions that can and should be drawn from this body of evidence and argument depend very much on whether one views males as "natural" targets of victimization, and therefore irrelevant and unnewsworthy; or whether, on the other hand, one sees them as equally deserving of attention and protection in the face of violent assaults, up to and

including genocidal mass killing. My own preferences are no doubt apparent. In my opinion, no meaningful claim to humanity, fairness, or analytical accuracy can be advanced by those who, consciously or unconsciously, would consign half the human race to second-class status in the humanitarian and policy equation. This article has argued that an alternative framework is possible, and needs to be adopted rapidly to ensure that *all* victims of violence receive the empathy, attention, and assistance they require.

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Notes

1. I am currently developing Mary Anne Warren's concept of "gendercide," defined as gender-selective mass killing, in an inclusive way, as Warren unfortunately does not (Warren, 1985). See Jones (2000) and the materials compiled on the [Gendercide Watch](#) website.
2. See "Young Men of Fighting Age," chapter 15 in Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe -- Kosovo Verification Mission, 1999. Emphasis added.
3. *n.b.*: This refers to Usenet groups, not sites on the World Wide Web. These groups post the reports of the major English-language wire services -- Reuters, Associated Press, United Press International, and Agence France-Presse -- organized according to theme. The text posted is the *complete* text of the dispatch, not the truncated version that usually runs in daily newspapers. In the present case, this was significant, since so much valuable information and testimony was buried in the middle and later stages of the reportage.
4. This source is referred to in the text simply as *The Guardian*, although it includes material from *The Observer*. All references are to the Web version in any case.
5. I have addressed these issues in the Canadian context in Jones (1992).
6. I hope it hardly needs to be stressed, but I am not suggesting that the attention paid to children, women, and others is excessive and needs to be reduced. Rather, I argue that the palette of our sympathies should be expanded to include a class of civilian victims -- men, especially "battle-age" men -- that is usually rendered invisible in the analytical and humanitarian equation.
7. Ian Traynor's unforgettable phrase (Traynor, 1999).
8. For more on the "absent subject" motif, see Jones, 1994: 122.
9. See also the comments of Superintendent William Gent of New Scotland Yard, leader of the British forensics team in

post-occupation Kosovo: "What we are looking to try to prove for [the Criminal Tribunal headquarters at] The Hague is that in any given case, there were women and children that were mercilessly killed for no reason at all. If we can establish how people died, and establish that they were ordinary women, children and men going about their lives, that will go a long way to proving that crimes occurred." Here, the majority category of victims is at least dropped in as an afterthought. Gent quoted in Eggen, 1999.

10. "... scores of bodies lying in a low row in a clearing ... 17 acquaintances, men ... rang[ing] in age from 18 to 80 ... a 60-year-old man shot ... three men from another village shot ... the killings of at least 40 men in the town of Velika Krusa ... [the] execution of nearly two dozen men suspected of helping the rebels ... officials say that they have credible evidence that government troops separated scores of men from women and children who had moved back into the village [Malisevo] during the winter; the men allegedly were then herded into the hills and have not been seen since." Smith and Vick, 1999; emphasis added.

11. The *Post* did not publish a letter seeking to correct the error. For another example of this strategy, which is not uncommon, see Moutot, 1999. This article referred to Racak only slightly less misleadingly as an "attack on a fleeing column of some 40 civilians, old men, women and children." The core component, the slaughter of "battle-age" males, was invisible in this equation. Curiously, a subsequent AFP dispatch (Agence France-Presse, 1999b) noted the death at Racak of "Ajet Emini ... along with 44 other men." This, although much closer to the truth, is not accurate either, since between one and three women were apparently among the 45 victims.

12. The most detailed tabulation of the Izbica death-toll that I have seen was provided by Ellen Knickmeyer of the Associated Press, who gave a breakdown of "142 people ... [killed] from March 28 to May 10." "In all," Knickmeyer writes, "seven of the victims were women. Two were children. Ninety-eight were men older than 50, up to the age of 102." Thus, if the 142 tally is accepted, adult males constituted 133 of the victims (94 percent). But this framing was not uppermost in Knickmeyer's mind (note the placement of women, children, and *elderly* men ahead of the wider gendercidal component).

13. Oblivious to the contradiction, Janowski mentions later in the article: "Women are telling stories of their men being tortured and shot. It's completely out of control."

14. In this light, it is interesting to note that the cover of Denitch's book is an AP photo captioned as follows: "Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Nov. 10 [1993]. 'Last Farewell.' A man puts his hands on the window of a bus to give his wife and son a last farewell in Sarajevo. More than 1,000 people who have endured months of siege piled onto Red Cross buses in Sarajevo and headed in an often-delayed convoy toward safety in Croatia. Bosnian president Alija Izetbegovic signed an order that all women, boys under 18, and men over 60 could leave." Meaning: who could not?

15. Among the other apparently less "ghastly" acts of gendercide mentioned briefly in the article are the following: "As many as several hundred thousand ethnic Albanian men may have been detained or harmed by Yugoslav government security forces in the past three weeks. ... In the southern Kosovo city of Djakovica ... more than 100 ethnic Albanians were reportedly slain by Interior Ministry troops and paramilitaries. ... Another [*n.b.*] 112 men were allegedly shot and burned in the southern Kosovo town of Malakrusa ... as many as 200 'military-age' men may have been slain in the northern city of Podujevo ..." At no point in the article, however, is any *pattern* of gender-selective mass executions discerned.

16. If the allegation of a prisoner being forced to bite off another's testicles seems far-fetched, it should be noted that the charge formed part of the Criminal Tribunal indictment of Dusko Tadi, the director of evening torture sessions at Omarska, captured in Munich and turned over to the Tribunal in 1994. See Junger, 1999: 154. The designation of Omarska as the "most brutal" of the Serb-run death camps is relative, of course. The most famous symbol of Omarska - the emaciated Bosnian prisoner Fikret Ali, who appeared in numerous photographs behind the barbed wire of the camp on liberation day -- was a recent arrival from Keraterm, where, Vulliamy notes, "he had witnessed the murder of 200 men in one night" (Vulliamy, 1998: 74). (On the massacre, see also Silber and Little, 1996: 256, citing "at least 150" as the death-toll.)

17. Helsinki Watch, 1993: 87, 89, and (on the fate of the female detainees) 113, n. 154. One of the female detainees told Helsinki Watch: "Most of the prisoners brought to Omarska were men, ranging in age from fifteen to about fifty-five. They most frequently arrived in a paddy wagon, although some arrived in buses. All were beaten as soon as they emerged from the vehicle. They were then beaten against the wall and thrown into various buildings on the camp grounds. ... We saw the men being tortured. They were beaten with braided cable wires. Pipes filled with lead were

also used to beat the men. ... The most traumatic experience for me was to see all the corpses. ... Sometimes there was a lesser number of bodies - twenty or thirty -- but usually there were more" (Helsinki Watch, 1993: 102-03).

18. The "summary executions" and "men missing" references are drawn from Perlez, 1999. In the same story, Perlez quotes "a senior Administration official" who "cited landmark incidents in the Bosnian war -- the massacre at Srebrenica and the use of concentration camps for Muslim men of fighting age -- and said that what was happening now in Kosovo was broader and faster-paced ..." The passage appeared nine paragraphs into the story.

19. I have attempted no broad sampling of broadcast media in this study. But I feel I should point to CNN's Christiane Amanpour as unusual among such media workers in her early attention to the phenomenon of the missing men. Reporting from the refugee camps in Albania on 30 March 1999, Amanpour asked straightforwardly: "Where are the men?" Young men, she said, were notably underrepresented in the refugee convoys: there were "very few men coming out ... the tractor-trailers are full of women and children." Amanpour said she asked the occupants of the refugee convoys about the fate of the men. The answers: some were in hiding, some were joining the fight against the Serbs, and others had been detained and led away to destinations unknown. She referred to "an appalling picture and a consistent picture" of the gender-selective atrocities being committed by the Serbs. This was all tougher and more to-the-point than anything else I saw broadcast at the time.

20. Fisher's article originally ran in *The New York Times* on 30 May, under the heading: "The Men: Missing Refugees Turn Up With Accounts of Abuse." There is no headline focusing on "The Men" in Kosovo at any point in the two months of *Times* coverage preceding the mass release from Smrekovnica.

21. See Jones, 1999, and the [news coverage](#) I compiled during the crisis.

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