

Genocidal Rape, Enforced Impregnation, and the Discourse of Serbian National Identity

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Thematic Issue **Life Writing and the Trauma of War**. Ed. Louise O. Vasvári and I-Chun Wang

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Abstract: In her article "Genocidal Rape, Enforced Impregnation, and the Discourse of Serbian National Identity" Tatjana Takševa analyzes two main processes which contributed to the systematic rape and enforced impregnation of Bosniak women during the Balkan conflict: the discourse of Serbian nationalism articulated in response to the sexual violence that took place in Kosovo preceding the war and the simultaneous diminishing and downgrading of women's political and social autonomy on all territories of the former Yugoslavia. Based on statements in narratives of Bosniak women rape survivors, Takševa argues that these ideologically motivated processes combined to revive, inflame, and militarize long-standing Serbian stereotypes about Muslims and the supposed threat they represent.

Tatjana TAKŠEVA

Genocidal Rape, Enforced Impregnation, and the Discourse of Serbian National Identity

Between 1991 and 1995 Bosnia was one of the deadliest regions in the wars triggered by the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Under the banner of the old Yugoslav army all sides, but particularly Serbian nationalist, forces engaged in campaigns of ethnic cleansing of Bosnians (also Bosniaks, Bošnjaci) of Moslem faith and ethnic heritage. A significant aspect of this strategy was the systematic use of rape and enforced impregnation of Bosniak women. It is estimated that between 25,000 and 40,000 Bosniak women were victims of rape and enforced impregnation released from the rape camps only after their pregnancies had progressed beyond the possibility of a safe abortion (Sharratt; Skjelsbaek; Erjavec and Volčič). In narrative accounts of their experiences, some of the rape survivors reported being told by Serbian soldiers that the purpose behind the rape was to impregnate them with a Serb child or "little Chetnik," that is, children assumed to become nationalist Serbs who would later turn against their biological mothers. There is consensus in scholarship about the genocidal intention behind enforced impregnation whose purpose was manifold: to create the rejection of raped mothers and their children and thus destabilize their social and ethnic group to persuade, to prepare victims to hate and eventually to destroy their own children or be destroyed by them, and to create a situation where the paternal lineage of the child -- seen as decisive in determining ethnic and national identity -- would perpetuate and increase the ethnic group of the aggressor (see Allen; Erjavec and Volčič; Sharratt; Snyder, Gabbard, May, Zulcic).

The massive scale on which these rapes were taking place and the existence of rape camps -- improvised, but purposefully utilized spaces where the women, if they were not killed, were kept and abused for several months -- suggested even during early investigations in 1992 and 1993 that there was a politically motivated agenda behind the acts (see Allen). In the report submitted to the secretary General of the UN by a UN appointed commission of experts, it is stated that practices of ethnic cleansing including systemic rapes conducted by Bosnian Serb and Serbian military units in Bosnia "were not coincidental, sporadic or carried out by disorganized groups of bands of civilians who could not be controlled" but show "the existence of an element of superior direction" (Allen 45). It should not be overlooked that there were also Croatian women who were raped by Serbian paramilitaries as part of this campaign, as well as Serbian women who were raped by Croatian and Bosniak soldiers. The Commission for War Crimes created in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia claimed that in 1993 there were 800 Serbian women raped in Muslim detention camps whose personal narratives also indicate that they were victimized owing to their ethnic affiliation (see Nikolić-Ristanović; Stiglmaier). Throughout histories of conflict, wartime rape has long been acknowledged as a common occurrence. Women's bodies have often been seen as an essential instrument of war strategy and these "bodies" often constitute the symbolic and actual battlefield of the conquest of an ethnic domain in "an endless construction of women as the universal Other" (Papić 156). However, the 1993 report to the UN in its concluding remarks reiterates that Bosniak women were the special target of Serbian military and paramilitary units: "While the team of experts has found victims among all ethnic groups involved in the conflict, the majority of the rapes that they have documented had been committed by Serb forces against Muslim women from Bosnia and Herzegovina" (Mazowiecki <<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G95/129/00/PDF/G9512900.pdf?OpenElement>>).

The women's cultural and national identity appears to have been a crucial factor in the particular type of violence inflicted upon them, despite remarks such as Beverley Allen makes in her 1996 book *Rape Warfare* that "enforced pregnancy as a method of genocide makes sense only if you are ignorant of genetics. No baby born from such a crime will be only Serb" (87) and further commenting on how "the Serb policy erases the victims' cultural identity and treats her as nothing more than a kind of biological box" (88). While it is true that the children born of such rape are not only Serb, their own narratives reveal that regardless of the fact they have been raised by their Bosniak mothers in Bosniak communities, they are seen as neither Serb nor fully Bosniak. I have written elsewhere about what it means to raise a child born of wartime rape in today's Bosnia and the strategies many mothers adopt in negotiating the various forms of ostracism and victimization they and their children face in the mothers' community (see Takševa and Sgoutas). The fact that the children are being raised by Bosniak mothers in Bosniak communities does not mean that the politics of their identity in those communities is any less complicated. While the Serb paramilitaries' injunction to the Bosniak women was informed by a profoundly patriarchal notion that the child will automatically carry the nationality of the father, what was also at stake for them is defining and policing of group membership. Biology is an important marker of identity, but identity is more than biology, as much of it is socially constructed (see Goodhart; Weitsman). The lived experience of Bosniak rape survivors and their children indicates that one cannot just join any community just because one wants to, and one is never part of any community solely because possesses (some of) its requisite traits (see Takševa and Sgoutas; see also Goodhart). What matters in how identity is enacted politically and perceived is the socially constructed significance of the biological marker of identity, namely, how the children are perceived by their com-

munity and sometimes by their own mothers. This is evident in the wars Southern Europe where violence was used to inscribe and virtually produce the differences between various ethnic groups (see Zarkov). Based on recorded personal narratives of the women rape survivors and those of their children, my aim is to shed light on the specific ways in which the rapists' injunction is implicated in Serbian nationalist politics of identity leading up to the war. I argue that several specific cultural, socio-political, and psychological factors inform it.

There are not many recorded personal narratives of Bosniak women rape survivors. The topic remains a taboo in Bosnian society; the majority of women who were impregnated in this manner during the war either sought abortions or gave their children up for adoption right after birth. In 1993 the Bosnian government, concerned about the birthrate of the country after about 200,000 people were killed in the war, issued a general ban on international adoption with the result that centers for social work took the responsibility for placing children in local orphanages or organizing domestic adoption (see Daniel-Wrabetz). Some women, finding themselves at the edge of sanity and endurance, committed infanticide. There is a small number of women who chose to keep the children born of these experiences and most do not want to talk about what happened as a way of protecting themselves and their children from re-traumatization and victimization and as a way to redefine their social identities (see Skjelsbaek). The narratives that do exist, however, highlight the women's sense of being targeted because of their ethnicity. Danira, a 44 year-old rape survivor, speaks of her ordeal remembering that the violence done to her was accompanied by the perpetrators' calling her "a bad word for a Muslim woman, that I was dirty" (Skjelsbaek, "Victim" 382). Another survivor, 20 year-old Hasiba, recounts having been forced to kiss a big Serbian cross and cross herself three times in Serbian Orthodox style in order to "convert" before being raped, while Ifeta was told that "it would be an honour for a Muslim woman to give birth to a Serbian child" (Stiglmeier 118-28). The staggering number of Bosniak women who were held prisoners in the rape camps, forcibly impregnated and released only after it was too late to abort suggests that there was something particular about the perception of Bosniak women's religious, cultural and ethnic identity that seemed to account for their systematic abuse at Serb hands (see Erjavec and Volčič; Skjelsbaek; Snyder, Gabbard, May, Zulcic).

Many of the violent scenarios recounted by the women are played out in relation to their and their perpetrators' ethnic identity. One survivor narrative records the intertwining of misogynist, masculinist enactment of power, and ethnicity: "I was naïve in thinking that the Serbs wouldn't rape me again. The next one called himself 'top gun'... He tied me up with his belt and dribbled beer on my body. While he was raping me, he repeated vulgar language into my ear. At the end he didn't forget to spit at me. 'It's your price from Top Gun, you Muslim whore' he told me ... I thought he was Serbian, from Serbia. I recognized his dialect as being from Serbia" (Vranić 141). Other Bosniak women survivors' told about how "they attacked women and girls in front of the men, brothers, and sons. Nasty people, those Orthodox ... no women were exempt due to pregnancy from rape and maltreatment ... they constantly told us that we had to bear small Chetniks" (Vranić 157-302). One of the testimonies was provided by a young woman who before the war had not declared herself as belonging to any ethnic group, but as a Yugoslav, but who after being repeatedly raped and brutalized identified herself as Bosniak. Another woman survivor who gave birth to a child conceived of wartime rape was able to identify her multiple attackers by name because she met them before as members of the Serbian Democratic Party: "while they were repeatedly raping me, they were eating a feast of food and drink. They 'feted' me with offenses, cursing and beating me with a stick ... while he was tyrannizing me, he said that he loved bleeding Muslims ... When they noticed that I was pregnant, they told me that I must bear the little Chetnik. After that time, only two men raped me every night, not four or five which was usual before" (Vranić 174-75). A thirteen-year old boy, Ferid from Foča, spoke about the rape of his younger sister after the Serb occupation of his town and remembered being told a 'secret' by his schoolmate that "any Chetnik could do 'it' to any Muslim girl, and that nobody could help" (Ferid qtd. in Vranić 278).

The outbreak of war in Yugoslavia and the particular treatment of Bosniak women during the war find their meaning in the evocation of past ethnic conflicts, as well as nationalist discourses whose destructive power lies in their destabilization of the previous perception and intelligibility between past, present, and future (see Papić). I suggest that there were two main processes which contributed to the systematic rape and enforced impregnation of Bosniak women: 1) the discourse of Serbian nationalism articulated in response to the sexual violence that took place in Kosovo preceding the war, a discourse promoted by Serbian politicians, some intellectuals, and the media to the point where it became widely accepted as true and based on common sense and 2) the gradual and simultaneous downgrading of women's political and social autonomy on all territories of the former Yugoslavia, while emphasizing and reconfiguring women's role in terms of their duty as mothers of the nation. In relation to Bosniak women specifically, both of these ideologically motivated processes combined to revive, inflame, and militarize long-standing Serbian stereotypes about Muslims and the supposed threat they represent, creating a climate that facilitated the particular kind of violence inflicted on Bosniak women. Further, the verbal and conceptual connection that the perpetrators made between Bosniak women's reproductive capacity on the one hand and nationhood based on ethnicity on the other does

not imply the complete ideological obliteration of the mothers' own cultural and religious identity. Underpinning the act of enforced impregnation is the assertion of power and superiority of one group over another, enacted via gendered and sexualized means (rape as a form of violence done by those who are stronger to those who are perceived as weaker). The perpetrators used the mothers' cultural and religious identity for a battle that she is likely to lose through attempting to mother "a child of the enemy group." The violent act assumes that women as mothers represent a symbolic yet politically voiceless extension of the nation, a repository of group identity itself that she can reproduce but that is in all other ways actively transmitted by men and masculinist, patriarchal institutions. The injury to the woman as mother implies injury to the other, namely the group whose symbol she is (on the trope of the mother as nation, see, e.g., Mosse; Parker, Russo, Sommer, Yaeger). In the years surrounding the war, this symbolic contiguity between woman as mother and nation as the motherland that she is seen to embody was newly revived within the inflammatory nationalist rhetoric used by political and clerical leaders in the Balkans. The Serbian nationalist script and the gender roles embedded in such an ideology are best understood as masculinist projects in which women are relegated to roles reflecting masculinist notions of femininity and of women's "proper place" (Nagel 24; see also Albanese; Milic), but also as nationalist projects whose desired success depended on creating and reinforcing group boundaries here delineated along ethnic lines.

In the years leading up to the war, there were two public discourses which transformed women in the Serbian cultural and nationalist imaginary into tools and instruments of nationhood and into entities with diminished or obliterated human autonomy and agency. One was the discourse surrounding "nationalist" rape in Kosovo in the 1980s that specifically foregrounded the use of rape in support of the Albanian nationalist cause in mobilizing support for nationalism in Serbia. The other was the Serbian radical nationalist discourse that was in part shaped through the gradual restriction of women's rights and the re-traditionalization of women's roles. Because the debate over Kosovo was a highly politicized public issue in the 1980s, accusations of Albanian rape of Serbs in Kosovo were an important political factor in the development of Serbian nationalism. Populated by a majority of Albanians and made into an autonomous unit within the Republic of Serbia in 1974, nationalist tensions in Kosovo simmered until 1981 when Albanian demonstrations called for a "Kosova Republic," followed by further disturbances and agitation, all met with federal repression (see Bracewell). At the time, discussions of rape were used to create the perception of Serbian national victimization at Muslim hands, thus legitimizing the emergence of and support for militant Serbian nationalism. Kosovar Serbs who emigrated from the province to Serbia in large numbers brought with them tales of Albanian abuses of power, the sly takeover of their homes through a high birth rate, and a virtual "occupation" of what Serbs identify as Serbian ancestral land.

The incidents of "nationalist rape" in Kosovo were represented as a threat to Serbian identity and survival. By 1985 issues of nationally motivated sexual violence in Kosovo perpetrated by Albanians against Serbian women were widely publicized in the Serbian media. In the five years before the outbreak of the war, Serbian newspapers featured almost daily discussions about alleged rapes of Serbian women by Kosovar Albanians and the violation of all Serbs that these rapes represented (see Lilly and Irvine 112). While there is lack of conclusive evidence to support claims of deliberate Albanian campaign of sexual violence against Serbs, the Serbian nationalist intelligentsia focused attention on rape as an aspect of the threat to the Serbian population in Kosovo. Intellectuals, politicians, and the media, headed by Milošević himself, actively supported the hysteria over popular accounts by representing as rape narratives that often blurred the line between rape and other forms of violence. A relevant aspect of the Albanian campaign of nationally-motivated sexual violence against Serbs is that it was purportedly directed toward men, as well as women. The case of Djordje Martinović, a Serb living in Kosovo, was often used to illustrate this trend. In May of 1985 he appeared in the hospital of a primarily Albanian town with punctured large intestine due to a bottle wedged up his rectum. He reported being attacked by two hooded Albanians who tied and drugged him before assaulting him (see Bracewell 563). This case helped spread the view that aggressive Albanian men seek not only to rape Serbian girls and women and thus enlarge and perpetuate their national claims to Kosovo, but also to emasculate and thus subordinate and enslave Serbian men, bringing into question the prevailing gender hierarchy and precipitating a crisis of Serbian masculinity. Significantly, however, in contrast to the reports about the Martinović case, the sexual violence against women in nationalist interpretations was less about the experience of the victims themselves than about the challenge to Serbian masculine pride: in these cases it was not the injury to the victim that counted, but the injury to the nation (Bracewell 571-73). Politicians exploited this link to create an aggressive nationalist program that could redeem both national dignity and Serbian masculine honour, and structured Serbian nationalism with reference to an aggressive and competitive masculine idea (tough, dominant, heterosexual) and an articulation of its complementary feminine one (passive, maternal, vulnerable) (Bracewell 569-70). The other important element in building the new Serbian nationalist program was that nationalist Serbian rhetoric had long equated the predominantly Muslim Albanians in Kosovo and in an extended stereotype Muslim populations in general to the Ottoman Turks (who defeated the Serbs in the battle of Kosovo in 1389 followed by a five-century long occupation of Southern Europe). Various cultural

stereotypes which surface consistently in Serbian folklore and humor revolve around Muslims where both Albanians and Bosniaks are represented as stupid, lazy, backward, religiously fanatical, and brutish who occupy menial positions in society (see, e.g., Panjeta). Furthermore, the stereotypes about Bosniaks are infused with references to their moral and ethical inferiority often due to the fact that they converted to Islam under pressure from Ottoman policy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, thus seen to have betrayed the religion and culture of their Christian ancestors. In the newly articulated nationalist discourse, the fall of Serbia into Ottoman hands was revived and recast in the present-day scenario and the view that the Albanian bid for independence has placed the heroic Serbian nation in an unnatural position, rendered it emasculated and degraded, forced to submit to an unworthy culture (see Bracewell).

Alongside the equation posited between Bosniak populations and the Ottoman Turks who occupied Serbia in the past, the Serbian nationalist government propagated a form of panic related to falling Serbian birthrates compared against consistently rising Albanian ones. Rising birthrates among Muslim populations were contrasted to the falling birthrates of Serbs and represented as another way in which Muslim populations threatened the Serb nation, adding fuel to the campaign for Serbian demographic renewal. This rhetorical and cultural framework provoked ethnic hatred and produced cultural stereotypes for the purposes of constructing the enemy's otherness through clearly demarcated lines of religion, ethnicity, culture, and gender that had up until then existed in a fluid state (see Papić 155). According to the 1981 Serbian census, there were nearly 14% of Albanians living in the country, constituting the largest growing minority, plus 2.3% of population that identified as Muslim by identifying as Kosovar Albanian. By 1991, the time of the next census, the Albanian population living in Serbia rose to close to 18 % of the population, plus the now increased 2.5 % of the population that then identified as Muslim according to their nationality. This means that before the beginning of the war over 20% of the population in Serbia was Muslim with the indication that this number would only continue to rise, based on similar rises in Muslim population in other republics, notably Macedonia, where the number of Albanians calling Macedonia home rose from 19% in 1981 to 22% in 1994, and more recently, in 2002, to 25%, excluding the nearly 8% of other Muslim groups, such as Turks, Roma, Bosniaks, and those who identify as Muslim. In 2002, the religious demographics for Macedonia show that a third of the country's population identifies as Muslim. In the nationalist Serbian imaginary, Albanians are often taken to represent Islam in a more general sense, stemming from their frequent association with Ottoman Turk mentality. The fact that in the 1990s Albanian birth rates were more than double of Serbian birthrates and the gap between them widening caused great alarm among Serbian nationalists, as well as the wider public who began to speak of an impending demographic disaster of tremendous proportions (see Lilly and Irvine 133). The urgent need for Serbian demographic renewal was illustrated paradoxically through the denigration of Muslim sexual and marital practices as not being dependent on any form of birth control with the resulting perception voiced in some stereotypes that Muslims "multiply as rabbits" while Serbian women are allowed to choose to "murder their children" through liberal abortion laws. Stories of rapes committed by Albanians on Serbian women appeared alongside stories in the media promulgating the imminent disappearance of the Serbs owing to low birth rates. The first post-communist pluralist elections in 1990 brought to power conservative nationalist political parties whose platforms were marked by more or less open xenophobia and patriarchal agendas. Associated with these agendas were political and legal challenges to women's rights of abortion in all former Yugoslav republics (see Papić 155).

In response to the problem raised by national unrest in Kosovo, the new Serbian government raised the question of an imbalance in the population's demographic reproduction. The government pointed to a low fertility rate of 1.8 that was continuing to decline for Serbia and contrasted this with a high fertility rate of 4.3 for Kosovo with its Albanian majority (see Milić). Calls for action to raise fertility levels came from all key political players: the ruling Socialist Party, major opposition parties, the Serbian Orthodox Church, and the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences. The message of the Orthodox patriarch was aimed specifically at existing abortion laws which in his words amounted to "infanticide" committed by women who refused to give birth to more Serbs and thus painted a picture of a nation under threat of diminishing and extinction. The major concern behind the initiatives to address demographic renewal was that if the low birthrate of Serbs and high birth-rate of Albanians, Muslims, and Roma remain unchanged, the Serbs would soon be outnumbered by other ethnic groups in their own country. The head of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Pavle, addressed the issue in terms of an epidemic of the so-called "white plague," the South Slavic term for shrinking populations of Serbs and other majority groups. The Patriarch tried to impress upon Serbian women the importance of bearing more children, and that not doing so constitutes a threefold sin, toward themselves, toward the Serbian nation, and toward god (see Papić 161). On the more secular side, a document issued in 1992 entitled "Warning on the Demographic Movements of the Serbian Population" signed by officials of public and national institutions proposed that a State Council of Population be established with the aim to address Serbian low birth rates. The document links this agenda to the escalating violence in Croatia and Bosnia stating that conflicts and "terror committed against the Serbs in Croatia and Bos-

nia-Herzegovina" are taking a toll on the number of "potentially reproductive Serbian males" (see Papić 161).

In 1993, the Bishop of Zvornik and Tuzla, Vasilije Kacavenda, also a cabinet minister in the government of the Republic of Srpska (the Serbian entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina), advocated for a complete ban on abortion in the Republic Srpska and suggested to the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church to extend the ban to "all Serbian lands" because "today ... many Serbian women kill their children. That is why the percentage of Serbian population decreases with every census. In today's Serbia only 63 percent of the population are Serbs ... If we listen to the advice of feminists and others who support the killing of unborn children, the new census will in a few years show that in Serbia and everywhere where Serbs live this percentage is even lower. And this will go on until, God forbid, Serbs in Serbia become a minority and no longer live in their own country. Because of this state of affairs, Serbs have no right to blame others; they will be themselves to blame for their vanishing" (Kacavenda qtd. in Shiffman, Skrabalo, Subotic 11-12). Statements such as these made by prominent officials have been used to mobilize power and seem to issue a challenge to prevent what is represented as an imminent Serbian downfall from happening "again" by all means possible. Given that reports about the Bosnian rape camps circulated widely in world media at this time, it appears unlikely that this and other officials did not have any knowledge of what was going on inside them. Thus the forceful impregnation of Bosniak women can be seen as serving the Serbian cause on several levels: it avenges the wrongs done to Serbian mothers long ago during the period of Ottoman Turkish occupation and it diminishes the number of Muslim children born, while also ostensibly increasing the Serbian birth-rate through violent means. Many of the recorded narratives of women rape survivors indicate the way in which their religious, ethnic, and gender identity was conflated with that of past Serbian enemies. Hatiza, one of the women rape survivors recounted being told by the rapist, a former Serbian acquaintance that "you'll have one of our kids in your belly" after being struck by guns in the mouth and having her clothes torn off, acts which were supposed to show their superiority to "the Turkish women" (Hatiza qtd. in Stiglmeier 92). Rape survivors Mirsada and Azra reported being told that they will give birth to Serbian children alongside hearing curses "Fuck your Turkish mother" and "Death to all Turkish sperm" (Mirsada and Azra qtd. in Stiglmeier 109). Senada's narrative reveals that from the beginning of her ordeal the rapists announced that she was going to have to bear a Serbian child: "They told us how much they wanted to see us raise their kids, they sang rhymes with words like: 'A mother raises her baby, he's half a Muslim, half a Serb'" (Senada qtd. in Stiglmeier 132). Senada's words also point to the reality that in this case the perpetrators were constructing the identity of the child along the lines of a mixed background, but with the assumption that inflicting upon the child this state of not being purely one or the other was part of the revenge.

In each narrative of ethnic nationhood women are products of a masculinist, nationalist strategy of representation, and doubly subjugated: as insiders they are colonized and instrumentalized in their natural reproductive function as mothers, and as outsiders they become "mediated instruments of violence against other men's nations and cultural identity" (Stiglmeier 155). In this sense, women's individual and biological capacity is circumscribed and used in the service of defining and policing imagined and real group boundaries. While reports about the Bosnian rape camps kept surfacing with increasing regularity in world media at this time, in May 1993 the Parliament of Serbia adopted a newly articulated abortion law which does not allow personal, family, or social reasons to be considered as legal grounds for abortion after the tenth week of pregnancy nor does it allow women to make their own decisions after this period. The violence embedded in restricting the reproductive and legal rights of Serbian women in the name of a nationalist agenda finds an even uglier counterpart in the rape and enforced impregnation of Muslim women as the perceived enemy on the outside. Further, the psychology of rape is such that the victim of rape is always objectified by the perpetrator(s), which to some extent accounts for the violence of the act itself. Here, however, I am interested in exploring the specific ways which enabled or may have led to particular forms of objectification and sexual violence Bosniak women suffered at the hands of Serbian military and paramilitary units, as well as the particular discourses which may have accounted for the rapists' statements that the Bosniak women will bear Serbian children. I suggest previously that the discourse of nationalist rape in Kosovo preceding the war, the wave of radical nationalism it engendered in Serbia, as well as the consequent re-patriarchalization and archaization of women's roles and identities can be counted among the factors which helped create a particular kind of militarized and masculinist nationalism that led to the restriction of reproductive and other political rights for women in Serbia on the one hand and the rapes and impregnation of a great number of Bosniak women on the other.

The reconfigured gender relations in Serbian nationalist ideology show that women occupy a distinct, symbolic role in nationalist culture, discourse, and collective action. Nira Yuval-Davies and Floya Anthias identify five ways in which women tend to participate in ethnic, nationalist, and state processes: 1) As biological producers of members of ethnic collectivities, 2) As reproducers of the (normative) boundaries of ethnic/national groups by enacting proper feminine behavior, 3) As participating centrally in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and transmitters of its culture, 4) As signifiers of ethnic and national differences, and 5) In smaller measure, as participants in national, economic and

military struggles (7-8). Yuval-Davies's and Anthias's theoretical framework can be modified to apply to the role Bosniak women were suffering through rape and impregnation. Bosniak women appeared as signifiers of ethnic, religious, and national difference for nationalist Serbs: the raping and impregnating of Bosniak women represented a specifically gendered form of punishment on the Bosniak Muslim population for freshly remembered past wrongs. Further, if we think of Bosniak women as reproducers of boundaries of ethnic and national groups, their injunction to bear Serbian children break down and reinforces those boundaries: the boundaries are broken with the implication that they will be unable to reproduce their own identity and culture through these children and that they will be forced to reproduce in some patrilineal way the boundaries of Serbian national identity and thus act against their own. As biological producers of members of ethnic collectives through the act of rape and enforced impregnation, Bosniak women's membership to their own ethnic collective is hijacked and directed to the production of members of the Serbian nation.

The enforced impregnations of Bosniak women were also a perverse acknowledgment of the women's central participation in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of that collectivity's culture: while giving birth to "Chetnik" babies perverts the women's ability to participate in the ideological reproduction and transmission of their own culture, it subsumes them under the Serbian nationalist banner where they appear to be unwilling participants in the reproduction and enforced transmission of the Serbian collective. While the perpetrators' intention behind impregnating Bosniak women through rape was motivated by the desire to perpetuate and increase the ethnic group of the aggressor in the cause of greater Serbia, it was also a way to restore what was constructed in nationalist discourse as the authentic and natural social and (hetero)sexual order of Serbian masculine and militant dominance and superiority over the Muslim population. In addition, it was a way to repossess, achieve, and assert a newly reclaimed Serbian nationalist masculinity in which traditional manhood was redefined through a nationalist dimension and perspective. In the years preceding and during the war, Serbian political, nationalist, and gender discourses intertwine and transmute into a sort of "Oriental" despotism produced by Milošević and his supporters, a style of governance designed to dominate, restructure, and have authority over territories inhabited by mainly Muslim populations reconstructed along historical and legendary lines. Thus, the discursive contiguity between woman and nation in radical nationalist discourse in South Europe, alongside the revival of long standing religiously and politically motivated animosity and prejudice against Muslims, can be counted among the constitutive socio-political and cultural factors which enabled the violent and systematic targeting of Bosniak women's status as mothers.

There exist, however, an inherent paradox and historical irony in the endeavor to impregnate Bosniak women with Serb children who will later hate them and supposedly contribute to the destruction of the Bosniak community. The paradox and irony are that the act of enforced impregnation, while intended to produce and reinforce the boundaries of one ethnic or nationalist group, in fact results in the opposite: in ethnic and national mixing, the kind of which was performed under Tito's Yugoslavia. Again, it is not the "mixing" itself that constitutes a problem, but the social perception of that mixing and the discursive inflection that society ascribes to it. A number of young people born of wartime rape live in the mothers' communities suffering victimization and rejection owing to their "impure" identity. Six out of eleven interviewed adolescent girls identified themselves as scapegoats: "I see myself as a scapegoat because I have Serbian blood, and in this way, I am kind of ... available for everyone to hate me" (Zerina) and "children and their mothers shouting at me and after me that I am a Chetnik or a whore child" (Lejla), "I have nothing to do with the Serbs. I hate them too, but everyone sees a little Chetnik in me" (Jasenka), and "Since I know who my father is, I feel dirty. Dirty on the inside, so I can't clean myself enough" (Satka) (Zerina, Lejla, Jasenka qtd. in Erjavec and Volčič, 367-73). At the same time, a small minority of the children in fact construct themselves in their own recorded narratives as "peace builders" due to their "ethnically mixed blood," and as someone who can help "bring people closer," feeling it is their duty to speak about "injustices and continuing struggles" (Erjavec and Volčič 377-78). Said paradoxical perception and thus contrary to the nationalist Serb objective is exemplified in one raped woman's voice as follows: since she has "ethnically mixed blood" Seada feels she can help to stop ethnic conflicts so that "we can all start to talk: I see myself as a rescuer, as someone who can connect enemies ... Having blood of both sides in me, Bosniak and Serbian, it is my duty to speak out ... We all have to make sure this does not happen again ... We have to assure there will be no repetition of these acts of violence again" (Seada qtd. in Erjavec and Volčič 378-79). Seada's words provide an alternative discursive construction of ethnically mixed identity, one that is positive as it is uniquely positioned to mediate peace between warring factions. While at this time Bosnian society remains divided along ethnic lines and it is difficult to speculate about the possibility for peaceful coexistence among the groups, narratives by the children born of wartime rape offer some hope that there may be a way to contextualize the past through lived experience and overcome at least some of the effects of the violent legacy of the South European war.

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