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Representing Bosnia: Human Rights Claims and Global Media Culture

James Castonguay

Sacred Heart University, castonguayj@sacredheart.edu

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Representing Bosnia Human Rights Claims and Global Media Culture

James Castonguay

Information Technology and Human Rights

Jamie F. Metzl begins his *Human Rights Quarterly* article "Information Technology and Human Rights" by pointing out that in 1913, when the newly formed Carnegie Endowment for International Peace sent a delegation to "gather basic facts and make an assessment" (in response to the "war-inspired" confusion of the second Balkan war), it took them more than two months to reach the region. When the "accurate and well written report" finally appeared more than a year later, it was "overshadowed in the popular media by the more sensational news story of the outbreak of World War I." Metzl contrasts this early-twentieth-century example with the media coverage of the war in Bosnia in the 1990s:

When the newest round of Balkan troubles emerged with the breakup of the former Yugoslavia in 1991, information came dramatically faster. Every turn of political fortunes was reported immediately by journalists able to file stories and photographs through electronic media beamed across the world by CNN and other satellite news networks. News reports accompanied by digital photographs were available instantaneously to Internet users on the World Wide Web (WWW), and discussed ad infinitum on Internet user-groups and discussion groups.¹

Truth claims, representation and human rights
of those who are affected

Through explicit and implicit arguments about the uses and functions of newer media, Metzl suggests (to me) a guarded optimism for the potential of information technologies for human rights organizations and by extension for journalists and civilians in Bosnia and Kosovo. Consequently, although Metzl is most concerned with the use of these new communication technologies by human rights organizations, his comments provide a useful context for my consideration of representations of Bosnia and Kosovo on the Internet and the World Wide Web.²

Although there has been a good deal of theoretical scholarship concerned with the Internet and, among other things, identity, globalization, community, human rights, and the public sphere, analyses of actual Internet artifacts have lagged behind. As this essay demonstrates, while it is productive to speculate on what is theoretically specific to various communication technologies in relation to rights claims, this should not be done at the expense of historical analyses and detailed examinations of actual media texts. Indeed, within the context of the vertiginous excesses of fin-de-siècle media culture, it becomes necessary to look beyond journalistic accounts and traditional media toward the broader discursive continuum that comprises the "war in Bosnia" or the "Kosovo text." Through an examination of the mediation of Bosnia and the crisis in Kosovo on Internet bulletin boards, newsgroups, personal and group Web pages, government and military Web sites, mainstream media sites, and Web presentations by human rights organizations and media activists, in this essay I ask whether the Internet offers spaces and opportunities that are unavailable through more established media for making rights claims.

The Internet Goes to War

The history of modern communication, from the telegraph and telephone to radio and television, demonstrates that democracy does not inhere in new media, beginning with the fundamental issue of unequal access to these new technologies. More important for my purposes, however, is Armand Mattelart's more specific suggestion that the entire "history of international communications and its representations" is best viewed as "a history of the interwoven paths of *war*, *progress*, and *culture*," and his qualification that "communication serves first of all to make *war*."³ Indeed, like previous communication technologies and networks (e.g., the telegraph, radio, television), the Internet was developed through a complicity with the U.S. military, when the Defense Advanced Research Agency (DARPA or ARPA) founded ARPANET in the late 1960s to help research agencies access expensive hardware and software. By the early 1970s, in conjunction with MIT researchers, ARPA had created the protocols and technology for contemporary Internet communication. During the 1970s, other networks such as BITNET, USENET, and UUCP were also created with public government resources and private com-

mercial funding, and in the early 1980s (NSFNET) was established to connect universities. As antiquated network ARPANET was taken over by commercial entities, it is commonly referred to as the backbone of the World Wide Web browser, Mosaic, was developed into the popular Netscape (Netscape Inc.). Consequently, during the late 1990s, the technology of the World Wide Web became a major part of the global media landscape.

Since 1995 (the year the Internet became the World Wide Web has become second nature), the Internet has become second nature for net communication and is in part responsible for services that focus on interactive communication: Internet Chat (IRC), Usenet newsgroups, and Web makes the Web so attractive to users that it has become a business (and indeed the impetus for the development of Internet protocols across platforms). The user-friendly precedent, by the way, was set by the early days of the Internet.

As Robin Hamman notes: "When the Gulf war was in progress, many people used their computers to get the latest news. It was not possible to report on the daily atrocities of the war. A hundred people from other countries would live through IRC during the war. They were watching television or listening to the radio. The Internet was supplementing, and enhancing, their experience through this new technology." The logs point to the paradoxes of the Internet: still contained by standardized protocols. The public "space" of chat rooms is a space of interactions between users who are not aware of identities, while IRC users spend many hours spent "chatting" (talking) to each other.

The logs from the +peace IRC channel are a new manifestation of old anxiety about the Internet:

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mercial funding, and in the early 1980s the National Science Foundation Network (NSFNET) was established to link its supercomputers to research agencies and universities. As antiquated networks disbanded or were redistributed, the original ARPANET was taken over by commercial companies and now comprises what is commonly referred to as the backbone of the Internet. The first graphical World Wide Web browser, Mosaic, was created by computer science students at the Center for Super Computing at the University of Illinois in 1993 and would later be developed into the popular Netscape Web browser (and Netscape Communications, Inc.). Consequently, during the Gulf War and for most of the Bosnian War, the technology of the World Wide Web was not in place or did not form a significant part of the global media landscape.⁴

Since 1995 (the year the Dayton Accord was reached), however, the World Wide Web has become second only to email as the most popular means of Internet communication and is in many ways analogous to other kinds of Internet services that focus on interactivity, from bulletin boards and email to Internet Relay Chat (IRC), Usenet newsgroups, and MUDs (Multi-User Dimensions). What makes the Web so attractive to computer users, political activists, educators, and businesses (and indeed the impetus for its existence) is that it supports all other Internet protocols across platforms in addition to exploiting the link-based method of its user-friendly precedent, hypertext.

As Robin Hamman notes in his history of the Internet, even as early as 1991 when "the Gulf war was in progress . . . users around the world gathered around their computers to get the latest news from inside Kuwait. Kuwaitis with PCs were able to report on the daily atrocities under Iraqi occupation."⁵ In addition, several hundred people from other countries, mostly the United States, communicated live through IRC during the first days of the bombing. Many of these IRC users were watching television or listening to the radio while they were typing, so the Internet was supplementing, augmenting, and increasing the intensity of the media experience through this new form of "intermediality." At the same time, the chat logs point to the paradoxes of the Internet, exhibiting an international reach but still contained by standardized information (CNN, CBS, and wire service reports). The public "space" of chat rooms or IRC channels was also used for personal interactions between users whose login names suggest anonymity and the fabrication of identities, while IRC users would no doubt claim to "know" each other from the many hours spent "chatting" online before the outbreak of hostilities.

The logs from the +peace IRC channel during the Gulf War also document a new manifestation of old anxieties and thrills generated by war and the medium of the Internet:

WAR WITH IRAQ IS OFFICIAL BUSH LIVE

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 Tylenol WAR HAS STARTED!!!!
 Alexander WAR!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
 Arkie what is the best media to receive now?
 Spitzer The liberation of kuwait has begun . . .
 Alexander WAR!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
 WAR!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
 Arkie i'm listening to nbc radio....[. . .]
 Nati All Israelis present- please come to +report [. . .]
 Nati To all ppl that are concerned: I am OK.
 Heechee Has Iraq fired missiles against tel aviv? Many? [. . .]
 Python:+report nati, do you have your gas mask on? what city are you in?
 Stalker:+report CBS says Pentagon confirms 5 missiles launched against
 +israel.
 Mustang:+report glad to hear, Nati
 Nati This is Nathan Srebro from Mount Carmel, Haifa, Israel in a live war
 Ryman:+report 6 missile launches into Tel Aviv. . .
 Nati I have my mask on and am in a sealed room with my family. . .⁶

When the Gulf War was ongoing, IRC exchanges like this most likely numbered in the hundreds, taking place over a small number of servers that required competent knowledge of the Unix operating system to participate. The current ability of Java and other programming languages to allow easy real-time chat with an ordinary Web browser facilitated the participation of more Internet users in these kinds of public forums during the war in Bosnia and NATO strikes in Kosovo.

In addition to IRC, there were also active Usenet and email discussions during the war, while articles and official documents, like the antiwar writings of George Lakoff and Noam Chomsky, were circulated through email and FTP (file transfer protocol) on the Internet during Operations Desert Shield, Desert Sword, and Desert Storm. The Gulf War's current presence on the Web is dominated by discussions and information on Gulf War veteran sites related to Gulf War syndrome/illness, suggesting that the Web might provide fruitful discursive ground for rewriting the instantaneous electronic historiography of the Persian Gulf TV war.

While it is impossible to know if the existence of a communication network—like the present-day World Wide Web with its ability to disseminate dissenting text as well as video of massacred Iraqis—would have made a substantive difference in the reception of the Gulf War in the United States or elsewhere, representations of the war in the former Yugoslavia on the Internet provide us with a fruitful case study for exploring these and other important questions. In addition, the mediation of Bosnia and Kosovo provides us with an excellent opportunity to test several salient theoretical claims concerning Internet politics and culture.

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A 1996 *New York Times* article entitled "Serbs' Answer to Oppression: Their Web Site," reported that Slobodan Milosevic "unwittingly spawned a technological revolt" by shutting down independent news outlets, when "tens of thousands of students, professors, professionals and journalists immediately connected their computers to Internet web sites across the globe." According to the article, "The independent outlet that was forced off the air for two days by the Government, Radio B92, used that time to begin digital broadcasts in Serbo-Croatian and English over audio Internet links." A 1999 article in the *Nation* by Veran Matic and Drazen Pantic, who helped found B92 in 1989, along with several journalists and media activists, in a former storage room used by the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party, contributed to the radio station's status as a symbol of "alternative" political views. In May 2000, several major papers also carried wire reports of Milosevic's suppression of B92 (renamed B2-92) and other opposition media outlets shortly before the 2000 elections.⁷ While B92 is a local radio station broadcasting from Belgrade, then, it was able to go "global" through digital streaming technology over the World Wide Web.

In addition to this new method of distribution for an older medium, Web sites like the ZaMir Peace Network, Sarajevo Online, and email discussion lists like net-time and several of the spoon collective lists (lists.village.virginia.edu) seemed to suggest the existence of a new public sphere where alternative journalistic information could be shared and personal stories could be told outside of the traditional media outlets. During the NATO raids, the *Montreal Gazette* published a story about Domovina Net (www.domovina.net), "one of hundreds of Web sites created by refugees, activists, human-rights groups, governments and news organizations to offer updates on the remnants of Yugoslavia, which blew back into the news this week because of fighting in another region—Kosovo, in the south." According to the article: "Thanks to the Internet, [Bosnian expatriates] can reach people within Serbia and Croatia, areas where news of the trials might be suppressed by the nationalist media. In Bosnia, where telephone infrastructure is old and war-damaged, few people have Internet access. But some Bosnian radio stations plan to pick up the Internet signal of the trials, and rebroadcast it over their land-based transmitters."⁸

In "E-mail Flies Faster Than NATO Planes," the *Toronto Star* cited Associated Press reports about the "early-alert system" provided by Yugoslav Internet providers and email activists during the NATO strikes. "We can hear the idiots flying towards Yugoslavia," "Loud detonations and planes flying over," "Many explosions in Pancevo," and "Shoot down the bastards" were among the messages sent from sympathetic Internet users in Slovenia and Serb regions of Bosnia and later catalogued on the Belgrade-based Web site beograd.com.

Several years earlier, in 1996, the official Web pages for the University of Belgrade student protests against Milosevic's regime were able to stay online thanks to several mirror sites at universities around the world using a modem, an occasional

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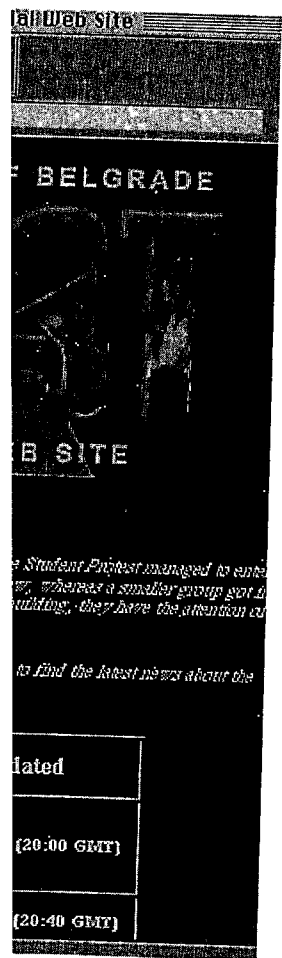
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positive Serbian image

Jamie F. Metzler lists other ways in which the Internet allowed "concerned Internet users [to] establish links with the inhabitants of Sarajevo," as well as to receive action alerts "sent across the Internet directly to concerned observers by groups like Amnesty International, which led to letter writing campaigns and popular pressure on Western government officials to act." As Metzler observes, "From the perspective of the international human rights movement, this is a remarkable transformation."¹⁰ Indeed, during the late 1990s the Internet and the Web have become increasingly important to relief efforts in Bosnia and Kosovo through several support groups, email lists, newsgroups, and Internet communities of volunteers, online activists, and nongovernmental organizations.¹¹

Metzler's avoidance of informational, technological, and media determinism is important in this context, because—as demonstrated by the lack of Western action taken in response to information received about Nazi concentration camps during World War II as well as the lack of international intervention in response to CNN broadcasts of UN radio reports concerning mass killings in Rwanda in 1994—the availability of information and the use of technologies to distribute information do not determine the responses to this information, nor can access to information anticipate the overall social functions and political uses of these information technologies. As Stanley Cohen puts it,

On the one hand, the increased international awareness of human rights, the spread of new information technologies, and the globalization of the mass media mean that the sovereign state is being "watched" like never before. On the other hand, the profusion of so many images, the blurring of the lines between fiction and facts (reconstructions, factoids, and documentary dramas), and the relativist excesses of postmodernism and multiculturalism make the representation of old-fashioned human rights information more difficult than ever.¹²

Similarly, Philip M. Taylor has argued that during the "Kosovo crisis" in 1999 the distribution of "messages from people whose homes had been bombed, or from monks at a Serbian monastery near the Albanian border," provides "further evidence of the breaking of the previous monopoly of the war correspondent to report from the front." The difficulty then becomes, as Cohen also notes, discerning the authenticity of the sources or senders and the accuracy and reliability of the messages. "Thanks to the Internet," Taylor concludes, "the fog of war in Kosovo merely got thicker."¹³

For Metzler, despite the widespread celebration of information technology by human rights activists, "technology . . . is a neutral tool which can be used just as much to violate human rights as to promote them. . . . If information technology can function as a tool of the oppressed, it can just as much serve the oppressor—'technologies of freedom' can just as easily become technologies of abuse."¹⁴ While Metzler's awareness of social and economic contexts in which technology is

embedded is laudable, as Cohen's remarks suggest, Metz's arguments for technological neutrality need to be qualified. Technologies are made with intents and biases that in turn lead to intended and unintended consequences. Furthermore, as Metz himself points out, the Internet lends itself to certain actions and functions while impeding others. It is certainly possible to argue that technologies and media do not determine their social uses without claiming that communication technologies are neutral, passive, and value-free.

Of course, accounts of Internet communication during the Bosnian War and the crisis in Kosovo need to be grounded within the context of the practical and theoretical issues of "access," to which I shall return at several points in this essay. "In an information age," writes Metz, "disparities in access to information and sources of knowledge can only exacerbate existing divisions between rich and poor societies, states, and individuals." Most obviously for my purposes, the victims of war or military aggression often do not have access to new or old media because the country's technological infrastructure is either undeveloped or has been destroyed. During the 1999 NATO bombing raids, for instance, a maximum of fifty thousand people had access to the Internet in Serbia, while only one thousand had access in Kosovo. Less than 2 percent of the Serbian population used the Internet frequently during the conflict, relying for their information instead on the traditional media of television and newspapers followed by word of mouth and radio.¹⁵

This is not to argue that the Internet did not matter before and during the events in Kosovo, far from it. In fact, Philip M. Taylor argues that the Kosovo Liberation Army and Serbian Information Ministry used the Web to target the elite influential opinion makers "who were in a position to influence much larger numbers of people, and the very type of people who would want to get the story behind the story, for which the internet is an invaluable tool."¹⁶ In other words, although the reports coming out of the region over the Internet may not have influenced public opinion in the war region, they were a significant part of the larger rhetorical battle for the hearts and minds of those outside the war zone who could influence or make policy decisions.

Bosnia on the Web

Powerful Internet search engines locate hundreds of thousands of Web pages concerned with war in the former Yugoslavia. Among these are the sites that accompany the news divisions of newspapers and TV networks, sites representing political organizations, and personal Web pages of individuals on the Internet. There are official U.S. military and other government sites; official sites for the governments of Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, and Yugoslavia; the complete Dayton Accord; sites with histories of the conflict, replete with maps; a "virtual tour" of Bosnia; bulletin boards, chat rooms, and newsgroups concerned with the various countries in-

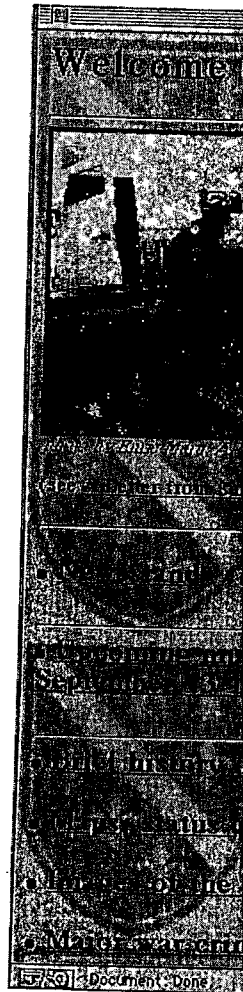


Fig. 11. Sniper victim picture of Technology

involved; and email directories of the conflict by countries involved in the war.

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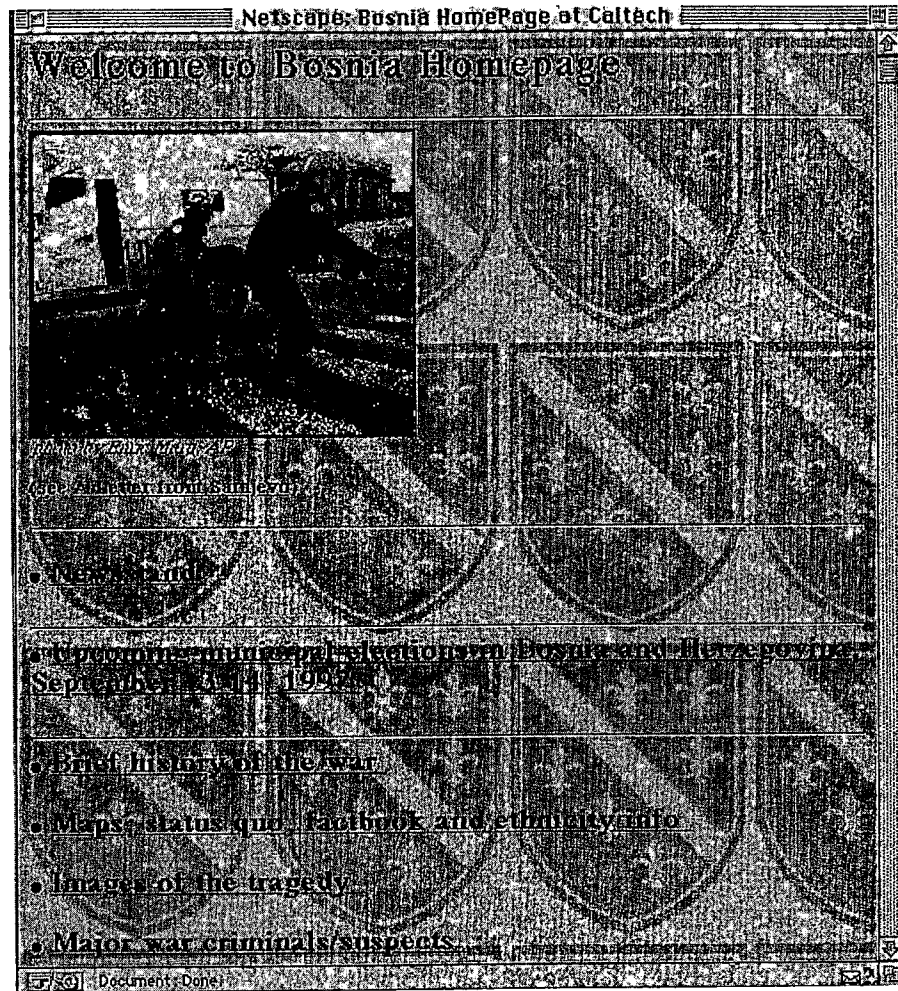


Fig. 11. Sniper victim pictured on award-winning Bosnia homepage at the California Institute of Technology

involved; and email discussion groups about the Balkans. There are hundreds of histories of the conflict by military experts, academics, and politicians from the countries involved in the war, as well as from other countries around the world.

One of the most visited Bosnia sites on the Web is the Caltech Bosnia Homepage launched in December 1994 (www.cco.caltech.edu/~bosnia/), which greets the user with a graphic photograph of UN peacekeepers standing over the body of a dead boy shot in the head by a Serb sniper (see fig. 11). The text from the *Time* magazine article that originally accompanied this photo is also included on the Web site: "He was sought out by a Serb sniper who waited, got him into his telescopic

sights, looked at his face and then pulled the trigger. Then the same sniper shot Nermin's mother in the stomach so she would not die immediately, but would watch her son die first." This site also links to resources about the war, including information about war criminals indicted by the International Tribunal and a petition to indict Serb president Slobodan Milosevic. An indicator of the awareness of the issues of "objectivity" in the reporting of the war is evident in the Lycos Web review of the Caltech Bosnia presentation, which received a "top 5% of the Web Award" with the caveat that "the page has a decided anti-Serb bias (but then, much of the rest of the world seems to as well)."

For the official view of U.S. operations in the Balkans, there is the military-sponsored and -maintained BosniaLINK Web site, which offers links to several official government and agency pages, including the Dayton Peace Accord, NATO-Web sites, and bulletin boards for sending messages to U.S. troops participating in Operation Joint Guard. On the opposite side of the ideological coin is the antiwar.com Web page, which in 1997 greeted visitors with a black background and bright red letters stating: "I'd like to ask President Clinton why my son is dead" (from a *Washington Post* interview quoting the father of the first U.S. soldier killed in Bosnia on February 3, 1996) (see fig. 12). On this site affiliated with the Libertarian Party, the arguments reiterate traditional isolationist and anti-imperialist views. In an article published in August 2000 on the antiwar.com Web site, Justin Raimondo went so far as to claim that "Bosnian [Muslim] cyberthugs" had maliciously hacked the Web site with the assistance of the U.S. government.¹⁷

Mainstream sites like the CNN and *Time* Web sites function primarily as tie-ins for their network television stations or print publications and often reiterate or supplement the stories from those other media. Titled "Mission Peace: The Balkan Tragedy" (cnn.com/WORLD/Bosnia/history) and "Keeping the Peace" (at pathfinder.com), respectively, these sites offer "time lines" and histories, links to feature stories, and searchable archives with reports, maps, and contact information for relief agencies. Like many other Web sites, they also contain links to Web bulletin boards for feedback and have chat rooms for real-time discussions of events in the old Yugoslavia. *Time's* Bosnia Web pages resemble a war game complete with maps, flags, and a bullet-holed "Bosnia" for its logo, while CNN displays the more melodramatic image of two sobbing women. The rhetoric of CNN's presentation is symptomatic of the larger U.S. media's coverage of the war. The explanation and exposition of the conflict is framed within the context of ethnic rivalries and the oft-repeated phrase "Balkan players," thus assigning theatrical coordinates to this Balkan tragedy in addition to the metaphorical scenario of a contest, game, or play.

In an unwitting gloss on Freud's infamous question, the main "Balkan Tragedy" page asks, "What do they [the ethnic groups] want?" pointing to the Orientalist essentialism that served to mystify the causes of and solutions to the conflict. CNN's main "Balkan Tragedy" page claims to speak for the user, suggesting: "We see the



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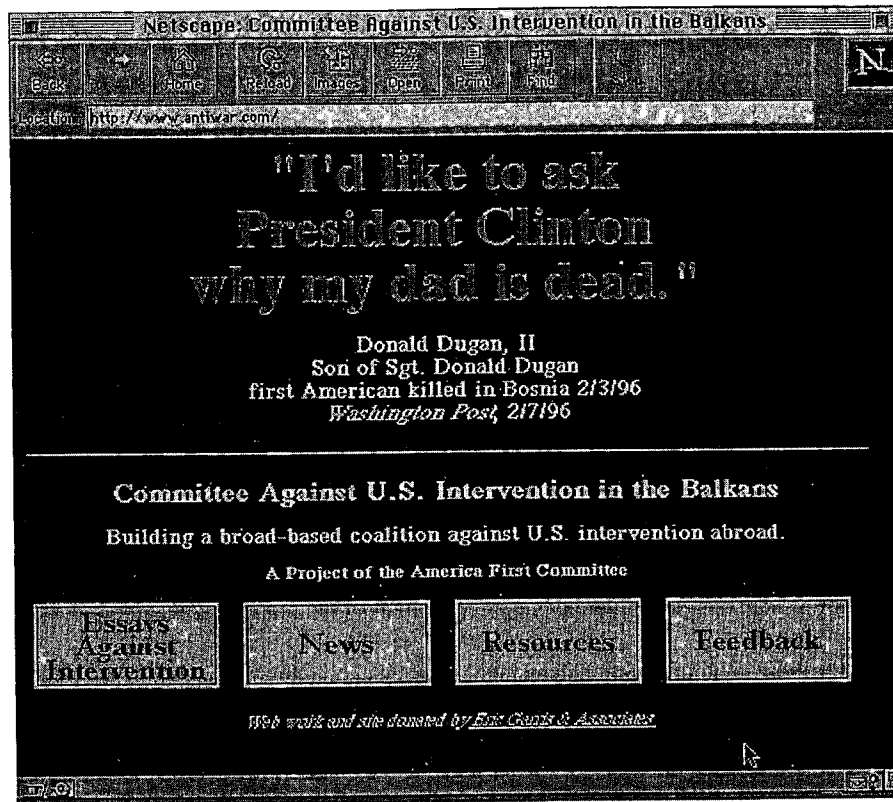


Fig. 12. Libertarian Party-sponsored antiwar.com Web site

images—refugees bearing children and suitcases, war-wearied elderly women, crying soldiers. But many of us don't understand exactly how the turmoil began." The Web site proceeds to offer its historical explanation with a "brief overview" of "rivalries between Serb, Croat and Muslim communities in Yugoslavia [that] date back centuries." Like many other journalistic and historical accounts, those of CNN and *Time* contribute to a feeling of hopelessness and historical inevitability concerning the war in the former Yugoslavia through a discourse of ethnic essentialism. Like many of the personal Web pages I will discuss here, these mainstream mass media outlets repeat many of the political mythologies coming out of the Balkan region.

In short, CNN's history of the conflict argues that the collapse of the Soviet Union facilitated an inexorable march toward inevitable ethnic genocide until the 1995 "conclusion" in Dayton. It thus contributes to a "common myth about the war in Bosnia . . . that it is another outbreak in an old conflict of peoples and faiths that history jumbled together in the Balkans—between Serbs and Croats; between

Catholics, Orthodox Christians and Muslims," as Noel Malcolm writes. For Malcolm, the myth is useful to both "Serb or Croat nationalists who hope to carve out new territory . . . [and] has helped soothe the conscience of the outside world: why step in, at least with fighting troops, to reconcile irreconcilables?"¹⁸ CNN's historical narrative is accompanied by a photo gallery that attempts to put a human face on the war through pictures of refugee children and women. As the user clicks through the four pages of twelve images, there are several captions that identify Muslim refugees and injured civilians victimized by Serbs, concluding with a photograph of "victorious" Croatian soldiers—who, we are told in another section of the Web presentation, are allied with Bosnian Muslims against the Serbs—and a link to contacts for relief organizations.

In addition to mirroring its print coverage of events in Bosnia, the *New York Times* Web site also exhibited photographer Gilles Peress's "Bosnia: Uncertain Paths to Peace." The exhibition lets the user follow a hypertext link from the front screen either toward "the suburbs" or into Sarajevo. It contains several essays by the photographer, audio files of his commentary, and links to contextual information and forums with journalists, academics, and other writers at the bottom of each page. Another of Peress's online exhibits, this one at the Picture Projects Web site, "Farewell to Bosnia," includes areas for downloading video testimonies of reactions recorded in cities where the exhibit appeared in traditional form (see fig. 13).

Another online photojournalism exhibit is "Witness: Roads to Refuge," which tells the stories of seven people's experience of the war. The site includes Quick-Time VR files in the center frame that allow the Internet user to navigate with the mouse through bombed-out rooms and streets, thus exploiting interactivity and 3D modeling technologies to increase the affective power of the documentary form.

A photo exhibition at the Photo Perspectives Web site (titled "Faces of Sorrow: The Agony in the Former Yugoslavia") is organized into the following categories: "Combatants," "Siege of Sarajevo," "Prisoners," "Introduction," "Refugees," "Faces of Rape," and "Ethnic Cleansing." The "Faces of Rape" section has images of seven women that link to a larger photo and elaborate the individual testimonies of the victims. The accompanying text notes that "rape has been perpetrated by all sides . . . [b]ut the vast majority of rapes have been committed with impunity by Bosnian Serb forces against Muslim and Croat women in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (see fig. 14).

According to Stiglmeier's *Mass Rape: The War Against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina* and Beverly Allen's *Rape Warfare*, the tens of thousands of rapes were a crucial part of the Serb policy of ethnic cleansing.¹⁹ Indeed, Catherine MacKinnon has documented in "Turning Rape into Pornography: Postmodern Genocide" that "actual rapes of Muslim and Croatian women by Serbian soldiers, filmed as they happened, [were] shown on the evening news in Banja Luka, a Serbian-occupied city in western Bosnia-Herzegovina."²⁰

The "Faces of Rape" exhibition—which is no longer to my knowledge on the



Fig. 13. "Farewell to Web site

Web—was a brief e women, offering a c stream sites like the sites concerned with claims of genocidal Congress Site and M see fig. 15). Indeed, ent re-presentation opposition to the U. U.S.-led air raids, fo

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Joel Malcolm writes. For Mal-
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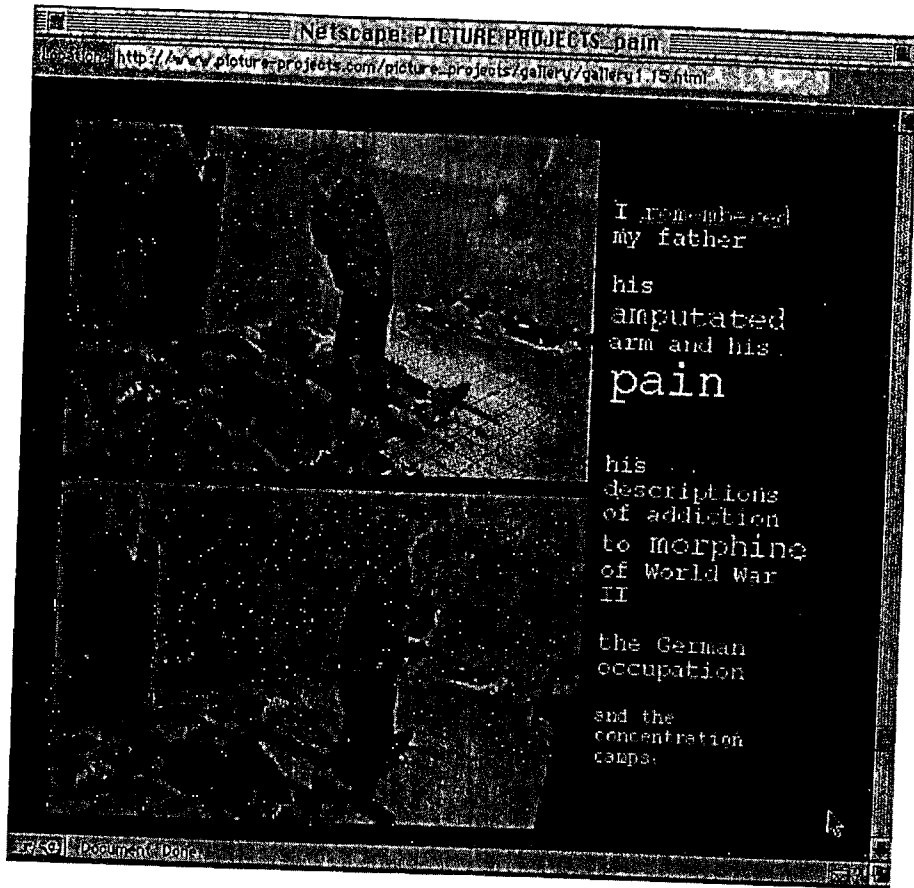


Fig. 13. "Farewell to Bosnia," an online exhibit by Gilles Peress on the Picture Projects Web site

Web—was a brief attempt to document on the Internet these atrocities against women, offering a different contextualization of the Bosnian War than do mainstream sites like the CNN and *Time* presentations on Bosnia. More recently, Web sites concerned with human rights abuses against women in Bosnia argue that the claims of genocidal rape were exaggerated or fabricated (e.g., the Serbian Unity Congress Site and Michael Parenti's Web site, as well as several academic papers; see fig. 15). Indeed, in the late 1990s and in 2000, there was an increasingly different re-presentation of the events in the former Yugoslavia, fueled in large part by opposition to the U.S.-led NATO bombings in Kosovo in 1999. Writing after the U.S.-led air raids, for instance, Michael Parenti claimed:

For the better part of a decade the U.S. public has been bombarded with a media campaign to demonize the Serbian people and their elected

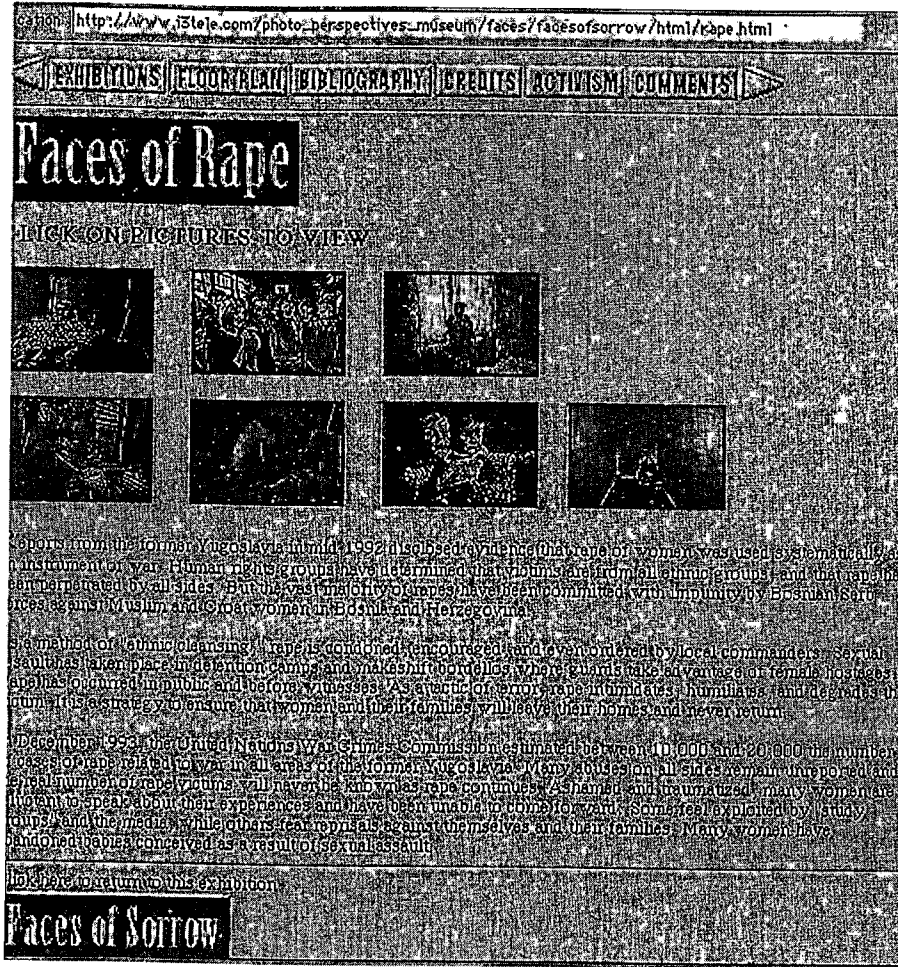


Fig. 14. "Faces of Rape," from Photo Perspectives Web site series "Faces of Sorrow," with links to rape victims' testimonies

leaders. . . . Of the various Yugoslav peoples, the Serbs were targeted for demonization because they were the largest nationality and the one most opposed to the breakup of Yugoslavia. But what of the atrocities they committed? All sides committed atrocities in the fighting that has been encouraged by the western powers over the last decade, but the reporting has been consistently one-sided.²¹

Elsewhere on his Web site, Parenti criticizes Noam Chomsky and Alexander Cockburn for describing Milosevic as "monstrous" without offering any specifics. Parenti argues that stories of mass rape and a systematic rape policy as part of the project of "ethnic cleansing" are false, and that "common sense would dictate that



Fig. 15.

these stories be treated for an aggressive article, "The Media and—and—as with Parenti and validity in his claims raises complex ethical subjectivity and professional consequences and implications

The most rhetorically War and Serbs remain Nazi concentration c

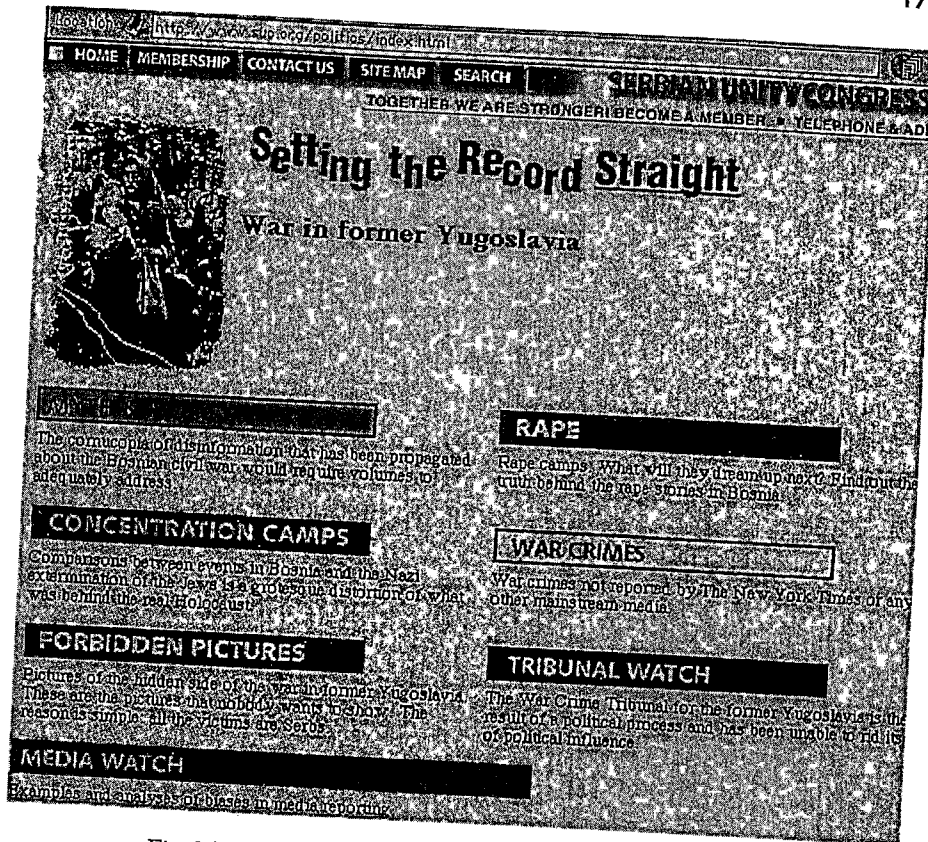
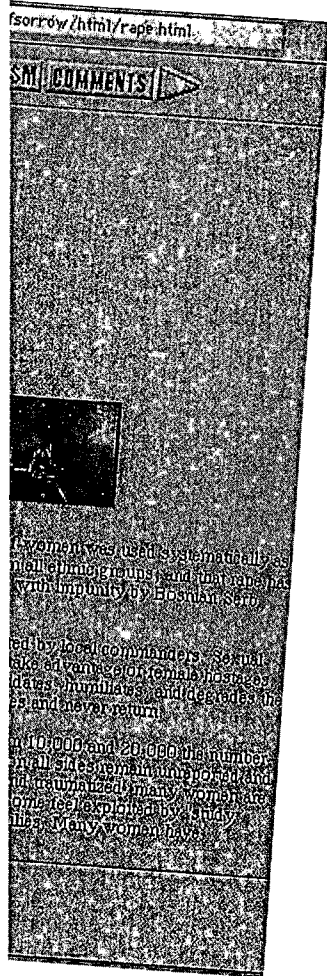


Fig. 15. Professional-looking Serbian Unity Congress Web site

these stories be treated with the utmost skepticism—and not be used as an excuse for an aggressive and punitive policy against Yugoslavia.” The title of Parenti’s article, “The Media and Their Atrocities,” points to the primary target of his critique, and—as with Parenti’s earlier criticisms of the U.S. media—there is much value and validity in his claims.²² At the same time, however, Parenti’s radical position raises complex ethical questions not only in relation to the issues of journalistic objectivity and professional conventions, but also concerning the ethical consequences and implications of his own media critique.²³

Virtual Nationalisms

The most rhetorically and politically powerful images of the realities of the Bosnian War and Serbs remain those explicitly associated by the media with World War II Nazi concentration camps. One of those images taken by an ITN reporter and BBC

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television news crew is featured on the cover of the British Film Institute's anthology titled *Bosnia by Television* (see fig. 16). According to the editors:

It was the images they provided of brave and intrepid reporters interviewing camp detainees and confronting those who imprisoned them, as well as the horror which flashed around the world as one emaciated Bosnian Muslim by the camp fence recalled images of events fifty years before. More than anything else, it may be that the personal report to the camera, from the right face, is what has impact.²⁴

The veracity of this image of men behind barbed wire had been contested by Serb officials shortly after its original broadcast, and one contributor to *Bosnia by Television* wrongly suggests (following a report in the *Washington Post*) that the emaciated man was not even a Bosnian Muslim but a Serb. In late July 1997, the Serbian Network's Web site continued to discredit the original report through an elaborate Web presentation. Labeled "HOT!!!" the presentation is an abridged version of an article from the print journal *Living Marxism*, which reports: "The fact is that Fikret Alic and his fellow Bosnian Muslims were not imprisoned behind a

barbed wire. It was not for refuge they wished, it is around the Bosnian Network showing atrocities, amor Bosnian Serb disturbing in concentration

The image to construct as an icon of the Web, the Int

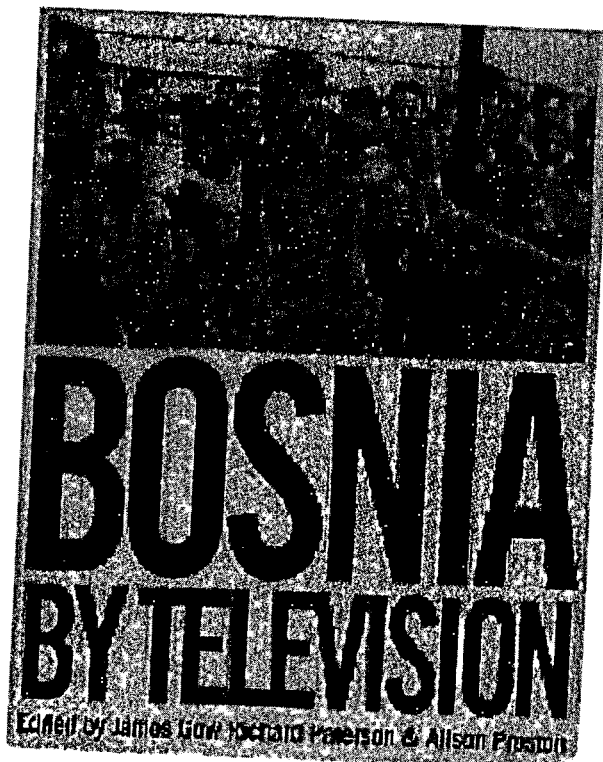


Fig. 16. Contested image shown on *Bosnia by Television* book jacket

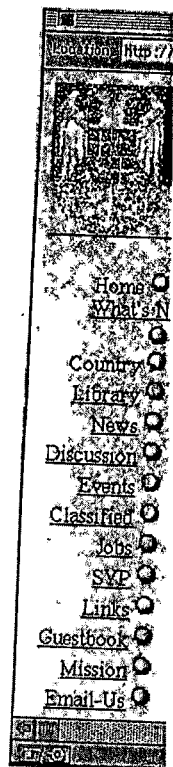


Fig. 17. Photos from the network's home page

British Film Institute's anthology to the editors:

Intrepid reporters interviewed and imprisoned them, as one emaciated Bosnian survivor fifty years before. I report to the camera,

which had been contested by a contributor to *Bosnia by Television* (*Washington Post*) that the image. In late July 1997, the original report through an abridged version is an abridged version which reports: "The fact that he was not imprisoned behind a

barbed wire fence. There was no barbed wire fence surrounding Trnopolje camp. It was not a prison, and certainly not a 'concentration camp', but a collection center for refugees, many of whom went there seeking safety and could leave again if they wished. The barbed wire in the picture is not around the Bosnian Muslims; it is around the cameraman and the journalists." To complement the article, the Serbian Network site has a photo exhibition (titled "A Selective Silence") documenting atrocities committed by Bosnian Muslims and Croats against Serbs. The photos show, among other things, a Muslim soldier with his foot on the severed head of a Bosnian Serb and then trace that image back through other similarly graphic and disturbing images, culminating with photographs of Serbian women being taken to concentration camps by Croatian fascists (see fig. 17).

The image of the emaciated man thus serves as a symbol of the media's ability to construct the truth of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina (*Bosnia by Television*) and as an icon of anti-Serb propaganda for the Serbian Network. Most recently on the Web, the Internet Freedom site has also featured a section on "The Bosnia Picture



Fig. 17. Photos from "A Selective Silence," Serbian Network series of enemy atrocities, on the network's homepage

book jacket

Controversy," claiming to "Blow . . . the Lid [off] the Media Scandal of the Decade." According to the front page, "Every two months [the site] feature[s] a controversial issue that would not get into the public sphere if it were not for the Internet." The presentation includes detailed maps, the entire video of the original broadcast, and interviews with people from the original video, including a camp guard. The site deconstructs the mise-en-scène of the original report by separating each shot into a downloadable unit for closer analysis.

Acknowledging the "obvious potential" of visual over written communication, Stanley Cohen reminds us that "there is the 'Rodney King effect,'" through which the "'obvious' meaning [becomes] denied [when placed] into an ideological framework where it [becomes] justified."²⁵ As with the videotape of the beating of Rodney King, then, the debates over the meaning of the *Bosnia by Television* image and video are comprised of an obsessive recontextualization and a perpetual analysis that is being endlessly revised through repetition, reviewing, and reduplication. Ironically, for all of the talk about the death of photography as evidence in the digital age, arguments about images in Bosnia seem to take for granted the authenticity of this digital image, invoking it as absolute proof for their opposing claims.

Writing of the kinds of ideological frameworks to which Cohen refers, Noel Malcolm notes that "Croatian propaganda has described all Serbian nationalists as 'Cetniks' and has tried to present the leader of the Cetniks in the second world war, Draza Mihailovic, as a genocidal monster. Serb propaganda has described all Croatian nationalists as 'Ustasa,' and has raked up the story of the Muslim SS division in the second world war as a way of suggesting that the Bosnian Muslims are either Nazis or fundamentalists, or both."²⁶

Writing several years before Kosovo made headlines in U.S. newspapers, Renata Salecl provided a similar context for interpretation in *The Spoils of Freedom: Psychoanalysis and Feminism after the Fall of Socialism*:

Serbian authoritarian populism . . . has produced an entire mythology about the struggle against internal and external enemies. The primary enemies are Albanians, who are perceived as threatening to cut off the Serbian autonomous province of Kosovo and thereby stealing Serbian land and culture. The secondary enemy is an alienated bureaucracy which threatens the power of the people: alienated from the nation, it is said to be devouring the Serbian national identity from within. And the third enemy has become the Croats, who with their politics of "genocide" are outlawing the Serbian population from "historically" Serbian territories in Croatia. Nowadays the enemies are primarily Muslims who are pictured as Islamic fundamentalists threatening the Serbs living in Bosnia and Herzegovina.²⁷

Perhaps the most vocal collective presence on the Web is comprised of pages constructed by individuals and groups supporting Serbs and Serbia, many of which perpetuate the kinds of arguments outlined by Malcolm and Salecl. These pages and sites are constructed by self-identified male Serbs who contend that Serbia has

been unilateral media. For many other mainstream is seen as the or nationalist ideol some of them v Canada, Austral defiantly aggress

One blatant which proudly ei U.S. media.²⁸ Th snarling, muscul: tional three-finge long before Koso IS SERBIA," offeri of maps from U.S history of Serbia i The history lessor

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The front page : disapproval from U.S glish and Serbian to puter mouse across : One can repeat this g sive attitude of this si the actual Bad Serb C

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Web is comprised of pages and Serbia, many of which a and Salecl. These pages o contend that Serbia has

been unilaterally victimized by Bosnian Muslims, Croats, NATO, and the Western media. For many Serbs who feel that their views have been censored by CNN and other mainstream media, Web "space" takes on particular importance because it is seen as the one forum or medium through which their historical arguments and nationalist ideologies can be expressed to the entire world. Many of these pages—some of them written by natives of Serbia, Serb-Americans, or exiled Serbs in Canada, Australia, the United States, and other countries—are notable for their defiantly aggressive rhetoric and refusal to take any responsibility for Serb violence.

One blatant example of this hostile rhetoric is the online "Bad Serb Club," which proudly embraces the media construction of Serbs by the supposedly unfair U.S. media.²⁸ The introductory page to the site has an animated illustration of a snarling, muscular, young "bad Serb," who raises his fingers defiantly in a traditional three-finger Serbian salute.²⁹ The Bad Serb Club Web pages also announced long before Kosovo had entered the mainstream U.S. news reports that "KOSOVO IS SERBIA," offering a "quick [thousand-year] history lesson." With scanned images of maps from U.S. atlases to support this thesis, the Kosovo page argues that the history of Serbia is one of self-defense against constant victimization by outsiders. The history lesson concludes as follows:

World leaders know the truth about Kosovo, and judging by their stance against terrorism, should side with Serbia, but we all know that will not happen. Serbia and its leaders, will once again be demonized. BUT, this time, I don't think that Serbs will back down and give in as they did in Krajina, Western Slavonia, Eastern Slavonia, Sarajevo, Gorazde. For KOSOVO IS HEART OF SERBIA and shall remain so for the next thousand years.³⁰

The Bad Serb Club also links to email addresses of hundreds of members worldwide and reaches out to others on its recruitment page:

Are you questioning anything or everything coming out of CNN or other US propaganda machinery, where news is reported only when and if it follows their agenda? Then, this club is for you. Why not become international pariah with us. They have branded us SERBS as pariahs (not to mention some nastier names), for not bowing to their view of the world. Thus lies and other kind of intimidation has occurred. You don't have to be a Serb to join us, just a person who wants the truth to be told, not only about Ex-Yugoslavia, but the world in general.

The front page of the Bad Serb site, which proudly flaunts a fake stamp of disapproval from U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright, invites the user in English and Serbian to "HAVE FUN with [Albright's] picture" by dragging the computer mouse across the image, virtually distorting her face (see figs. 18 and 19). One can repeat this graphic mutilation by clicking "Undo" or "Reset." The aggressive attitude of this site is apparent right from the beginning. To "enter" or access the actual Bad Serb Club Web pages, you must first respond in the affirmative to a



Fig. 18. Images of Madeleine Albright from the Bad Serb Club Web site front page

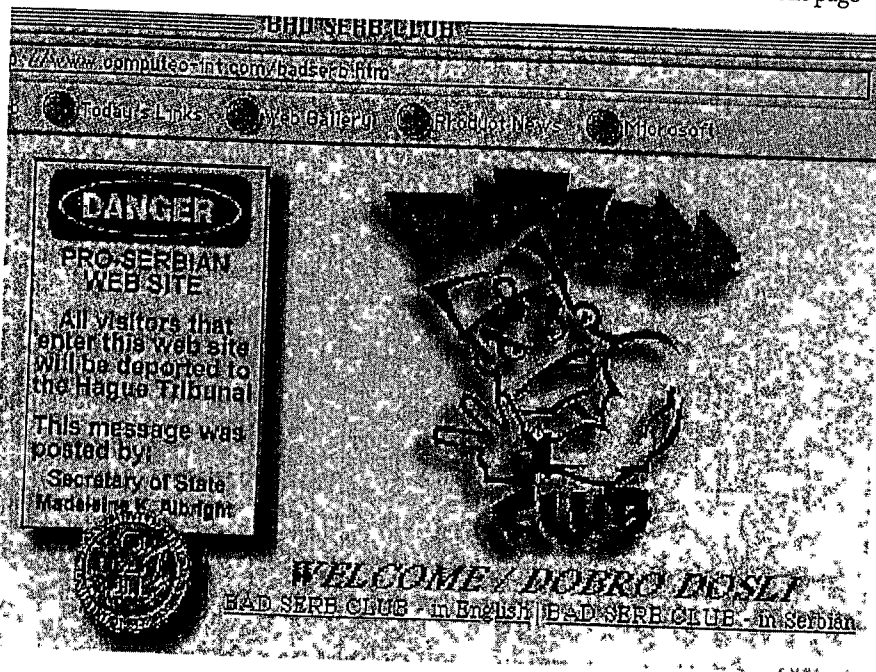


Fig. 19. Bad Serb Club Web site welcome page with Madeleine Albright seal

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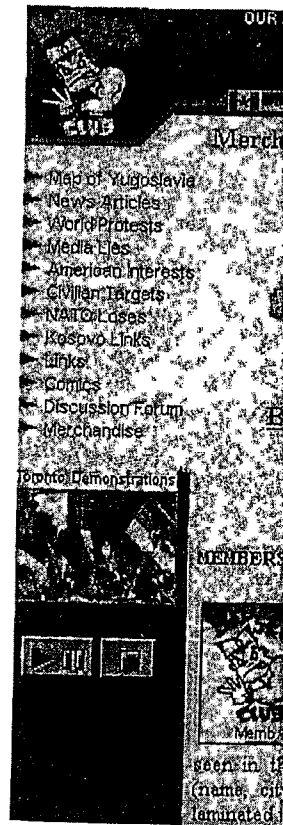
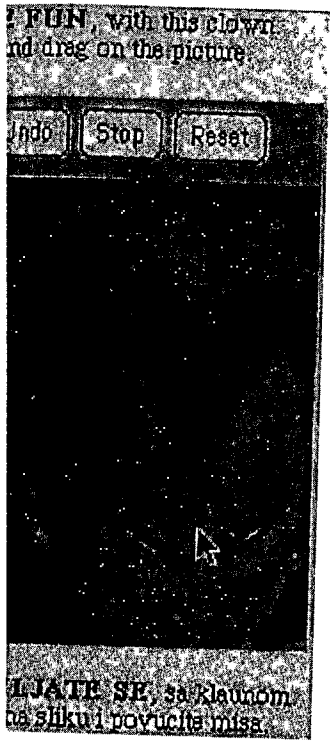


Fig. 20.



b Club Web site front page



adeleine Albright seal

dialog box that pops up saying "I like Serbs. Chose [sic] OK or Cancel." If you choose "OK," you are taken to the main Bad Serb Web page, which has an outer-space design with links to photographs, merchandise, Web pages, and email addresses of "Bad Serbs" around the world (see fig. 20).

The Bad Serb Club Web site reminds us that progressive politics do not inhere in interactivity, which is often invoked by Internet enthusiasts, artists, and cultural studies scholars in the way that the terms "resistance," "subversion," or "negotiation" are often employed by television and cultural studies scholars. It would, perhaps, be more accurate to present the relationship between the Internet end user and the World Wide Web as one of a general *interpassivity*, or as one in which the user actively embraces capitalist, classist, sexist, racist, nationalist, and other regressive ideologies.³¹

For instance, one personal Web page criticizing Bosnian president Alija Izetbegovic not only links to an analysis of his writings but also contains articles about

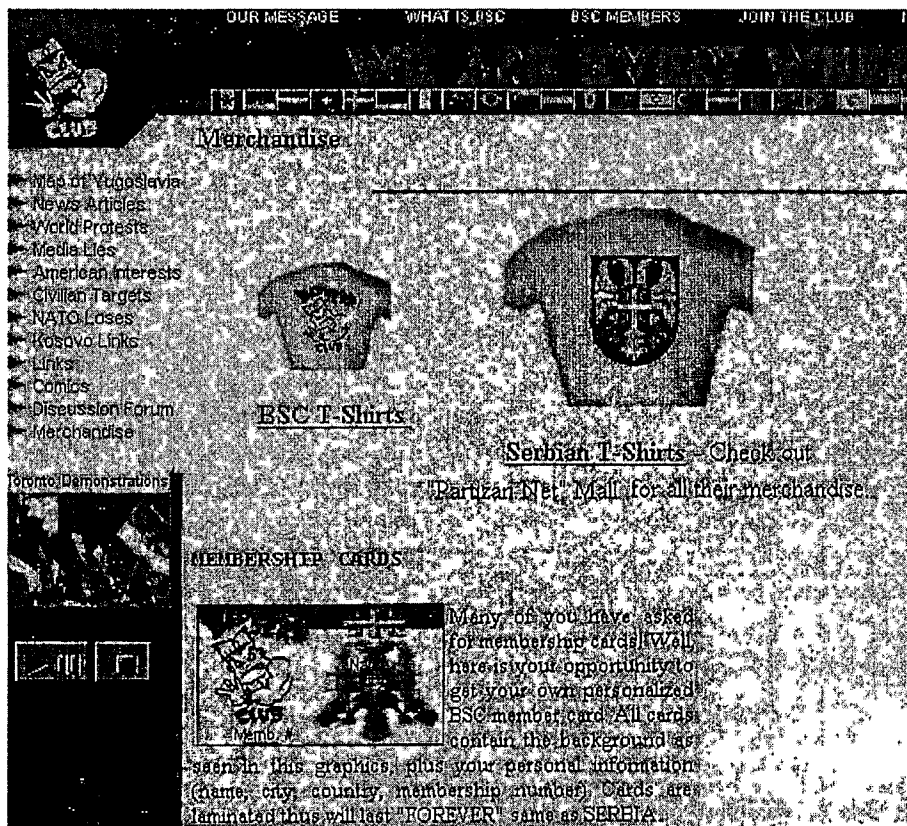


Fig. 20. Bad Serb Club Web site merchandise page

the evils of Islam more generally, documenting terrorist attacks against the West by Islamic fundamentalists. The connection between Izetbegovic and Iran is especially foregrounded in an attempt to exploit fears caused by ignorance and stereotypes about Islamic culture in the United States. One hagiographic Web page devoted to celebrating Drazha Mihailovich and the Chetniks of Ravna Gora quotes praise from Presidents Truman, Nixon, and Reagan and links to testimonies and Web pages constructed by U.S. airmen who were saved by Chetniks during the war. There are several other Chetnik Web sites that are more aggressive and defiant in their rhetoric, most likely constructed by younger Serbs, including the Chetnik Mafia, Chetniks of Australia, and Chetnik Arizona (see fig. 21).³² The past president of the Serbian Unity Congress also proudly announces on the Serbian Unity Congress Web site that he at the "age of 16 joined Gen. Mihailovich forces," and *Serbianchetniks.com* is a historical tribute that, like the SUC Web site, does not link to the extremist and explicitly violent pro-Serb sites.³³


Another individual page attempted to counter the petition for Milosevic's arrest at the Caltech Web page by demanding (with burning flames and a picture of Izetbegovic) "Justice for Serbs! Arrest Alija Izetbegovich & Franj Tudjman." A Web presentation titled "The Eradication of Serbs" contains images of Muslim and Croat atrocities committed against Serbs (see fig. 22). The captions for two of these images explain: "The heads of Blagoje Blagojevic, Brana Djuric and Nenad Petkovic, being kicked by a Muslim Fundamentalist soldier," and "[this] magazine published documents based on the ideas Alija Izetbegovic (Bosnia's Muslim president) presented in his ISLAMIC DECLARATION-DECLARATION OF THE SOVEREIGN REPUBLIC OF BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA, POLITICAL PLATFORM OF THE MOSLEM NATIONAL COUNCIL, WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO SERBS IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA." This rhetoric is typical of that on many Serb Web sites that construct Izetbegovich as an Islamic fundamentalist in part to appeal to the prejudices and fears informed by perceptions of Islam in the West.³⁴

Recently, self-proclaimed "Chetnik" and "Utasha" Web pages have also begun to appear on the Web, complete with online discussion boards and guest books. The fluid identity or relative anonymity afforded by the Internet's elision of the usual markers of national identity such as race, dress, and geographical location gives rise to a constant battle between Croats and Serbs to cleanse their respective virtual spaces of enemy ethnicities. The following exchange from one Croatia Message Board is instructive in this regard:

MIRJANA & HER CETNIK FRIEND Posted by
 VRAZIJA on August 16, 2000, 5:17 am
 MARIO HAS YET TO REPLY, AFTER I UNCOVERED HIM AS THE SERBIAN SHUBERT . . . AND
 MIRJANA AKA HRVATICA (SERBIAN IMPOSTER) IF YOU DESLIKE THE USTASHA AND
 ALSO THE CETNIKS WHY DO YOU NOT ATTACK THEM AFTER THERE POSTS ON THIS
 WEBSITE??? HMMMM . . . I'LL LEAVE IT AT THAT. DO NOT WRITE IN THIS GUESTBOOK

FORWARD

COMING SOON
 CETNIK SHOP
 YOU WILL BE
 INFORMED OF
 MORE
 CHANGES



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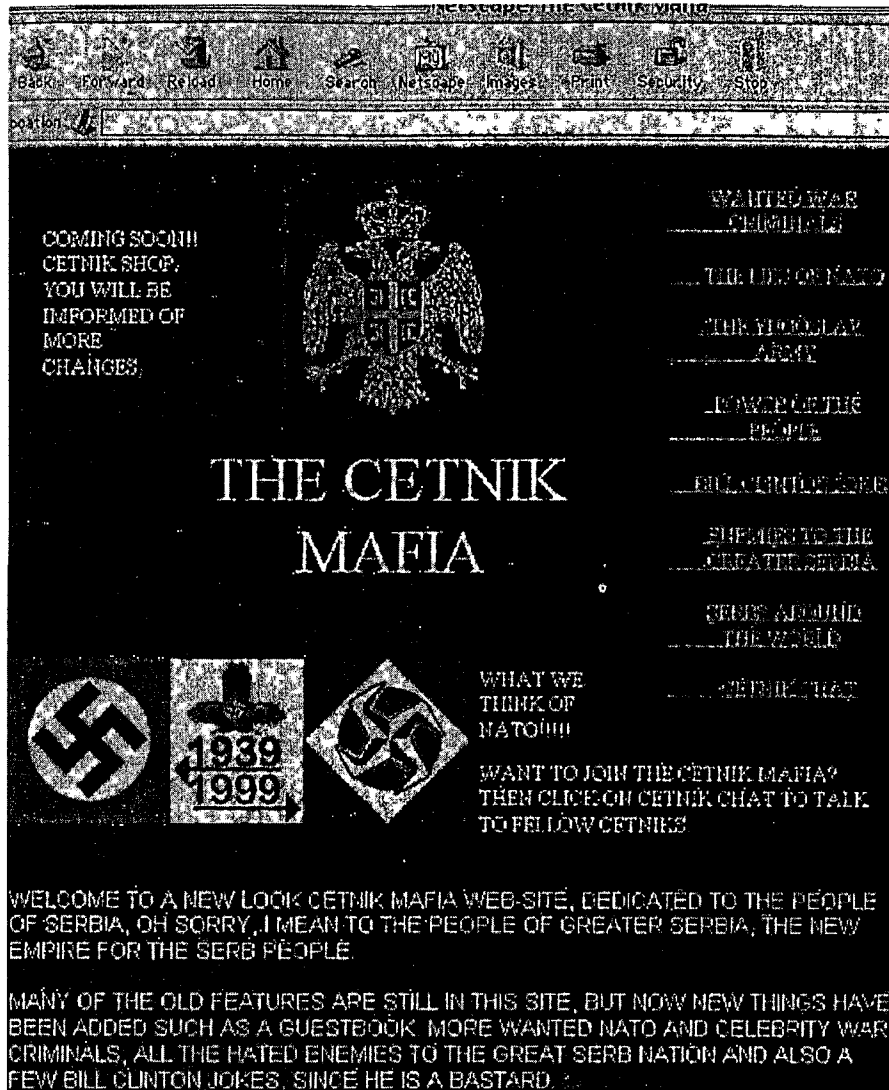


Fig. 21. Pro-Serbia Chetnik Mafia homepage

OTHERWISE YOU SHALL BE FURTHER HUMILIATED. JUST LIKE MARIO, HA HA HA HA. . . YOU SERBS ARE SO LOW!!!

Posted by mirjana on August 16, 2000, 5:41 am, in reply to "MIRJANA & HER CETNIK FRIENDS"

Hey you, I am not a Serb, both my parents are Croats and I have a domovnica and Croatian passport and a Croatian husband and two Croatian kids to

RBIAN SHUBERT . . . AND
LIKE THE USTASHA AND
THERE POSTS ON THIS
ITE IN THIS GUESTBOOK

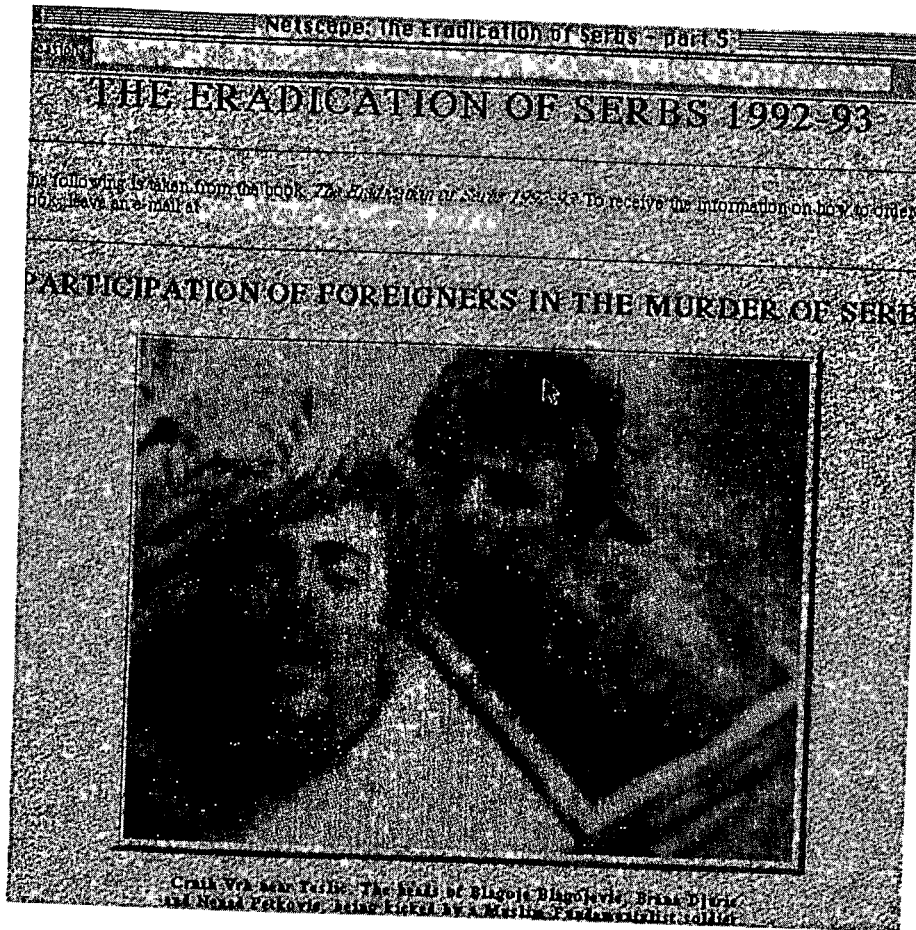


Fig. 22. Personal Web page devoted to exposing "attempts by foreigners to eradicate Serbs"

prove it. According to your "logic" 99% of the Croatian population must be Serbs also, because anyone who dislikes the Ustasha MUST BE SERBS. Get a life, although I doubt it.

Posted by VRAZIJA on August 16, 2000, 8:33 am, in reply to "Re: MIRJANA & HER CETNIK FRIENDS"

ANSWER THE QUESTION YOU SERBIAN PROSTITUTE, IF THE USTASHA ARE VILE AND REPUGNANT? AND WE ONLY STAY ON "OUR" OWN SITES AND DON'T BOTHER OTHERS WHAT DOES THAT MAKE THE CETNIKS THAT VISIT THIS SITE, YOU MOTHERF##KING SERBIAN WHORE, ANSWER THE F##KING QUESTION. WHY DO YOU NOT ATTACK THE CETNIKS AS YOU DO THE USTASHA???

The "Chetnik mafia" and other Web pages proclaiming "Chetnik pride" are rhetorically similar to "White pride" Web sites and those of other hate groups on

the Internet, an hostile exchange pages directed at soc.culture.yugo and chat rooms tranationalism irities to extend be

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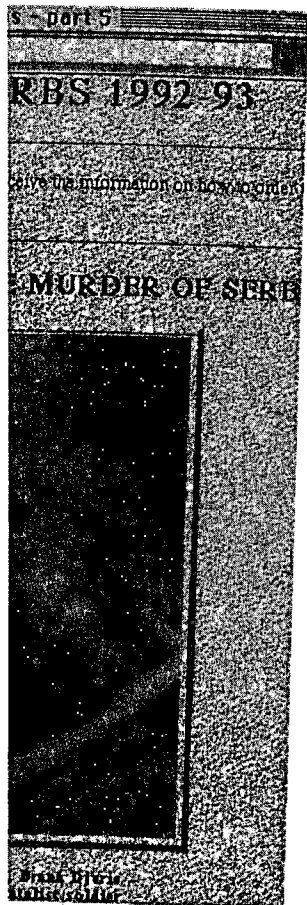
the Internet, and the guest books for many of these sites are commonly filled with hostile exchanges, including threats of physical violence and murder. Similar messages directed at various ethnic groups routinely appear on the Usenet newsgroups soc.culture.yugoslavia and various other soc.culture lists, as well as message boards and chat rooms on major news-related Web sites. These rhetorical displays of ultranationalism in the name of Greater Serbia or Greater Croatia thus allow hostilities to extend beyond the Balkans into the virtual geography of the Internet.

While the Bad Serb Club presents the user with a technically competent site that often lacks well-reasoned argumentation, other more professional-looking sites (i.e., pages with high production values and larger budgets), such as the well-funded and politically active Serbian Unity Congress Web site, present their case using the established conventions of academic and journalistic argumentation. Sponsored by Serbian CEOs, doctors, and other professionals from around the world, the SUC site includes a section titled "Setting the Record *Straight*," which intends to debunk what it presents as the mythologies of rape, war crimes, and concentration camps in Bosnia-Herzegovina (see fig. 15). In addition, the site has added an extensive Web presentation with hundreds of photographs documenting the killing of Serb and Albanian civilians during the NATO strikes on Kosovo.

The question of a Web site's production values, aesthetics, or form and style in relation to its content is important in this context. Unlike television and film, for relatively little cost a Web site can copy the design of a major site. It is no coincidence, for instance, that during the NATO raids on Kosovo, the Serbia Information Ministry's site (www.serbia-info.com) became "curiously similar" in its design to the official NATO Web site (www.nato.int) to facilitate the methodical "attempt[s] to undermine everything NATO claimed with their own counter-claims, debates and even disinformation."³⁶

The evidence presented here suggests that political mythologies are thriving on the World Wide Web and that the narrow historical interpretations that informed the Bosnian War in the 1990s continue to underpin much of the Internet discourse concerned with Bosnia and Kosovo. Indeed, for all the theoretical claims about the blurring of identities and borders afforded by the Internet, many of the Web pages, Usenet groups, and online chat boards consistently reinforce, define, and police ethnic, national, and ideological boundaries. In the end, these "pro-Serbian" sites may largely be preaching to the converted, since many of them link to each other and form a largely insular community. Yet these Web sites can be accessed by anyone with an Internet connection, and many of these sites are exploiting the technology of the Internet to recruit others to join their disgruntled clubs and groups.

Taken together, the thousands of Web pages that comprise these sites provide powerful evidence that many Internet communities are not as progressive as many media and cyberculture theorists have claimed. I am not arguing that we should condemn the Internet or the World Wide Web as inherently regressive,



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xenophobic, and nationalist communication technologies, but I am proposing that, in the case of the former Yugoslavia, the evidence suggests that there is less room for optimism than even the more balanced views of new technologies tend to suggest. The examples discussed in this essay demonstrate at the very least that scholars and activists need to consider how the Internet makes possible—and how it precludes—spaces and opportunities for rights claims from a variety of often conflicting perspectives.³⁷

Notes

1. Jamie F. Metzl, "Information Technology and Human Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly* 18, 4 (1996): 705.
2. Of course, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) rely on the media both to disseminate and to collect information about human rights. For an excellent discussion of NGOs and the media, see Stanley Cohen's "Denial and Acknowledgement: The Impact of Information on Human Rights," published on the Web at <http://humrts.huji.ac.il/denial.htm> by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Minerva Center for Human Rights. For a debate specifically addressing the relationship between information technology and human rights organizations, see the exchange between Metzl and Ball, Girouard, and Chapman in *Human Rights Quarterly* 19, 4 (1997).
3. Armand Mattelart, *Mapping World Communication: War, Progress, Culture*, trans. Susan Emanuel and James Cohen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), xiii.
4. See Gene I. Rochlin, *Trapped in the Net: The Unanticipated Consequences of Computerization* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 40–50.
5. Robin Hamman, "History of the Internet, WWW, IRC, and MUDs," <http://www.socio.demon.co.uk/history.html>. Accessed September 16, 2000.
6. From the +peace IRC logs at <http://sunsite.unc.edu/pub/academic/communications/logs/Gulf-War/Tel-Aviv-tidbits>. Accessed September 15, 2000.
7. Paul Watson, "Milosevic Takes Stations: Control Seized of Opposition TV, Radio Outlets," *Chicago Sun-Times*, May 18, 2000. See also <http://www.freeb92.net/>. Accessed November 15, 2000.
8. Andy Riga, "Bosnian Expatriates Follow War-Crimes Trials on the Web," *Montreal Gazette*, July 2, 1998.
9. David S. Bennahum, "The Internet Revolution," *Wired*, April 1997, 122.
10. Metzl, "Information Technology," 706.
11. Some of these organizations include: WAR Child, the Open Society Fund, the Soros Foundation, Bosnian Student Project, ICRC/Red Cross Web Site, the Institute for War and Peace Reporting Online, SAGE (Students Against Genocide), Women for Women in Bosnia, the Balkan Institute Home Page, Job 22, and Friends of Bosnia.
12. Stanley Cohen, "Government Responses to Human Rights Reports: Claims, Denials, and Counterclaims," *Human Rights Quarterly* 18, 3 (1996): 541.
13. Philip M. Talet, ed. *Web* (2000), 200.
14. Metzl, "Info."
15. See Taylor, "
16. Ibid.
17. According to
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20. Catherine Ma
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21. Michael Paren
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24. James Gow, Ric
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25. Cohen, "Gover.

13. Philip M. Taylor, "The World Wide Web Goes to War: Kosovo 1999," in David Gauntlett, ed. *Web Studies: Rewiring Media Studies for the Digital Age* (New York: Arnold, 2000), 200.
14. Metz, "Information Technology," 714.
15. See Taylor, "World Wide Web," 195.
16. Ibid.
17. According to Raimondo:

One indication that this was not a random attack is that another antiwar website, *emperors-clothes.com*, was also targeted [sic]: the editor of that site, Jared Israel, has been very visible in the effort to expose NATO's lies and the victimology of the Bosnian Muslims, especially over the issue of Srebrenica. Shock of the attack has yet to wear off—along with disgust at the knowledge that our tax dollars, and yours, no doubt funded this act of cyber-thuggery. . . . And so we come to the ultimate irony of life in Imperial America. A government whose only legitimate function is to protect us from foreign invasion is now subsidizing aggression against its own citizens. The same government that is spending billions in the fight against "cyberterrorism" and issuing a stream of legislation and proclamations designed to "protect" us from what is alarmingly described as "an electronic Pearl Harbor," is, on the other hand, enabling (if not directly overseeing) a sneak attack on antiwar websites.

See Justin Raimondo, "Behind the Headlines," August 4, 2000. <http://www.antiwar.com/justin/j080400.html>. Accessed October 8, 2000.
18. Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), xxiii.
19. Alexandra Stiglmayer, ed., *Mass Rape: The War against Women in Bosnia Herzegovina* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); Beverly Allen, *Rape Warfare: The Hidden Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
20. Catherine MacKinnon, "Turning Rape into Pornography: Postmodern Genocide," in Stiglmayer, *Mass Rape*, 76.
21. Michael Parenti, "The Media and Their Atrocities," <http://www.michaelparenti.org/MediaAtrocities.html>. Accessed September 20, 2000.
22. As did Susan Sontag in her arguments in support of U.S. intervention in Bosnia and Kosovo, Parenti offers anecdotal evidence from his trip to Belgrade, although in support of very different claims. See Michael Parenti, "Yugoslav Sojourn: Notes from the Other Side." <http://www.michaelparenti.org/YugoslavSojourn.html>, accessed September 20, 2000.
23. For a critique of Sontag's position on the Bosnian War, see Bruce Robbins, *Feeling Global* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 11–18. Sontag's more recent *New York Times* piece in support of the bombings of Kosovo adopts a similar rhetorical approach.
24. James Gow, Richard Paterson, and Alison Preston, introduction to *Bosnia by Television* (London: British Film Institute, 1996), 4.
25. Cohen, "Government Responses," 541–542.

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26. Malcolm, *Bosnia*, xxiii.
27. Renata Salecl, *The Spoils of Freedom: Psychoanalysis and Feminism after the Fall of Socialism* (London: Routledge, 1994), 22.
28. <http://www.computec-int.com/badserb.htm>. Accessed October 8, 2000.
29. Beverly Allen explains the significance of the traditional Serbian salute as follows:
 Amputations are a common form of torture practiced by Serb and Bosnian Serb military, Chetniks, and other irregular Serb forces. The most common form of amputation is to cut off the ring finger and the little finger of the victim's right hand, thus leaving that hand in an enduring Serb salute (the Orthodox manner of signing the cross is to use three fingers). . . . [I]f you look carefully at news photographs of Nazi skinheads throughout Europe and the United States, you will find that many of these young hate mongers have now abandoned the German Nazi salute in favor of the Serb one.
- See Allen, *Rape Warfare*, 79. This passage exemplifies the kind of rhetoric that, according to Michael Parenti, has functioned to demonize the Serbs unfairly.
30. <http://www.computec-int.com/kosovo.htm>, accessed September 20, 2000. Ellipsis in original.
31. With the exponential rise in e-commerce, one could argue that this is the ultimate form of interpassivity, reducing Internet democracy to "consumer choice." One could also argue that the term Internet "user" immediately assumes an active relationship, in opposition to, say, the apparatus of television, which posits a passive "viewer." At the same time, "user" carries with it connotations of addiction that lend themselves to the ubiquitous stories about Internet pornography junkies and Internet addicts.
32. For the Chetnik Mafia, see <http://www.angelfire.com/de2/cetnikmafia/>, accessed September 20, 2000; for the Chetniks of Australia, see <http://www.ozemail.com.au/~gozza/>, accessed September 20, 2000; for Chetnik Arizona, see 2000.<http://www.primenet.com/~slavonac/index.html>, accessed September 20, 2000.
33. <http://www.serbianchetniks.com/>. Accessed September 20, 2000.
34. By showing the horrific images of the heads of decapitated Serbs (like many other Web sites which link to or incorporate this photograph), Beverly Allen would argue, this presentation would also amount to a case study in projection that belies what Allen calls the throat-slitting "Chetnik cult of the knife . . . [that] derive[s] from pastoral society and the practices of animal butchery":

As the single most important symbol of legendary Serb ultranationalist cultism, the knife is also the single most important tool of the pastoral economy in the mountain cultures where such ultranationalism flourished, the cultures that produced, for example, Radovan Karadzic, leader of the Bosnian Serbs. . . . The knife fixation that seems to characterize both the legendary Serb dream of a Greater Serbia . . . and the official Serb military policy . . . goes beyond individual accounts of torture and death and suggests instead a collective madness that sweeps all before it in a sea of butchery. Civilians are the main victims of this diseased conflagration: peasants, town dwellers, women, men, children. The knives tear into so much that there is scarcely anything left to kill.

See Allen, *Rape Warfare*, 80–81.

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35. <http://members.boardhost.com/hrvatska/P966417430>. The ###s are automatically added by the bulletin board software. Accessed November 10, 2000.
36. Taylor, "World Wide Web," 197.
37. An important dimension not discussed in this essay is the effect of transnational media conglomerates on the structure of the Internet and the Web. The proposed merger between America Online and Time Warner, and the recently approved merger between Vivendi and Seagrams/Universal, signal a movement toward the kind of corporate ownership and global control of the Internet that we currently see with television and film.