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Adam Jones, ed. *Gendercide and Genocide.* Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004. 336 pp. $29.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8265-1445-5; $69.95 (library), ISBN 978-0-8265-1444-8.

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"Too Many Cides" to Genocide Studies?

In the first chapter of his edited volume *Gendercide and Genocide*, Adam Jones asserts that "gendercide," in a global-historical perspective, "is a frequently and often defining feature of human conflict" and a "ubiquitous feature of contemporary politico-military conflicts worldwide" (p. 2). More importantly for Jones is the contention that genocide is not restricted to the victimization of women, but includes the targeting of battle-aged men. This gender-specific targeting of men has, in Jones's view, "attracted virtually no attention at the level of scholarship and public policy" (p. 2).

Thus, with this opening salvo, Jones launches a concerted and important effort to place gender in general, and the victimization of men in particular, front and center in the growing literature on comparative genocide studies. As scholars in the field are aware, the literature to which Jones and his fellow contributors speak is already filled with competing definitions of genocide and has spawned the definition of other "cides" such as "politicide" and "democide." Thus, Jones and some of his fellow contributors argue that another "cide," "gendercide," is necessary.

The volume is anchored by an introductory essay by Jones in which he outlines his own definition of gendercide and the need to gender genocide studies in a way that the targeting of noncombatant "battle-aged men" is acknowledged as a central feature of many genocides. Drawing on Mary Ann Warren's original definition of genocide, Jones defines gendercides as "gender-selective mass killing" (p. 2) where gender and sex are taken to be relatively synonymous by virtue of their interchangeable use in everyday discourse. For Jones, the targeting of battle-aged men is pervasive because the removal of adult males, be they elites, non-combatants, or soldiers, is often the first step in the wider victimization of groups defined by ethnic, racial, religious, national, or political criteria. Jones explores this phenomenon more fully in his later chapter, "Gender and Genocide in Rwanda." He argues that the genocide was, in part, a result of the enormous stress placed on maintaining traditional masculine gender roles stemming from years of economic crisis and resource scarcity. Further, he claims that the genocide itself evolved from "a tradition-bound gendercide" targeting predominantly adult and adolescent males to a "progressive and culturally transgressive targeting of Tutsi women" (pp. 98-99), or what Jones calls the "root and branch" phase of genocide. Throughout Jones's analysis, it is the gender identity of the victims that is of primary importance rather than their ethnic, racial, national, or socioeconomic identity.

All of the other contributors explore gendercide from either a theoretical, empirical, or conceptual perspective. Oystein Gullvag Holter, in his chapter, "A Theory of Genocide," is the one contributor who offers the most explicitly stated theory of gendercide. In what he calls a "devaluation, regression, and aggression" model, Holterin suggests that gendercide is the result of four elements: social, political, and economic devaluation (i.e., crisis); "reactive reevaluation" through gender, race, and other social mechanisms; a buildup of aggression; and antagonistic conflict and war (pp. 63-64). In her chapter, "Gendercide and Humiliation in Honor and Human-Rights Societies," psychologist Evelin Gerda Lindner outlines a slightly less explicit theory of genocide while at the same time citing empirical cases to illustrate her gendercide-as-response-to-male-humiliation thesis. The chapters by Augusta Del Zotto, "Gendercide in Historical-Structural Context: The Case of Black Male Gendercide in the United States," and Stefanie Rixecker, "Genetic Engineering and Queer Biotechnology: The Eugenics of the Twenty-First Century?" focus less on theoretical or conceptual issues and instead detail what they see as actual or potential instances of gendercide based on the sex (Del Zotto) or sexual orientation (Rixecker) of the victim group.

The structure of the book is sound, beginning with

the general argument for the necessity of gendering genocide studies and the concept of gendercide, followed by several essays in which the concept is put into practice and/or explained, and then finally critiqued. All of the eleven essays in *Gendercide and Genocide* are updated versions of previously published articles, seven of which first appeared in a March 2002 special issue of the *Journal of Genocide Research*. Helpfully, each essay has been revised in light of the other essays in the volume, thus providing the book with a welcome level of added coherence and scholarly debate among the contributors. That said, the superior ability of three dissenting contributors to map out the conceptual landscape with respect to the concepts genocide, gender, and gendercide, brings needed conceptual clarity to the book only at the end, when such clarity would have been more helpful at the beginning. This is not so much a problem of organization, but with the first few chapters of the book.

In a courageous move not often seen in edited works, Jones has included three "heretics" who, in a genuine spirit of constructive academic debate, raise a number of interesting and well-placed criticisms of the concepts gender and gendercide as defined and applied by Jones and the other authors in the book. In a chapter that should be included on syllabi for courses on genocide, Stuart Stein ably navigates the scholarly debates over the definition of genocide and then carefully dissects how genocide and gendercide are used in the volume. Stein effectively questions the utility of adding yet another "cide" to the already crowded genocide lexicon. He suggests that gendercide, as conceived by Jones, risks placing too great a focus on gender at the expense of other explanatory factors. Similarly, R. Charli Carpenter thoroughly examines the conceptual problems evident in how gender/sex is variously formulated in the book. Finally the book concludes with a chapter by political theorist Terrell Carver, in which Carver goes some way toward clarifying the issue of gender and masculinity and suggests how some of the arguments in the book might be more profitably reformulated. Many of the criticisms discussed below are drawn from these three chapters.

Jones's volume can be commended for bringing gender into genocide studies and for making the hitherto overlooked point that many genocides involve the disproportionate victimization of men. Where the book falters is over the concept gendercide itself and the evidence used by many of the authors to illustrate the concept. The critiques of how gendercide is conceptualized with respect to the existing concepts genocide (Stein) and gender (Carpenter) get at this very problem. However, despite the strenuous arguments of Jones and many of the contributors to the contrary, it remains unclear as to whether gendercide is a useful concept. A concept that combines both gender and genocide, "gendercide" brings with it the conceptual muddle that surrounds its constituent parts. Both gender and genocide are highly contested concepts which have been formulated and reformulated, debated, and dissected by analysts in the fields of feminist, gender, and genocide studies, respectively. Scholars of genocide need to ask whether an even more contested concept is needed than the one (i.e., genocide) with which we already are struggling.

Further, gendercide, as presented in the book, does not seem to define a distinct phenomenon. Even Jones himself suggests it is a "component" of genocide. To be a useful and necessary concept, gendercide should define a unique, although closely related phenomenon. Gendercide would then be, and Jones often treats it as if it is, an attack on a group of victims based on the victims' gender/sex. Such an attack would only really occur if men or women are victimized because of their *primary* identity as men or women. In the case of male gendercide, male victims must be victims first and foremost because they are men, not male Bosnians, Jews, or Tutsis. Moreover, it must be the perpetrators themselves, not outside observers making ex-poste analyses, who identify a specific gender/sex as a threat and therefore a target for extermination.

As such, we must be able to explicitly show that the perpetrators target a gender victim group based on the victims' primary identity as either men or women. To be sure, many of the cases cited in the book–from the appalling treatment of Soviet POWs by the Germans in World War II, to the slaughter of Tutsi men and boys during the Rwandan genocide, or the wholesale extermination in the death camps of women and their children during the Holocaust–clearly show that there is often a gendered aspect to genocide. But the concept of gendercide risks minimizing more proximate identities such as race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic class that motivate the perpetrators. If, as Jones might reply, gendercide does not dismiss the importance of other factors and identities, the logical question is then, do we need the concept gendercide? Put another way, does gendering genocide, a worthy goal to be sure, require "gendercide"?

The problem of showing that gender is the primary identity upon which a genocidal attack is based reveals not only a conceptual problem, but a second, empirical one. Of the cases cited by Jones no hard evidence is presented *from the perspective of the perpetrators* that gender was the primary motivating identity behind the at-

tacks. As Stein notes, the evidence Jones presents with regard to these cases can just as easily be read as showing that Soviet soldiers, Tutsi men and boys, Jewish and Tutsi women and children were victimized first and foremost because they were Soviets and soldiers, Jews and Tutsis, and only secondarily because of their gender identity.

In a case of both concept and evidence stretching, Lindner argues in her chapter that the suicide of males in certain societies in response to humiliation is a case of male gendercide. Lindner's approach is both an unsatisfactory argument and a questionable source of empirical evidence of gendercide. Presumably, gendercide, like genocide, involves separate collective actors; that is, victims and perpetrators, the latter of who plan and execute the destruction. Killing one's self is an individual act of self-destruction in which the "victim" and the "perpetrator" are one and the same. Similarly, Del Zotto suggests that black-on-black male violence and reckless behavior leading to black male quasi-suicidal violent deaths constitutes male gendercide. Here we are again left without a perpetrator since the victims are also the ones doing the victimizing. Del Sotto rightly suggests that it is the history of race relations in the United States, the persistent lack of economic opportunity, and negative conceptions of black men as inherently dangerous that has produced the desperate situation in which many black men find themselves. However, society, the economy, "the system" (or prejudice), are not collective actors capable of perpetrating genocide/gendercide based on an intentional, explicit, and systematic plan of destruction.

In the only chapter that comes close to describing actual gendercide (destruction based solely on the gender/sex identity of the victims), Rixecker suggests that advances in biotechnology may one day allow fetuses to be tested for sexual orientation and aborted if found to be gay or lesbian. While a truly frightening prospect, it is, at the moment at least, hypothetical. And even if in the future parents may abort "queer" fetuses, as they do now in some places with female fetuses, one could argue that this is not gendercide/genocide since such a drastic action would most likely remain an individual act and not part of a coordinated plan of destruction. As well, depending on how one conceptualizes gender and the connection, or lack thereof, between sex/gender and sexual orientation, one might also argue that destruction based on sexual orientation of the kind Rixecker fears is not gendercide because the primary perceived offending identity is sexual orientation, not sex or gender.

Despite its problems, *Gendercide and Genocide*, makes an important contribution to genocide studies and should be taken seriously by scholars in the field. Jones breaks new ground in the further conceptualization of the concept gendercide and by highlighting the often neglected victimization of battle-aged men. Some or the entire book can be used profitably in undergraduate and graduate courses on genocide and perhaps gender studies, particularly the skillful chapters by Stein and Carpenter, who admirably wade through and analyze the literature of genocide and gender respectively. A potentially controversial volume, *Gendercide and Genocide* will likely spark further debate in an already highly contested and controversial field.

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