

Genocide

- From intro of Hewitt text:
 - Readers “should question” each event covered in relation to worst that human beings can do
 - 20th Cen: 169,202,000 killed via genocides
 - Difficult task
 - Different societies = different values
 - Value of human life always change
 - Human sacrifice
 - Humans sacrificed to appease gods
 - Hoped Gods would protect living
 - Victims = means to win favor of Gods
 - Plus, promise of good life in afterlife for those sacrificed
 - Ex. Carthage
 - Does parent willingly giving up child for sacrifice = worst?
 - Hum sac cont. until society embraced new ethic
 - Ennobling individual in this world
 - New ethic above Gods’ appetite for blood
 - Nigel Davies credits ancient Hebrews w/ being 1st
 - Changed perception of God
 - Genesis 22:1-24
 - Abandoning hum sac ≠ utopia
 - Famines; epidemics were common throughout history
 - French Historian Fernand Braudel “incorporated into man’s biological regime and built into his daily life”
 - Life Improved in W. Europe:
 - Moderate climate
 - Long growing seasons
 - Fertile terrain
 - Famine began to disappear due to Agricultural Revolution of 16th & 17th cen
 - France & England
 - New institutions developed to stabilize human condition
 - Gov’ts started controlling displaced peasants who flocked to cities during food shortages
 - Gov’t policy harnessed their labor to serve society
 - Peasants who stole food/property were punished by law
 - Traditional penalties lost favor in 16th & 17th cen because colonies
 - Mid-17th Cen, moderated use of capital pun in cases of crimes against property
 - New punishment = hard labor
 - Criminal labor was supplemented w/ slavery
 - Victims = sacrifices for development of modern nation-state
 - Shocks of 20th cen reversed process collective denial
 - Gap between practices & ideals became too great to support denial
 - Allied powers tried & executed top Nazi leaders

- Parochialism & nationalism undermined:
- Western journalists:
- Other victims come forward
- Scholars began examining\analyzing genocide in history
- In pursuing Genocide, one will come face to face w/ the very nature of extraordinary human evil
 - Easy to detach ourselves from perpetrators of extraordinary human evil & their victims
 - Most of us have never experienced perpetration of extraordinary evil
 - Each of us is a surviving heir of catastrophes & destruction that we never experienced
 - We are called to find meaning where there appears to be none