

**FAIR 334J/HGST 302/INTL 340 – GENOCIDE
CLASS QUESTIONS**

016 – Case Study: Indigenous Peoples: Native Americans, Aborigines *et al.*

Elazar Barkan: The Genocide of Indigenous Peoples, pp. 117-139

1. What is the relationship of the notion of the “vanishing natives” to the genocide discourse? If civilizational progress is based on an acceptance of certain level of destruction, why are judgments about the past based on today’s notion of progress? Is European expansion solely to blame for the destruction of non-European societies? (Barkan, pp. 117-120)
2. What is David Stannard's theory of the American Genocide? What error does Barkan identify in Stannard's theory? How does Stannard's claim about disease diminish his case for genocide? What is intentional versus collateral responsibility? How does Jeffery Amherst's role in infecting the Native population strengthen Stannard's argument? (Barkan, pp. 120-123)
3. What is structural devastation as defined by Dobyns? Does Stannard make a convincing case for genocide based on the legal definition? How does Tinker’s conception of genocide differ from or agree with those in the Genocide Convention? Is his emphasis on consequences versus intention appropriate? Why or why not? Do you agree that missionaries are complicit in genocide? Why or why not? (Barkan, pp. 123-126) What is the “noble savage” concept? How has this concept impacted the way scholars characterize the experiences of Indigenous peoples? (Barkan, pp. 126-127)
4. What was the policy of relocating aboriginal children in Australia? How do these actions fit with the Genocide Convention? What were the "Sorry Days" and how has the government facilitated and/or inhibited reconciliation? Was the Australian court's rejection of the genocide designation appropriate? What was the system for Canada's indigenous children? What ideology and rationale drove these efforts? Why was the use of Holocaust in reference to the experiences of the Native population of New Zealand controversial? (Barkan, pp. 127-132)
5. Do you agree with the notion of the uniqueness of the Holocaust? Why or why not? Is there a hierarchy of suffering? Are some victims worthy of that status than others? What was the connection between ideology and violence prior to the 20th century? Does M. Annette Jaimes' argument for defining the experiences of indigenous people as genocide facilitate or limit understanding? ‘If we reject the concept of "genocide," it would seem to deny the victims proper acknowledgement, in their own view, for their suffering.’ How does that statement by Barkan support the idea that defining and labeling genocide is for the victims? (Barkan, pp. 133-135)
6. Who bears the ultimate responsibility for the destruction of native populations? If disease had not killed the population, would the experiences of the indigenous populations have constituted genocide? Is Columbus guilty of genocide? Why or why not? How does the "weight" behind the word genocide lead people to use the term to validate their own experiences? Given the territorial nature of the destruction, would it qualify as “ethnic cleansing”? is it “ethnocide”? how useful is the Genocide Convention in capturing the experience of native populations? (Barkan, pp. 135-139)