Commentary on Genocide Reflection:

I should warn you now that you might think I'm a Nazi after reading this. My thesis effectively leads to the argument that Hitler is not such a bad person. I'd like for you to give it a read, however, and judge my argument based on what I have presented. Keep in mind while reading the piece that I do *not* like Hitler, and I do *not* approve of his actions. Killing people, I believe, is not the way to prevent them from doing things that you don't want them to do. Still, it is ingrained in society that we worship certain figures that killed many people, and hate others. Here I am analyzing the distinction that we make between heroes and villains.

If, after reading this, you think I am insane, that is okay. Perhaps I am not completely sane. My arguments make sense to me, though, and I hope that they make sense to you in the same manner.

Genocide Reflection

It seems as though genocide is less about killing a bunch of people and more about prejudice.

Looking back in history, almost all of the important guys killed lots of people. You don't get your name in the books if you don't meet your quota. This applies to 'good guys' and 'bad guys', and 'guys who initially seemed kind of good but then turned out to be completely insane' (I'm looking at you, Robespierre). Some of them got away with it by working as a patriot for their countries; a general who is very successful in the military never looks bad, as long as his side ended up winning. Some of them were United States Presidents who commanded thousands of troops to go kill a bunch of people.

They all killed people, though. Whether or not they were justified is debatable, depending on their circumstances and their actions. I wasn't particularly disturbed, however, when I found that Robespierre held lots of executions during his reign of terror. We had already been told that he was important, so it was about time he decided to kill people.

The point that I'm making here is that when Adolf Hitler or Saddam Hussein committed genocide, they didn't initially seem all that awful. While trying to examine the difference between these genocide advocators and 'good guys' who got lots of people killed (perhaps Abraham Lincoln in his fight against the confederacy), I found that the only difference was that the leaders of genocide selected whom to kill based on prejudice; they killed large groups of people like everyone else did, but these people were selected based on non-defining (though often relevant) characteristics. Hitler wanted to remove Jewish people from Germany because he thought that their presence was making Germany a less peaceful place to live. He was probably right in this respect; his mistake was two-fold: he singled out Jews, and he selected *all* Jews instead of problematic ones.

So when people think that I am insane for not disliking Hitler as much as they do, they should realize that many people did similar things. Though I never did approve of killing a bunch of people to get rid of them, the main crime that I accuse Hitler of, relative to the other historical figures who killed large bodies of people, is prejudice, not murder. The only thing that makes these 'villains' stand out is that they used a less acceptable criterion for selecting those who were going to be killed.