

# **DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

THE SCIENCE OF DIVERSITY

MONA SUE WEISSMARK, PH.D.

The background of the entire page is a complex, repeating geometric pattern. It consists of large triangles pointing towards the center, each filled with a dense, fine-lined texture. These triangles are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement. The overall color palette is grayscale, with the text and author name providing high contrast.

# THE SCIENCE OF DIVERSITY

**MONA SUE WEISSMARK**

**OXFORD**



# KEY CONCEPTS: DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

- Justice
- Gestalt Theory
- Law of Closure
- Law of Balance
- Heider's Concept of "Requiredness"
- Cognitive Dissonance



# THE ORIGINS OF JUSTICE

## ▪ What is Justice?

Humans have an inborn sense of “ought” similar to a sense of beauty

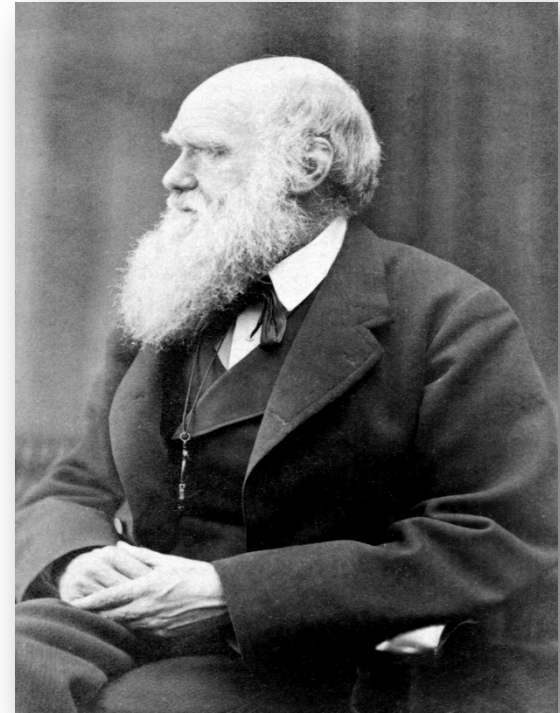
- Religious traditions offer moral exemplars and pose profound questions about how to act
- Do we punish those who act unjustly?
- How should we feel when someone harms us?
- Justice is culturally contextual



# THE ORIGINS OF JUSTICE

## CHARLES DARWIN (1809-1882)

- Humans have an inborn sense of “ought” similar to a sense of beauty
- Underlying mechanisms of judging and evaluating right and wrong are the same, even if conclusions differ

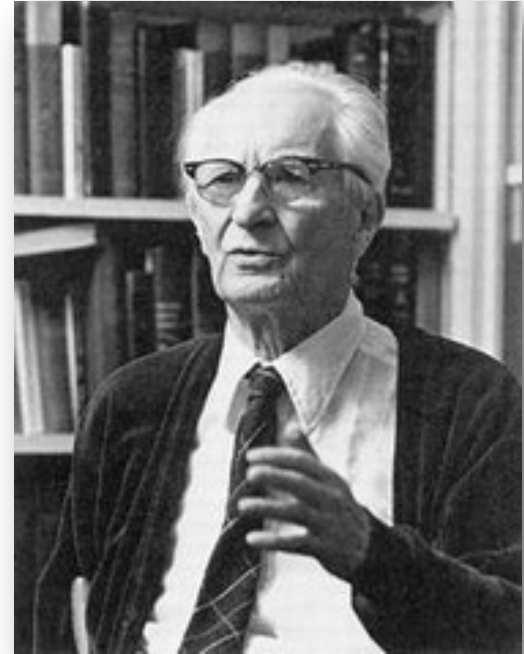




# THE ORIGINS OF JUSTICE

## FRITZ HEIDER (1896-1988)

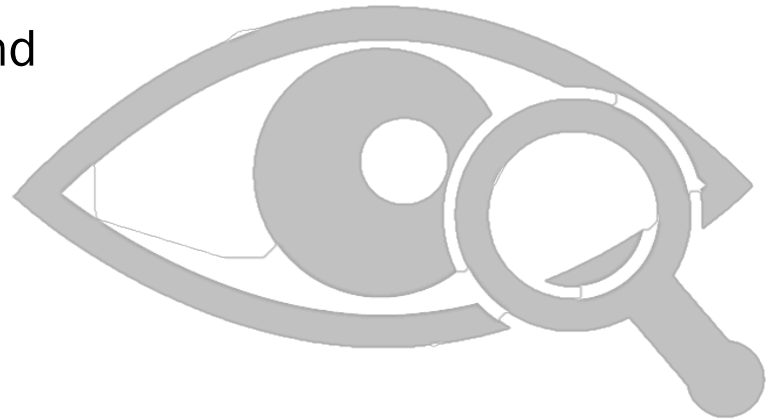
- Pioneer of modern field of social cognition and attribution theory
- Applied Darwin's idea of "ought" to social psychology
- The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations
  - "Ought and Value": Our sense of ought is similar to visual (perceptual) organization in that it follows the rule of cognitive consistency and balance



# THE ORIGINS OF JUSTICE

## ▪ Gestalt Theory:

- Psychologists tried to understand the underlying organization of perceptual processes
- Gestalt effect: Tendency of our brains to generate closure and balance



# THE ORIGINS OF JUSTICE

- **Gestalt: Law of Closure**

Our minds perceptually “close up” gaps when parts of whole the whole picture are missing





# THE ORIGINS OF JUSTICE

- **Gestalt: Law of Balance**

The mind perceives objects as being symmetrical:

[ ] { } [ ]

Three sets of brackets rather than six brackets

# THE ORIGINS OF JUSTICE

## Fritz Heider

- Sense of “ought” as cognitive consistency motive or drive toward psychological balance
- Concept of “Requiredness” all situations of Requiredness describe a situation in which we feel something “ought to happen”



# THE ORIGINS OF JUSTICE

## Heider's Concept of "Requiredness"

- Requiredness to act is rooted in the gap or incompleteness or injustice of a situation
- Bringing closure is identified with the just and right
- Happiness and goodness belong together; when they coexist a sense of justice prevails
- Happiness and wickedness are discordant

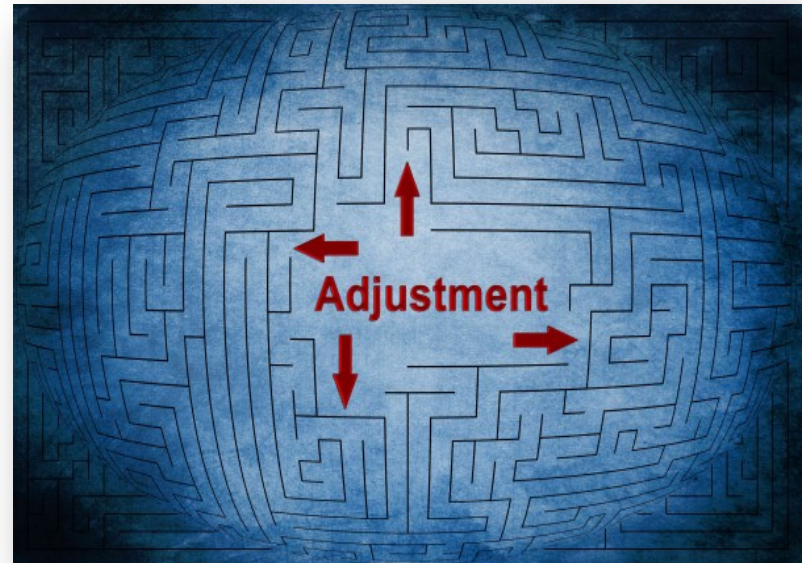




# THE ORIGINS OF JUSTICE

## LEON FESTINGER

- **Concept of cognitive dissonance:**
  - People feel tension or a lack of harmony (dissonance) when two thoughts, beliefs, or attitudes are inconsistent
  - People are motivated to restore harmony by making some kind of adjustment



# THE ORIGINS OF JUSTICE

## STUDIES OF COGNITIVE DISSONANCE:

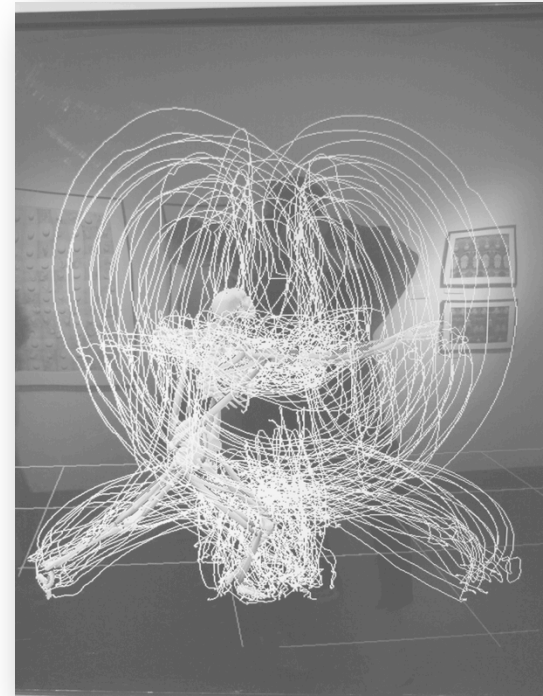
- People prefer information that validates their views
- In experiments where people inflict harm or punish others (a confederate), they are shown to justify the action by devaluing the victim
- Studies show a neural basis of reconciling cognitive dissonance



# THE ORIGINS OF JUSTICE

## Implications of cognitive dissonance

- The need for consistency, balance, and harmony may be innate in both humans and animals
- Dissonance produces a negative biological state
- Discomfort drives people to change their attitudes in an effort to reduce the negative affect and restore consonance





# THE JUSTICE MOTIVE

- People prefer harmony, balance, consistency
- Behavior is driven not only by material results but desire for fairness and justice
- People are motivated by a belief in a just world
  - Children are taught good is rewarded and evil is punished
  - Victim blaming results from the idea that this is a just world and people get what they deserve, for example:
    - Rape victim blaming
    - Battered spouse blaming
    - Poor people are responsible for their poverty



# JUSTICE AS INTERGENERATIONAL

- Emotional impact of collective accountability and of revenge is powerful
- Research suggests that if an injustice is not rebalanced between people, the imbalance and sense of injustice is passed down to their descendants
- Plato wrote acts of the wrongdoer influence the community and next generation
- In the Bible, children are punished in lieu of parents



# JUSTICE AS INTERGENERATIONAL

*Can We Really Inherit Trauma  
and Injustice?*

A Groundbreaking Study Examined  
This Question

# IN THE HEADLINES

## The New York Times

SUNDAY, JUNE 13, 1993

## HARVARD UNIVERSITY Gazette

September 4, 1992

### Generations Try to Heal Wounds From World War II

By KIM S. HIRSCH

For many years Alan Berkowitz did not know about his father's life in the forest. Mr. Berkowitz, 33, a West Hartford resident, said that when he was growing up, he tried to find out how his father, who died when Mr. Berkowitz was 10, had survived the Holocaust. But whenever he questioned his grandmother, the soft-spoken

Knapal, 46, a Cambridge, Mass., resident and a native of Germany whose father was an officer in the S.S. The program, called "People Helping People, Place to Place," brings together the children of survivors of Nazis to share what the organizers say is their common bond in history and to try to end the cycle of hatred that can pass from one generation to the next.

"This is not to forget the past. It's a cycle of hatred that can pass from one generation to the next," Dr. Weissmark said.



By GEORGE KOVANS  
From Front Seat West

BOSTON — Lucia Nerenberg snatched a napkin off the floor where she had dropped it, wadded it into a ball and buried it toward a



Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 7. März 1993

## Schuldig geboren

Kinder der Opfer reden mit den Kindern der Täter

Auf den ersten Blick wirken die sechzehn Männer und Frauen wie eine Reisegruppe an ihrem letzten Urlaubstag. Das heikle Gemeinschaftserlebnis ist überstanden, die Erleichterung spürbar. Man nennt sich beim Vornamen, unarmt sich zum Abschied gezwungen bis herzlich, macht Witze und tauscht Adressen aus. Gegenseitige Besuche werden verabredet. Keinesfalls, so ist zu hören, will man den Kontakt wieder abreißen lassen. Er war nur allzu schwer zustande gekommen.

Die Tagungsteilnehmer im badischen Neuenbürg sind Erben des Dritten Rei-

men in den Schmutz ziehen?", wurde die Tochter eines Wehrmachtsoffiziers gefragt, als sie ihrer Familie von ihren Absichten erzählte.

Die Tagung hat mit dem "Storytelling" begonnen. Die Teilnehmer erzählen ihre Geschichte, die zunächst immer die ihrer Eltern ist. Der erste, der das Wort ergriffen hatte, war Otto, ein freundlich aussehender älterer Herr mit der Brille und dem weißen Bart eines pensionierten Studienrates. Strenggenommen gehört er nicht in diese Runde, denn er ist der einzige, der den Terror der Nazizeit noch aus-

any way, Lucia their Holocaust.

hatriot from Ann old she have been struck back at the a few of their sons a fragile people. Men by their parents' son gun-ridden they all the way from with other children

er for four days at Boston by a Harvard rents had survived Mass., spokeswoman a Naz.

children of survivors and children of confidants in impersonal feelings many of their own families. easier if she hated the

he who had discovered just five

Remarkable rela-

That Lucia and others spent four days to understand one as nothing less than re-

That the children and the children grew to care about at least one case, d-

Heard the other side

The purpose of bringing two such disparate sides together "is not to forget or forgive the past but create a new future," says Weissmark, author of "Justice Matters: Legacies of the Holocaust and World War II" (Oxford University Press, \$27.50), which chronicles the interactions between the

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14 June 1993

## Revisiting the Past to Transform Children of Holocaust Survivors, Children of Nazi

by Michael Jonathan Grinfeld

A technology-laden 20th century produced its share of mechanized slaughter, but the standard by which history will judge this darker side of the human experience resides firmly in the annals of World War II. Though 47 years have passed, remembrances of the he deaths of 12 fings of pain and aided over time. n from the generation become the cen-

histories that motivated their work. Weissmark's mother was a survivor of the Auschwitz concentration camp, while her father spent the war behind the barbed wire at Dachau. She met Knapal, the daughter of a lieutenant in the Third Reich's Waffen-SS, in 1991 while conducting research interviews. As they talked, they discerned common feelings and experiences that established,

To meet these concerns, organizers were careful to structure the conference based upon a model that would foster active, joint participation between the groups. Several assumptions about how the parents' emotions were passed down to the children guided the development of this model, Weissmark said. "We assume that the participants who are coming to the conference, based on the inter-

"We specifically told the participants and explained to ourselves that this was not therapy in a traditional sense. Rather, [we wanted] to create a but we don't want to

## Healing the Pain of the Holocaust

By Lois Josimovich  
Special to the Gazette

Nearly half a century after the concentration camps were liberated in Europe, 11 children of Holocaust survivors and 11 children of Nazis are gathered at Harvard this weekend to seek healing the pain they inherited from their parents' generation. Attendees throughout the United States and include people from many life—academics, business, and others whose parents' involvement in the Holocaust

## Generational healing

A daughter of Holocaust survivors comes to terms with past for the sake of the future

By Veronique Mistral  
Special to the Tribune

Every Thursday at noon, Chicago psychologist Mona Weissmark shuts herself in her home office in Evanston. There, among scattered papers and books, she dials a number in England. In an Anglican convent in central England, Sister Renate, 33, sits by the telephone eagerly awaiting Weissmark's call. The two women have never met in person, and until last April, had never been in contact. Yet without the elderly nun, it's likely Weissmark and her 6-year-old daughter, Britanny, wouldn't exist. In April 1945, Renate became, then 20 years old, and her family rescued Weissmark's father, Adolf, and his childhood friend, Rudolf Knapal. The pair had fled the concentration camp of Lagerstein in Thurnee, 11 with typhus and dysentery, covered in lice and starving.

More than 60 years have passed since that day, but Sister Renate remembers it vividly. "I had just come home from the front. We saw two figures collapsed in front of our door. My husband brought the doctor and said, 'They are not my mother's babies.' I said, 'Forget about them.' But my mother didn't listen," she said. Renate, her sister, Bianca, and their mother fled, huddled and clothed the two young men, and nursed them back to health. Her father, Pastor Julius Seebach, and her four brothers welcomed them into the family. "Adolf was the same age as me. He called our parents Moma and Papa."

The two young men remained part of the family for several months, until they could immigrate to America. Renate, who had contracted typhus, probably from them, died the following January. Adolf Weissmark was able to rebuild his life in America, where he married and raised three children. Renate and her sister, Bianca, also a Holocaust survivor. The couple raised their daughter, Mona, in Forest Hills, N.Y. Mona Weissmark, now 38, is an associate professor of psychology and social work at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She is known for her groundbreaking social experiment that set up meetings between children of Holocaust survivors and children of Nazis.

Heard the other side

The purpose of bringing two such disparate sides together "is not to forget or forgive the past but create a new future," says Weissmark, author of "Justice Matters: Legacies of the Holocaust and World War II" (Oxford University Press, \$27.50), which chronicles the interactions between the

## CURRENTS: HISTORY





# FILM AND TELEVISION COVERAGE

CBS NEWS SEP 13, 1992  
SUNDAY MORNING  
The Past Between Them  
Correspondent:  
David Culhane

The Past  
Between Them



JOURNEY TO  
UNDERSTANDING



Seeing  
the  
other  
side



# A STUDY OF INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF SURVIVORS' AND NAZIS' OFFSPRING

- A study of intergenerational injustice among descendants examined how two groups coped with same historical heritage
- Children of Survivors of the Holocaust:
  - At least one parent survived Nazi concentration camp or slave labor camp
  - No parent was a member of an organization that actively fought against the Nazis
  - Agreement to participate in televised meeting with “other side”
- Children of Nazis:
  - One parent was an active member of the Nazi party during the Third Reich
  - No parent was a member of an organization that active fought against the Nazis
  - Agreement to participate in meeting

# KEY CONCEPTS: A STUDY OF INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF SURVIVORS' AND NAZIS' OFFSPRING

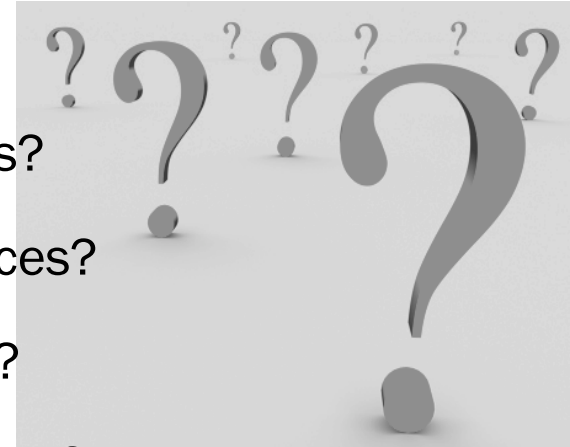
- Ethnic Identification
- Double Victim
- Feelings of Indignation
- A Personal Sense of Justice
- Justice as Intergenerational



# A STUDY OF INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF SURVIVORS' AND NAZIS' OFFSPRING

## ▪ Key questions of the study:

- How had they made sense of family stories?
- How had they found out about past injustices?
- What impact did it have on their identities?
- How had they tried to rebalance the injustice?
- What coping strategies had they used?
- How did they view the other side?





# A STUDY OF INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF SURVIVORS' AND NAZIS' OFFSPRING

## ■ Participants:

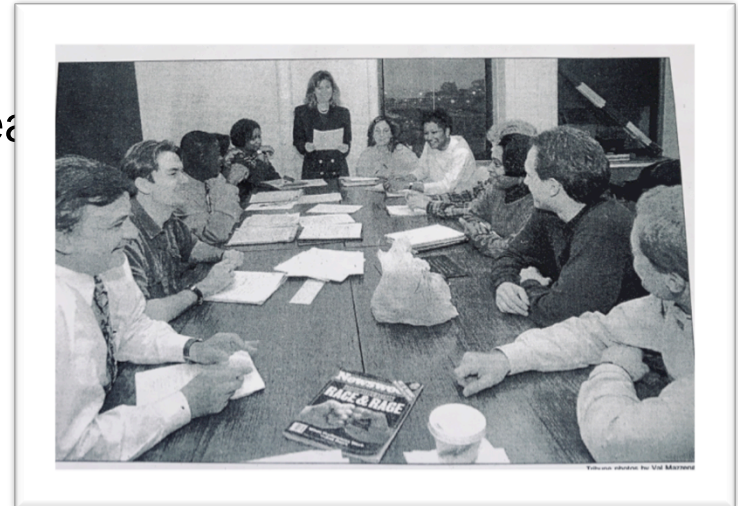
- 20 interviews
- Average age 43 (range 30 to 48)
- 14 women, 6 men
- 10 born in Germany  
1 in Israel,  
9 in USA
- Range of experiences of parents



# A STUDY OF INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF SURVIVORS' AND NAZIS' OFFSPRING

## ■ Interviews

- Conducted in English and German
- Tape-recorded, transcribed, 2 hours each
- Boston, New York, Hamburg, Berlin
- Developmental histories
- Responses to information about the Holocaust
- Perspectives on justice
- Views of descendants of the other side



# FINDINGS FROM A STUDY OF INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF SURVIVORS' AND NAZIS' OFFSPRING

## Ethnic Identification

- Events effected them in profound ways
- Offspring of both Nazis and survivors felt they inherited a defining legacy
- Parents' experience influenced their identification with their ethnic group
- Daughter of an Auschwitz survivor: "My whole Jewish identity revolves around my parents having been concentration camp survivors.
- Son of a high-ranking Nazi officer: "None of us can escape it because our identity as individuals and as Germans is woven into it."

# FINDINGS FROM A STUDY OF INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF SURVIVORS' AND NAZIS' OFFSPRING

## Double Victim

- Both groups of descendants felt victimized
- Children of Nazis reported their parents told them about the *war*
  - Parents told stories of how they suffered during the war
  - Daughter of a Nazi officer: “I didn’t know about the concentration camps until I was in my teens... At first I remember feeling proud to find out my father was an officer in the army”
  - Children believed parents were victims too
  - Son of high-ranking Nazi: “All our property was taken”
  - Son of a Nazi: “I remember my mother crying because of the bad situation... The British expropriated my father’s business. I think that was unjust and wrong”

# FINDINGS FROM A STUDY OF INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF SURVIVORS' AND NAZIS' OFFSPRING

## Double Victim

- Children of survivors reported their parents told them about the Holocaust
- Son of a survivor: “I remember my father would tell me stories about the camps, about how he was brutally beaten and starved... For me the picture of him and the other Jews being victimized by brutal Nazis was very strong”



# FINDINGS FROM A STUDY OF INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF SURVIVORS' AND NAZIS' OFFSPRING

## Feelings of Indignation

- Both groups of descendants felt indignation, which for some incited the desire for revenge
- Son of a survivor: “When my mother talked to me about the camps and the torture and showed me pictures of dead relatives, she didn’t have to say she’s angry... I think I have a much more powerful sense of anger and hate and wanting to get vengeance than most people do”
- Child of a survivor: “They killed my family, they took all their properties, and money, everything... I don’t think the Germans have paid for what they did to us”

# FINDINGS FROM A STUDY OF INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF SURVIVORS' AND NAZIS' OFFSPRING

## Feelings of Indignation

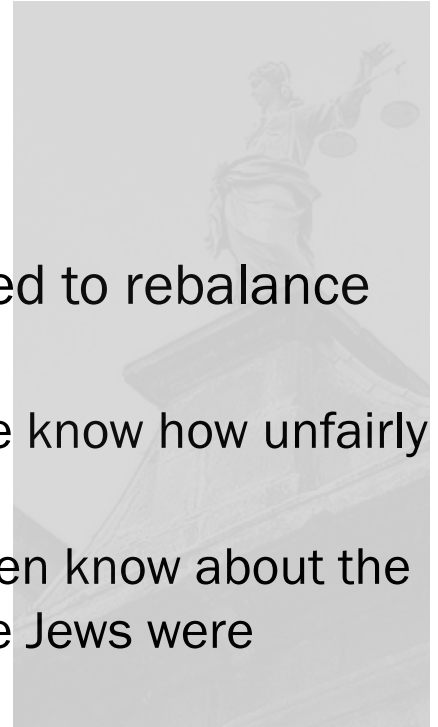
- Child of a Nazi: “I was angry when I heard what the Allies did to my family... I will do my part to see the Allies are repaid for the wrong they did and that things are discussed in the proper perspective”
- Child of a Nazi: “The first people killed in Dachau were German people, not Jewish people. I think the Jews make it seem like they were the only victims, but they were not”



# FINDINGS FROM A STUDY OF INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF SURVIVORS' AND NAZIS' OFFSPRING

## A Personal Sense of Justice

- Intergenerational process of ethnic identification
- Transmitted need to rebalance past injustices
- Both children of survivors and of Nazis felt the need to rebalance the past injustices in their lives
- Child of a Nazi: “I have a special obligation to let people know how unfairly Germany was treated”
- Child of a survivor: “It is important to me that my children know about the horrors of the Holocaust about how unfair and cruel the Jews were treated. And I feel I have a duty to let others know, too”



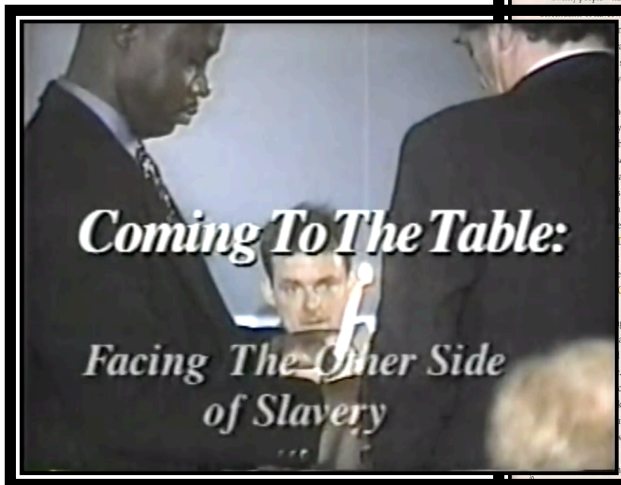


# FINDINGS FROM A STUDY OF INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF SURVIVORS' AND NAZIS' OFFSPRING

- Historical injustice is complex and requires an understanding of human psychology
- Children of survivors and of Nazis are locked in a special relationship
- Demonstrate intergenerational transmission of sense of injustice
- Intergenerational process of ethnic identification
- Descendants feel a need for justice that rebalances the past



# A NEW STUDY: IN THE HEADLINES



## an overdue apology

The meeting was not off to a good start. Twenty people—half of them descendants of slaves, the rest

—had gathered around a table at

University for a four-day discussion. Their

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ate older what was the

alls. said, 'I person

normal apology from the U.S. govern-

to former South African president F.W.

its work's commitment to freedom for everybody, not just for some.

for race relations, even though the apology wouldn't

those responsible for the suffering. Says Weissmark:

the United States has really faced up to its past at the

While many see slavery as a long-dead issue, Weiss-

psychic scars from

main. And that

whites as well as

one participant

on his family's

plantation, a

serving the rem-

who worked the

was a shameful

his ancestor's de-

"When a great

curse, the stories

down," notes M-

has also organiza-

errings between

German Nazis

survivors. "And

tries come anger

feelings perpetu-

advers. If your p-

arents were victim

normal for some

feel resentment.

While the m-

cussion was often

frank, those invol-

payoff was mutual understanding. Reports participant Darlene

Williams: "Eventually we stopped generalizing and started deal-

ing with each other as individuals."



"I Have Given the World My Songs," by Elizabeth Catlett. From a series of prints, *I Am A Negro Woman*, 1947.

## SLAVES TO THE PAST

**I** imagine that your great-grandfather was born a slave on a cotton plantation in Virginia. He told your mother that he always wanted to learn to read and write, but all he was allowed to do was carry his young mistress's books to school. Like all the children on the plantation, his days were spent cleaning the yard, carrying water to the men in the fields and going to "the big house" to fan the flies from the dinner table. His mother was too busy with her own work to look after her children, so they had to fend for themselves. He had never seen his father, but heard he was a white man who lived on one of the local plantations. That man had raped his mother. ▶

**"I am comfortable with my past. Slavery brought horrible things, but I don't feel guilty"**

Bonny

By Véronique Mistiaen

Chicago Tribune

## Lancing the past



Donna Carter (facing camera) hugs Bonny Burke after the four-day session held at Roosevelt University.

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES,

Metro

Project Yields Taste of King Dream

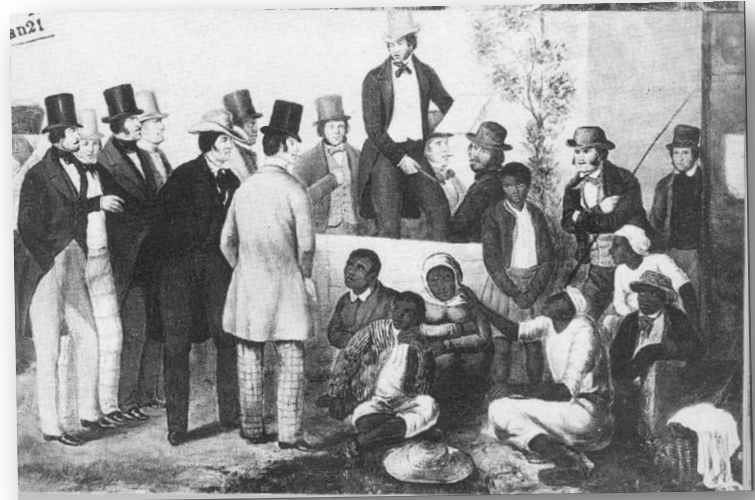
# A NEW STUDY: INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES AND OF SLAVE OWNERS

- First ever historical meeting between descendants of slaves and descendants of slave owners to talk about their common legacy
- Participants shared their family stories and difficult perspectives by addressing “unfinished business”
- Research interactions between the descendants of oppressors and oppressed



# A NEW STUDY: INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES AND OF SLAVE OWNERS

- Descendants separated by many generations
- Many white participants had limited information of their family's role in slavery
- Black participants had more knowledge of their descendants experience as slaves



# **KEY CONCEPTS: A STUDY OF INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES AND OF SLAVE OWNERS**

- Ethnic Identification
- Slavery was legal
- Feelings of indignation
- Apology



# A STUDY OF INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES AND OF SLAVE OWNERS

## ▪ KEY QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

- How had they made sense of family stories?
- How did slavery impact descendants of blacks and whites who still live together today?
- How had they found out about past injustices?
- What impact did it have on their identities?
- How had they tried to rebalance the injustice?
- What coping strategies had they used?
- How did they view the other side?

?

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# A STUDY OF INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES AND OF SLAVE OWNERS

## PARTICIPANTS

- 15 Participants, 8 Black, 7 White
- From various regions of the United States
- From diverse professions: independent business people, college students, university administrators

## INTERVIEWS

- Took place at Roosevelt University, Chicago
- Four days
- Six hours per day
- Facilitated by the researchers

# A STUDY OF INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES AND OF SLAVE OWNERS

## ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION

- Events impacted them differently in profound ways
- Offspring of both felt they inherited a defining legacy
- Parents' experience only influenced one group in their degree of identification with their ethnic group
- Both aware of the aftermath slavery has had on them and the country





# A STUDY OF INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES AND OF SLAVE OWNERS

## SLAVERY WAS LEGAL

- Stereotypes about slave owners
- Majority of slave owners did not beat their slaves
- There was a genuine relationship of trust between master and slave
- Descendant of slave owner:  
“Slavery was legal, I am not saying it was completely right”



# A STUDY OF INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES AND OF SLAVE OWNERS

## FEELINGS OF INDIGNATION

- Descendant of slave: “When my great grandfather was 8 or 9, he belonged to the master’s daughter, as if he were a pet. He had a little rug he slept on at the foot of her bed”
- Descendant of slave: Remembers hearing his mother describe how her grandmother had been raped by a slave master
- Descendant of slave owner: “For me to be ashamed of that aspect of it, my ancestor did something that was legal.... I am an individual apart from my family and my history”

# A STUDY OF INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES AND OF SLAVE OWNERS

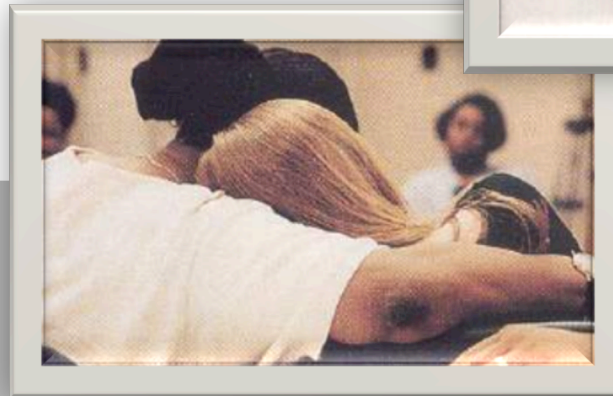
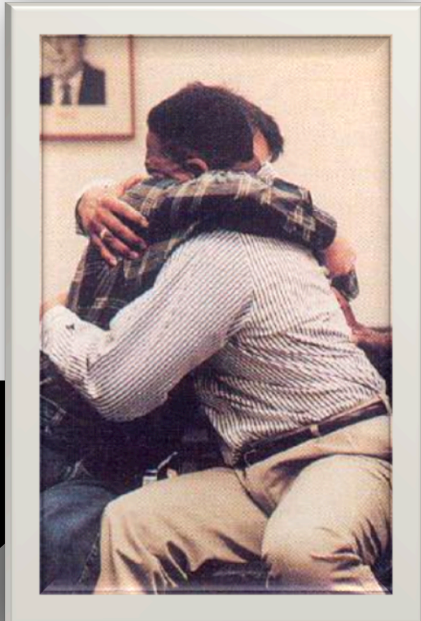
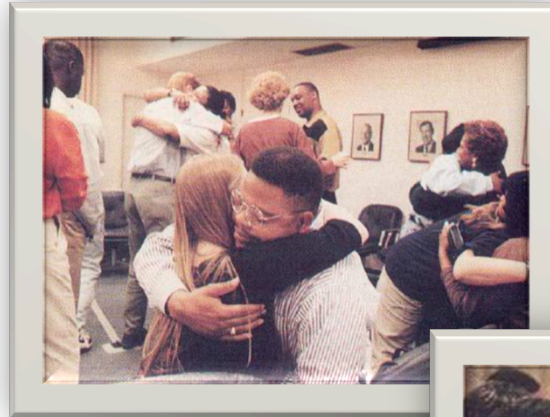
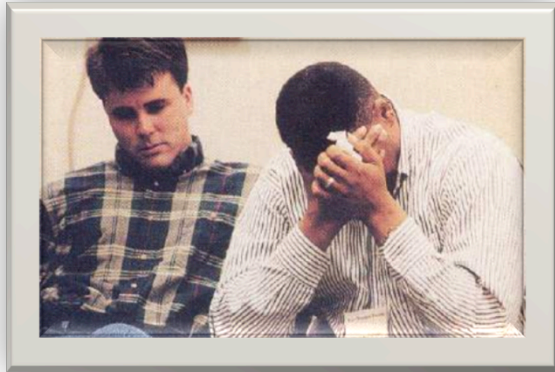
## APOLOGY

- Descendant of slave: “It is hard not to harbor resentment... the country has never said it is sorry it happened”
- Most of the white participants expressed sorrow for their forbearers' actions
- Descendant of slave owner: “I always wanted to prove to black people that I wasn't prejudiced, that I don't have this hate my ancestors had”
- Descendant of slave owner: I am sorry, I am ashamed of what my family did and I want to apologize to you”

# FINDINGS FROM A STUDY OF INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES AND OF SLAVE OWNERS

- Injustice did not go away and persists as a result of slavery
- Unresolved feelings remain due to the country's lack of recognition and acknowledgement of the suffering of many generations of black families
- Made progress, but there are unresolved feelings of injustice
- Unlike the other study an apology was made by white participants
- There is a sense of guilt and responsibility felt by the white participants
- Descendants of slave owners feel a responsibility to personally pay some kind of reparations

# FINDINGS FROM A STUDY OF INJUSTICE IN THE LIVES OF DESCENDANTS OF SLAVES AND OF SLAVE



# TODAY'S LEGACY OF INJUSTICE

- Affirmative action was a legal effort in the United States created to rectify the injustice of discrimination to minority groups
- In the 1970s, the concept of “reverse racism” and “reverse discrimination” arose in direct response to affirmative and race-based policies
- Reverse racism—or any race-conscious policy—has become a common grievance
- Minority people are viewed as the favored citizens of the state and deserving white people cast aside



# TODAY'S LEGACY OF INJUSTICE

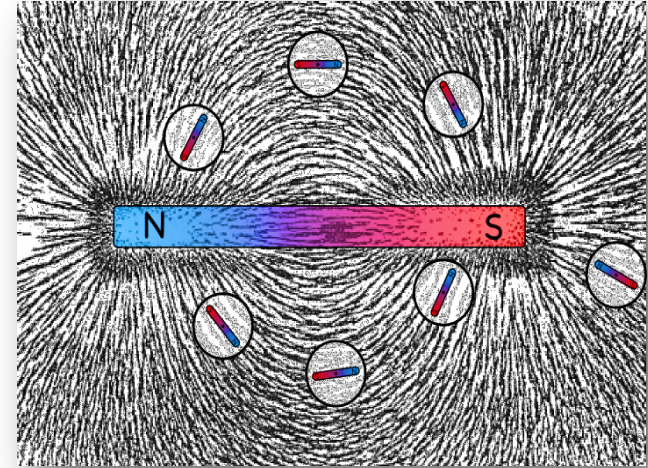
After 50 years of research, *A Retrospective View of Corporate Diversity Training From 1964 to the Present* states that:

- Diversity training efforts in the 1960s were focused on legislation and compliance
- The impetus and motivation for these efforts was misconceived and poorly executed
- Mandatory trainings have had unintended consequences
- This kind of force-feeding can trigger bias rather than stamp it out
- Researchers have found people often rebel against rules to assert their autonomy



# TODAY'S LEGACY OF INJUSTICE

- In the face of unjust treatment, individuals experience an overwhelming desire for revenge and retribution
- Legal systems offer a structural means for redressing injustice
- They do not address the very real emotional and psychological pain that individuals feel
- Emotional pain is unlikely to be solved simply by the recognition of historic grievances, by convening a national discussion on race, or by gestures of atonement
- Social science research suggests that simple discussions of polarizing topics can actually increase polarization





# THE SCIENCE OF DIVERSITY™

- The data show that the dialectical method is effective for creating open and honest exchanges of sentiments, opinions, and ideas with “the other”
- Absent an open conversation addressing the anger, resentment, and sense of injustice felt by all involved, the psychological pain that flows from an unjust past cannot be resolved
- Bias cannot simply be ordered away. When people are made to feel ashamed or are blamed for "bad" behaviors, they will lose their desire to change
- The shame and blame type of diversity training programs ignore everything social scientists know about the biological need to maintain our individual identities and our preferences for people who are like "us"

# THE SCIENCE OF DIVERSITY™ ARTICLES



Source: By Lizbeth Jacobs/GoAnimate, used with permission.

## Are There Effective Ways to Reduce Bias and Prejudice? November 13, 2018

Scholars report the sobering conclusion that bias interventions are ineffective.

[Read at Psychology Today](#)



## Teaching and Writing About Diversity November 03, 2017

Worldwide students respond to diversity taught through a scientific lens.

[Read at Psychology Today](#)



## Why Do Diversity Programs Fail? January 08, 2018

People who are made to feel ashamed or blamed will lose the desire to change.

[Read at Psychology Today](#)



## The Virtues of Science-Based Thinking August 16, 2017

Oxford dictionaries selected "post-truth" as the 2016 word of the year.

[Read at Psychology Today](#)



## Are There Any Solutions to Group Polarization? May 07, 2018

Why outlawing bias fails. Studies show the need to redress injustices.

[Read at Psychology Today](#)



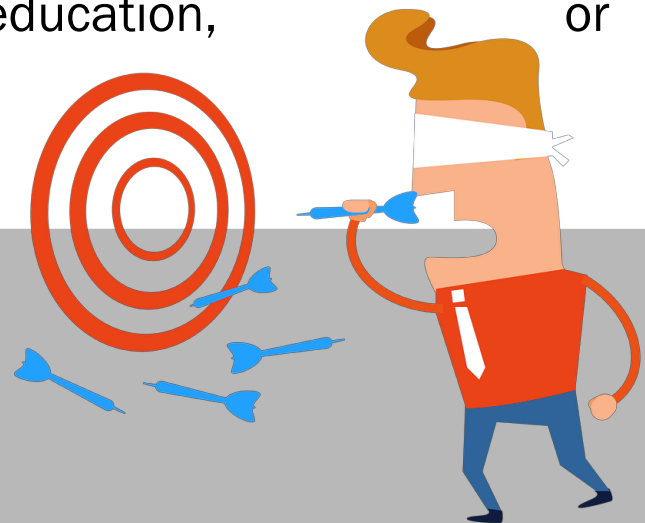
## Outlawing Bias is Doomed to Fail February 06, 2018

Bias is Hard-Wired into Our Brains

[Read at Psychology Today](#)

# THE SCIENCE OF DIVERSITY™

- Diversity programs aimed at outlawing bias are doomed to fail
- The sobering conclusions from thousands of studies have yielded zero practical knowledge
- Many people who teach and write about diversity have an agenda, sometimes, overt, more often hidden
- Conversations on diversity often end up being debates, arguments, and politicized
- The majority of diversity programs and books seek to prove or disprove the importance of diversity, the superiority or inferiority of one particular approach to diversity education, some point about outlawing biases or



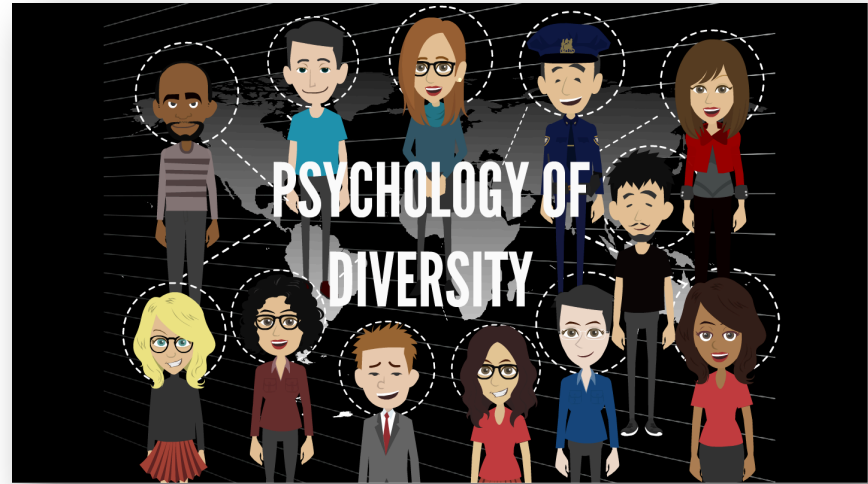
# THE SCIENCE OF DIVERSITY™

- Data from fifteen years of course evaluations show that facilitated dialogues using the dialectical method has a transformational impact on students' lives
- The method (dialectical) has an impact, we do not remove biases
- What makes my diversity course/book so unique is that it does not promote an agenda
- By contrast, the book and my course are designed to facilitate dialogue on hard issues, between divergent viewpoints, and foster understanding
- Students take away the experience that tolerance, perspective taking, and a scientific approach to diversity are prerequisites for productive dialogues and building a global community

# THE SCIENCE OF DIVERSITY™

## THE TEACHING STAFF

- I have a multicultural team of superb teaching fellows
- All teaching fellows are former students
- Are as diverse as the students who participate in the class
- Class members feel at ease with the diversity of the staff
- Instruction is not handed down by only one person of one single ethnicity or demographic



# THE SCIENCE OF DIVERSITY™

## THE TEACHING STAFF

- Teaching fellows are trained to help run facilitated dialogues during class discussions and breakout groups
- Our international, multicultural team effort is critical to the successes we have



CAROLINE  
SEATTLE, WA



JASON  
BOSTON & KOREA



JULIAN  
BOSTON & N.Y.C.



LIZBETH  
COLORADO & GUATEMALA



MARILENA  
GREECE



ANUBHA  
INDIA



AVANTI  
INDIA, HONK KONG



HUMBERTO  
TEXAS & MEXICO CITY



# THE SCIENCE OF DIVERSITY™

The fundamentals of the course The Psychology of Diversity and the book The Science of Diversity consist of four main learning modalities:

1. Investigate personal biases and assumptions
2. Learn to dialog well with others
3. Evaluate scientific research
4. Learn how to think scientifically



The background of the entire page is a complex, repeating geometric pattern. It consists of large triangles pointing towards the center, each filled with a dense, fine-lined texture. These triangles are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement. The overall color palette is grayscale, with the text and author name providing high contrast.

# THE SCIENCE OF DIVERSITY

**MONA SUE WEISSMARK**

**OXFORD**

**THE END**

**THANK YOU!**

# THE SCIENCE OF DIVERSITY™

## LINKS AND RESOURCES

Harvard Summer School Course, 2018:

<https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/41484/assignments/syllabus>

Course Trailer:

<https://youtu.be/u5LJm2hbYhA>

Course Video Short:

<https://youtu.be/qrEYmbWf6u0>

The Psychology of Diversity (PSYC 1507):

<https://www.weissmark.com/teaching>

Students Around the World Are Saying

(PREZI):

<https://prezi.com/view/qJ2tvko4TFIbwTkLCX43/>

Students Around the World Are Saying  
(YouTube Video):

<https://youtu.be/IAc4-SIRH18>

TED-Ed Lessons Worth Sharing

<https://ed.ted.com/on/aoehNVER>

Dr. Weissmark

<https://www.>



# THE SCIENCE OF DIVERSITY LINKS AND RESOURCES

## BOOKS:

Doing Psychotherapy Effectively

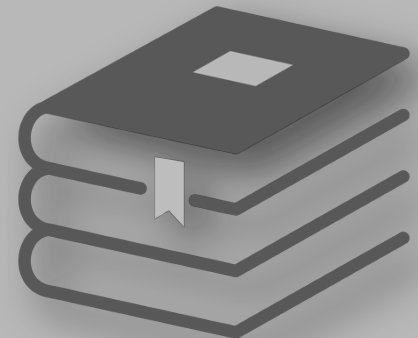
<https://www.weissmark.com/doing-psychotherapy-effectively>

Justice Matters, Legacies of the Holocaust and World War II

<https://www.weissmark.com/justice-matters>

The Science of Diversity

<https://www.weissmark.com/the-science-of-diversity>



# THE SCIENCE OF DIVERSITY LINKS AND RESOURCES

## FILMS:

Seeing the Other Side

<https://www.weissmark.com/seeing-the-other-side>

Coming to the Table

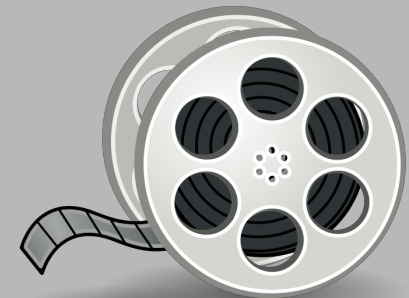
<https://www.weissmark.com/coming-to-the-table>

Journey to Understanding

<https://www.weissmark.com/journey-to-understanding>

The Past Between Them

<https://www.weissmark.com/the-past-between-them>





# THE SCIENCE OF DIVERSITY LINKS AND RESOURCES

## BIOGRAPHY

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## WIKIPEDIA PAGE

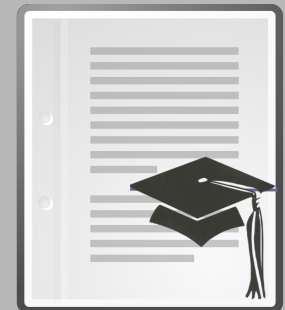
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mona\\_Weissmark](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mona_Weissmark)

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

<https://www.weissmark.com/publications>

## BLOG: PSYCHOLOGY TODAY

<https://www.weissmark.com/articles>



# THE SCIENCE OF DIVERSITY LINKS AND RESOURCES

## NEWSPAPERS

<https://www.weissmark.com/in-the-news>

## MAGAZINES

<https://www.weissmark.com/magazines>

## RADIO

<https://www.weissmark.com/radio>

