

often by strong verbs than by modifiers: “Evening congeals in the forum”; “Plocks of rain smite the sidewalks”; “Dawn polishes the silver blade of the sea’s horizon.” One might observe that this has always been the procedure of good poetry, but Warren reminds us in many little ways that this rhetoric represents the classical presence, Homeric at its roots, asserting itself in our contemporary expectations. Her ease in invoking this presence is her greatest strength.

—William Doreski

*Justice Matters: Legacies of the Holocaust and World War II* by Mona Sue Weissmark, Oxford University Press, 2004, \$26.00 cloth, ISBN 0195157575.

*Justice Matters: Legacies of the Holocaust and World War II* is a significant addition to the literature of the Holocaust because, in the words of the author, it “is the first book to describe what takes place when children of survivors and Nazis try to come to terms with the past and each other.” Mona Sue Weissmark, a Harvard-trained psychologist, is the daughter of parents who survived the Auschwitz, Dachau, and Buchenwald concentration camps, and from whom she learned as a child the cruel fates of most of her extended family at the hands of the Nazis.

Her seminal study is divided into seven chapters. An introduction sets forth the scope of the book, commenting on the televised Eichmann trial in Jerusalem in 1961, Hannah Arendt’s controversial coverage of the trial in her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963), the disturbing findings of Stanley Milgram’s experiments at Yale, described in *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View* (1974), and the questions of justice as intergenerational and interpersonal explored firsthand at an historic four-day meeting of twenty-two Jewish descendants of Holocaust survivors and children of Nazis at the Harvard Medical Education Center in 1992, with a replication study in Germany in 1993. The results of these researches by Dr. Weissmark comprise the main contents of her book.

In chapter two Weissmark addresses the question: “Can good people pursue heinous acts?” A detailed examination of the Eichmann trial and Milgram’s experiments underscores “the complexity of justice”; Eichmann and Milgram’s subjects saw themselves as moral and just, not evil, whereas the victims saw them as evil. Chapter three reviews the literature on “the psychology of injustice,” notably the role of revenge in restoring a sense of justice to victims. It also examines “the effects of injustice in the lives of survivors’ and Nazis’ offspring” through psychological interviews to determine the intergenerational dimension. Surprisingly, the children of Nazis felt that they and their families had suffered as victims at the end of

the war, so the children of Holocaust survivors weren't the only perceived victims.

Chapter four is devoted to an analysis of research "primarily on the link between the experience of injustice and degrading treatment." The first meeting between the children of survivors and children of Nazis is recounted, notably the cathartic experiences on both sides and the adamant need to "invalidate the others' points of view" because the parents' experiences and attitudes were passed down to the children and stood as "obstacles to establishing equal moral relations."

Chapter five analyzes the effects of having one's legacy questioned, and "for many, truly hearing the other side means to deny more than closely held ideas and passionately told tales; it means to deny their ancestors, their history, and themselves." The children of Nazis and of Holocaust survivors staunchly defended their legacies because of a deep-seated human need to belong to their group. Hypothetical reasoning can be a learning process resulting in greater open-mindedness and a readiness to hear the other side, but it will fail if the legacy inherited is one-dimensional.

Chapter six focuses on the transformative power of compassion in understanding and appreciating the suffering of another person, even a putative enemy or oppressor. Weissmark examines both how compassion is tied to a person's sense of justice and "the link between compassion and the ability to assume another individual's perspective."

The final chapter demonstrates how wrong it is to demonize all Germans as Nazis because there were Germans who risked their lives and their families to help Jews. But victims are reluctant to abandon the internalized parables of their parents, "each group of children also seeking their own justice fueled by anger, resentment, and shame." She concludes that only "the apology dynamic, offering and accepting forgiveness, is today's model for reconciliation."

The potential of this important book far exceeds its perspectives on the Holocaust for the children of the victims and victimizers, who, because of the legacy of their parents, have had their teeth set on edge. The cathartic personal encounters of the participants resulted in a paradigm shift best described, in Martin Buber's terms, from an I-It to an I-Thou relationship, a shift that enabled them to "hear the other side" and to experience the transformative power of justice as compassion. The applications of such a process in trouble spots throughout today's world is a sign of hope and poses the possibility of creating "a new relationship based on compassion."

—Michael Shinagel