



Third Edition

MORAL POLITICS

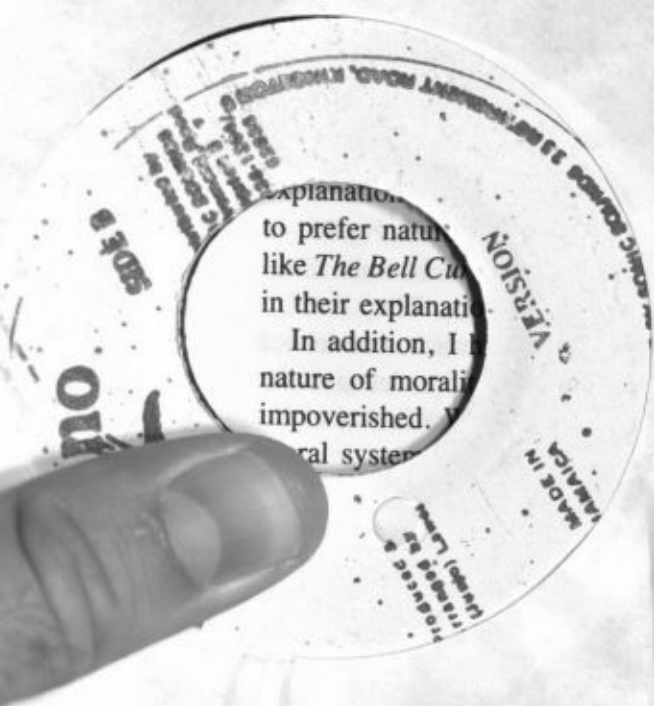
*How Liberals
and Conservatives Think*

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LAKOFF



The Basic Claim

To date, I have found only one pair of models for conservative and liberal worldviews that meets all three adequacy conditions, a pair that (1) explains why certain stands on issues go together (e.g., gun control goes with social pro-

grams goes with pro-choice goes with environmentalism); (2) explains why the puzzles for liberals are not puzzles for conservatives, and conversely; and (3) explains topic choice, word choice, and forms of reasoning in conservative and liberal discourse. Those worldviews center on two opposing models of the family.

At the center of the conservative worldview is a Strict Father model.

This model posits a traditional nuclear family, with the father having primary responsibility for supporting and protecting the family as well as the authority to set overall policy, to set strict rules for the behavior of children, and to enforce the rules. The mother has the day-to-day responsibility for the care of the house, raising the children, and upholding the father's authority. Children must respect and obey their parents; by doing so they build character, that is, self-discipline and self-reliance. Love and nurturance are, of course, a vital part of family life but can never outweigh parental authority, which is itself an expression of love and nurturance—tough love. Self-discipline, self-reliance, and respect for legitimate authority are the crucial things that children must learn.

Once children are mature, they are on their own and must depend on their acquired self-discipline to survive. Their self-reliance gives them authority over their own destinies, and parents are not to meddle in their lives.

The liberal worldview centers on a very different ideal of family life, the Nurturant Parent model:

Love, empathy, and nurturance are primary, and children become responsible, self-disciplined and self-reliant through being cared for, respected, and caring

for others, both in their family and in their community. Support and protection are part of nurturance, and they require strength and courage on the part of parents. The obedience of children comes out of their love and respect for their parents and their community, not out of the fear of punishment. Good communication is crucial. If their authority is to be legitimate, parents must explain why their decisions serve the cause of protection and nurturance. Questioning by children is seen as positive, since children need to learn why their parents do what they do and since children often have good ideas that should be taken seriously. Ultimately, of course, responsible parents have to make the decisions, and that must be clear.

The principal goal of nurturance is for children to be fulfilled and happy in their lives. A fulfilling life is assumed to be, in significant part, a nurturant life—one committed to family and community responsibility. What children need to learn most is empathy for others, the capacity for nurturance, and the maintenance of social ties, which cannot be done without the strength, respect, self-discipline, and self-reliance that comes through being cared for. Raising a child to be fulfilled also requires helping that child develop his or her potential for achievement and enjoyment. That requires respecting the child's own values and allowing the child to explore the range of ideas and options that the world offers.

When children are respected, nurtured, and communicated with from birth, they gradually enter into a lifetime relationship of mutual respect, communication, and caring with their parents.

Each model of the family induces a set of moral priorities. As we shall see below, these systems use the same moral

principles but give them opposing priorities. The resulting moral systems, put together out of the same elements, but in different order, are radically opposed.

Strict Father morality assigns highest priorities to such things as moral strength (the self-control and self-discipline to stand up to external and internal evils), respect for and obedience to authority, the setting and following of strict guidelines and behavioral norms, and so on. Moral self-interest says that if everyone is free to pursue their self-interest, the overall self-interests of all will be maximized. In conservatism, the pursuit of self-interest is seen as a way of using self-discipline to achieve self-reliance.

Nurturant Parent morality has a different set of priorities. Moral nurturance requires empathy for others and the helping of those who need help. To help others, one must take care of oneself and nurture social ties. And one must be happy and fulfilled in oneself, or one will have little empathy for others. The moral pursuit of self-interest only makes sense within these priorities.

The moral principles that have priority in each model appear in the other model, but with lesser priorities. Those lesser priorities drastically change the effect of those principles. For example, moral strength appears in the nurturance model, but it functions not for its own sake, but rather in the service of nurturance. Moral authority, in the nurturance model, functions as a consequence of nurturance. Moral guidelines are defined by empathy and nurturance. Similarly, in the Strict Father model, empathy and nurturance are present and important, but they never override authority and moral strength. Indeed, authority and strength are seen as expressions of nurturance.

What we have here are two different forms of family-based morality. What links them to politics is a common understanding of the nation as a family, with the government as parent. Thus, it is natural for liberals to see it as the function

of the government to help people in need and hence to support social programs, while it is equally natural for conservatives to see the function of the government as requiring citizens to be self-disciplined and self-reliant and, therefore, to help themselves.

This is just a mere hint of the analysis of the conservative and liberal worldviews. The details of the family models and the moral systems are far more complex and subtle and, correspondingly, so are the details of the political analysis. This overview is also too brief to discuss variations on the conservative and liberal positions. The full-blown analysis requires a lot more, beginning with a detailed account of our moral conceptual system.

HIDDEN VERSUS OVERT, DESCRIPTIVE VERSUS PRESCRIPTIVE

Before proceeding, it is crucial to put aside two common misunderstandings. The first is that many people believe that they are consciously aware of their own worldviews and that all one has to do to find out about people's views of the world is to ask them. Perhaps the most fundamental result of cognitive science is that this is not true. What people will tell you about their worldview does not necessarily accurately reflect how they reason, how they categorize, how they speak, and how they act. For this reason, someone studying political worldviews must establish adequacy conditions for an analysis, just as we have done. As we shall see, the kinds of things that conservatives and liberals say about their political worldviews do not meet these conditions of adequacy. If you ask a liberal about his political worldview, he will almost certainly talk about liberty and equality, rather than about a nurturant parent model of the family. But as we will see, such directly political ideas do not meet our adequacy conditions; they do not explain why the various liberal stands fit together, nor do they answer the puzzles or

account for topic choice, language choice, and modes of reason. Where just asking people fails, as it usually does, the cognitive scientist turns to model-building, as I have in this book. The idea is to construct a model of unconscious political worldviews that will meet those adequacy conditions as closely as possible.

A second common misconception confuses description with prescription. The models we are discussing are *descriptive*, not *prescriptive*. They are attempts to describe what people's actual unconscious worldviews are, not what they should be. Most theories of liberalism and conservatism are not concerned with description but with prescription. For example, John Rawls's celebrated theory of liberalism is not an empirical descriptive study but an attempt to characterize a prescriptive theory of justice, from which liberalism follows. As a descriptive account of actual liberal political stands on issues, it is a failure, as we shall see. My job here is to describe how people do make sense of their politics, not how they should.

The same goes for the account of morality that I am about to give. I am interested not in what morality should be, but in how our very notions of what is moral are built into our unconscious conceptual systems.

Why We Need a New Understanding of American Politics

The Failure of Liberals to Comprehend Conservatism

We are a few steps away from our denouement, from showing in detail how such an analysis of family-based moral systems contributes to an answer of the puzzles we started with and sheds light on why conservatives and liberals have the political policies they have. But first, it would be useful to show why such an account is needed. Existing attempts by liberals to understand conservative politics have failed. We will begin with three analytic failures by liberals:

1. Conservatism is "the ethos of selfishness."
2. Conservatives just believe in less government.
3. Conservatism is no more than a conspiracy of the ultrarich to protect their money and power and to make themselves even richer and more powerful.

THE SELFISHNESS HYPOTHESIS

Let us begin with the mistake of Michael Lerner of *Tikkun* magazine, whose "politics of meaning" has been endorsed

by Hillary Rodham Clinton. Lerner (*Tikkun*, November/December 1994, pp. 12, 18) gets some things right: he correctly perceives progressive-liberal politics as being centered on nurturance and community, what he calls "the ethos of caring." But he is quite mistaken when he dismisses conservative politics as being no more than "the ethos of selfishness." He has missed the conservative moral vision and missed the fact that American voters appear to be responding to that moral vision.

If Lerner were right, simple pragmatic appeals to self-interest should work on conservatives. They don't. If he were right, conservatives in California would have endorsed the Single Payer Initiative, since it would have saved them money. If he were right, conservatives would not be endorsing the replacement of AFDC welfare payments with orphanages, since orphanages cost more than AFDC does. If he were right, conservatives would not be endorsing the Three Strikes legislation and all the money to be spent on prisons that it entails. Simply pointing out to conservatives that these policies do not serve their selfish interests should end the matter right there. It has been pointed out, to no effect.

Lerner's "ethos of selfishness" hypothesis does not explain the moral fervor of the conservative majority as it took over Congress at the beginning of 1995. It does not explain the focus on family values. It doesn't even explain why the conservatives advocate the death penalty, or why they want to abolish the NEA, or why they oppose abortion. The selfishness hypothesis simply does not explain conservative policies.

THE LESS-GOVERNMENT HYPOTHESIS

Why does conservative politics take the shape it does? Why should conservatives be proposing orphanages? Abolishing the Environmental Protection Agency? Abolishing the arts

and humanities endowments? Is it merely, as is repeated over and over, that conservatives want less government and liberals want more?

That cannot be true. Conservatives don't merely want less government. They want to raise spending for the military—even bring back Star Wars—not reduce it. They want to build more prisons. There is no move to eliminate the drug enforcement agency. Or the FBI, or the intelligence agencies. There is no outcry to stop bailouts of large corporations, like Lockheed. Or eliminate nuclear power development. Or to stop funding computer research. There is no attempt to charge airlines for the training of pilots by the Air Force. Or to charge automobile companies for the building of highways. If conservatives simply wanted less government spending or wanted government to pay for itself, there are a myriad of other cuts and reforms they could be proposing. The Less-Government Hypothesis is simply false. It does not explain what conservatives do and don't want to spend money on. Conservatives want to spend on some things and not others. What determines which ones?

THE CYNICAL LIBERAL RESPONSE

Anthony Lewis (*New York Times* op-ed page, February 27, 1995) lists the following conservative budget cuts: repeal of the National School Lunch Act; ending the WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) program that has reduced infant mortality by providing nutrition to impoverished mothers and children; and legislation making it harder for investors to sue in cases of securities fraud. He comments:

Looking at that list of actions taken and planned, one can hardly miss the theme. The purpose of one measure after another is to enrich those who have money and power in our society and reduce the modest help

this country gives to the poor and the weak. Manufacturers and drug companies would gain. Sick children and poor mothers would lose.

This is an example of the cynical liberal response to conservative government.

The cynical liberal response is that conservative politicians are all tools of the ultrarich and the big, multinational corporations the rich control. Under the Reagan and Bush administrations, there was a massive redistribution of wealth toward the ultrarich, so that now the top 10 percent of families control 70 percent of the nation's wealth. The Reagan administration added three trillion dollars to the national debt, and redistributed it to the ultrarich, making the rest of the country pay interest on the debt, which amounts to 28 percent of the federal budget every year.

The cynical liberal response is that conservatives want to continue spending on (1) the means of social control such as the military, the police, the intelligence services, and prisons, and on (2) aspects of government that help make the rich richer, say, the funding of computer research, or nuclear power, or the Air Force's training of pilots which benefits the airlines, or the bailouts of large corporations.

The cynical liberal response is that the ultrarich are attempting to take over the intellectual life of the country to ensure their domination. One step has been to finance a network of right-wing think tanks. Eliminating the National Endowment for the Humanities would eliminate a major source of funding for non-right-wing research. Eliminating the Corporation for Public Broadcasting would curtail public discourse in a way that would serve thought control. Controlling the purse strings of public universities would be another step in thought control. Setting the agenda for moral education would be still another.

There is much to be said for the cynical liberal response.

Much of it is true. Yet it has major flaws and is far from the whole story. First, it is a demonization of conservatives. It assumes that they are either rich, evil, self-serving power-mongers, or their paid agents, or dupes. The conservative ranks may well contain some of each. Yet most conservatives are not rich and see themselves as working for the benefit of the country rather than for their own benefit. There are too many idealistic conservatives of good intentions and moderate means for the demonization theory to be true.

Second, the conspiracy theory attributes too much to competence and to centralized control. Political life in America is not run from the top by a smooth-functioning machine. It is messy. American politics is not something that yields readily to rational control. A well-financed smooth-functioning machine can do a lot in political organization and propaganda, but it cannot implant a totally different worldview in tens of millions of minds. It must use ideas that are already there and well respected in the culture.

Third, the conspiracy theory does not explain why conservative rhetoric can make sense to so many people who did not previously vote conservative. It does not explain why such people simply did not experience cognitive dissonance and disbelief when they heard the campaign rhetoric. The cynical liberal explanation is the Orwellian one, that any Big Lie repeated often enough will be believed. But that assumes an old-fashioned stimulus-response view of the human mind that both ignores what is known about the human brain and ignores the effects of culture. We are all immersed in American culture. Our cultural knowledge is physically encoded in the synapses of our brains. People do not get new worldviews overnight. New ideas are never entirely new. They must make use of ideas already present in the culture. No conspiracy of the ultrarich explains why conservative ideas make sense to people and what sense they make.

Fourth, the conspiracy theory does not explain the details

of conservative political positions. Why should the death penalty be in the interest of the ultrarich? How can the rich get richer on the Three Strikes and You're Out law, which requires heavy government spending on prisons? How would orphanages serve the interests of the ultrarich? Why should the ultrarich want to get rid of the National Endowment for the Arts? The conspiracy theory simply doesn't explain many important conservative policies.

Moreover, even where the ultrarich do benefit from conservative policies, a deeper explanation is in order. Why should conservative morality serve ultrarich interests? What links are there between conservative family values and the interests of the ultrarich? Simply positing a conspiracy of the ultrarich does not answer these questions.

In short, I do not believe the cynical liberal claim that the details of conservative political policies are just due to a self-serving ultrarich conspiracy, though the interests and finances of the ultrarich are certainly engaged. Indeed, I have not heard any liberal account of conservatism that makes sense of conservative policies, or the conservative worldview, or conservative language. I think there is a deeper explanation that comes out of the cultural role of the Strict Father model of the family and the moral schemes that fit that model.

The Conservative Failure to Understand Conservatism

Even the views of conservative thinkers don't really help in characterizing what conservatism is. There are three principal conservative descriptions of conservatism.

1. Conservatism is against big government.
2. Conservatism is for traditional values.
3. Conservatism is just what the Bible tells us.

We have already seen that the first is false. As for the second, take what William J. Bennett, one of the major conservative intellectuals, says:

Conservatism as I understand it . . . seeks to conserve the best elements of the past. It understands the important role that traditions, institutions, habits and authority have in our social life together, and recognizes our national institutions as products of principles developed over time by custom, the lessons of experience, and consensus. . . . Conservatism, too, is based on the belief that the social order rests upon a moral base. (References, C1: Bennett 1992, p. 35)

Bennett's account doesn't help much. It doesn't say what is to count as the "best" elements of the past and why. Racism, colonialism, witch-burning, child labor, and even the sale of children as indentured servants are not among the "best" elements of American tradition. But it is not clear by what criterion something is to count as "best." Bennett mentions traditional institutions, but government and public schools are not traditional institutions that count for conservatives. He mentions consensus, but conservatives support views where there is no consensus—anti-abortion legislation, the abolishment of social programs, and so on. He mentions a "moral base" but gives no general account of why conservative views of morality are to count as "moral," while liberal views of morality are not to count as "moral."

The same problem inheres in the claim of right-wing religious groups who state that conservatism is just a matter of following the Bible. The Bible cannot be applied to politics or much else without a lot of selection and interpretation. The National Council of Churches also urges following the Bible, but gives it a liberal interpretation. Liberation theology also follows the Bible, with an often revolutionary inter-

pretation. What, exactly, characterizes a conservative interpretation of the Bible? Until this prior question is answered adequately, it will be hard to understand just which Christians see their religion as fitting conservative politics and why. We will discuss this in Chapter 14.

What all this suggests is that conservatives themselves are not particularly good at characterizing what unifies their own political philosophy. Nor does it appear that liberals are any better at characterizing political liberalism. Theoreticians of liberalism see their job as normative, not descriptive, as saying what liberalism should be rather than describing what it actually is. Not surprisingly, the normative theoretical characterizations of liberalism do not do a very good descriptive job. Thomas Spragens, Jr., provides a typical view:

The essence of liberalism as a normative doctrine is its focus on the protection of rights as the central (perhaps the only) purpose of political society. Its essence as a social theory is its focus on autonomous and separate individuals as the sum and substance of society.

A properly ordered society, therefore, is centered around contractual relationships among these individuals. (References, C4: Spragens 1995)

This does not in any way distinguish between contemporary liberals and conservatives. The question to be asked is "Which rights count?" Conservatives declare the right to keep what you've earned, the right to own machine guns, the rights of the unborn, the right to do anything you want with your property, the right to form a private heavily armed militia, and so on. If it is liberals who fear the coercive power of the state, why is it that conservatives are trying to destroy federal power and liberals are trying to preserve it? Without an account of what rights count and what coercive powers of the state are bad, the classical theory of liberalism cannot distinguish political liberalism from conservatism.

Other classic liberal theories focus upon liberty and equality jointly. Rawls, for example, adds to liberty an account of equality in which any inequalities must benefit the most disadvantaged members of society. This tells us nothing about why political liberals favor ecology, why they are not anti-abortion, why they defend funding for the arts, and so on. From the abstract realms of liberty and equality, you can't get down to the nitty-gritty of real political stands on issues.

The communitarian critiques, on the whole, don't do much better than the classical liberal views. They correctly point out that the classical liberal myth of the autonomous individual entering into social contracts with other autonomous individuals doesn't make much sense. Individuals are not and never were autonomous. We are social through and through, and social life necessarily demands responsibilities as well as rights. But which responsibilities and why? Conservatives also stress responsibility. What's the difference?

Another common claim has to do with the liberal and conservative views of human nature: conservatives think that people are basically rotten and have to be subject to authority and disciplined, while liberals think that people are basically good and can decide what to do for themselves. That theory just doesn't jibe at all with contemporary liberal and conservative politics. Liberals don't think that people out to maximize their profit can be counted on to do the right thing—not to pollute, not to create unsafe working conditions, not to make unsafe products, not to discriminate unfairly. It's the liberals who are suspicious of human nature on many issues and the conservatives who are trusting.

Michael Lerner, as noted above, is on the right track when he talks about "the ethos of caring" as being central to liberalism. But he does not spell out just what the details of that ethos are and why it leads to the particular stands that liberals tend to hold. Moreover, conservatives, too, "care" about many things—the morals of their children, the rights

of the unborn, what is taught in our schools, the victims of crimes, the effects of our society on sex, drugs, and violence. How does the caring of conservatives differ from the caring of liberals? It is not caring alone that makes the difference.

I believe that the answer, or at least a large part of it, has to do with Strict Father and Nurturant Parent morality. I will argue that these opposed moral visions lie behind the worldview differences between conservatives and liberals. I will also argue that variations on these moral systems can explain the rich variety of positions within each camp.

The remaining step in the argument remains to be taken: what links the family and family-based morality to politics?

The Nature of the Model

The Nation As Family Metaphor

Part of our conceptual systems, whether we are liberals, conservatives, or neither, is a common metaphorical conception of the Nation As Family, with the government, or head of state representing the government, seen as an older male authority figure, typically a father. We talk about our founding *fathers*. George Washington was called "the father of his country," partly because he was the metaphorical "progenitor" who brought it into being and partly because he was seen as the ultimate legitimate head of state, which according to this metaphor is the head of the family, the father. The U.S. government has long been referred to as "Uncle Sam." George Orwell's nightmare head of state in 1984 was called "Big Brother." This has been consciously echoed in the conservatives' use of "big government." When our country goes to war, it sends its *sons* (and now its *daughters*) into battle. A *patriot* (from the Latin *pater*, "father") loves his *fatherland*. We ask God in song to "crown thy good [i.e., the good of the nation] with *brotherhood*." The metaphor even comes up in legislative argument. Senator Robert

Dole, in arguing for the balanced-budget amendment, chided liberals as thinking that "Washington knows best," a slogan based on the cliché "Father knows best," which had also been the title of a popular TV show.

Indeed, an argument regularly used for the balanced-budget amendment is that, just as a family's budget must be balanced, so must a nation's. Any economist, liberal or conservative, knows that there are many crucial differences between a family and a nation that make the analogy economically ludicrous: a family can't initiate economic stimulus programs, print new currency, or increase tax rates. Yet, despite this, the unconscious and automatic Nation As Family metaphor in our conceptual systems makes the logic seem to be just commonsense to most people.

My point is that the Nation As Family metaphor exists as part of our standard conceptual repertoire. I believe it does a lot more conceptual work than just allowing us to make sense of expressions like "Uncle Sam" or "Big Brother" or permit advocates of the balanced-budget amendment to get away with conceptualizing the nation as a family in their arguments. I believe that the Nation As Family metaphor is what links conservative and liberal worldviews to the family-based moralities we have been discussing. I believe that this metaphor projects the Strict Father and Nurturant Parent moral systems onto politics to form the conservative and liberal political worldviews.

A BIT MORE PRECISION

It's time to get a bit more precise about the model proposed. First, the Nation As Family metaphor can be stated as follows (here, for simplicity, we limit the older authority figure in the family to a parent):

- The Nation Is a Family.
- The Government Is a Parent.
- The Citizens Are the Children.

This metaphor allows us to reason about the nation on the basis of what we know about a family. For example, just as a parent functions to protect his or her children, so the government functions to protect its citizens. Certain inferences, importantly, are overridden, as is normal in conceptual metaphors. For example, citizens, for the most part, are adults and so are not treated like children. The government doesn't put you to bed, tell you a bedtime story, and so on. This is predicted by what is called the Invariance Principle (References, A1, Lakoff 1993). However, the government, like a parent, does have certain responsibilities toward its citizens and authority over them.

Notice that this metaphor does not specify exactly what kind of family the nation is. This is where the Strict Father and Nurturant Parent models come in; they fill in such information. For conservatives, the nation is conceptualized (implicitly and unconsciously) as a Strict Father family and, for liberals, as a Nurturant Parent family. The link between morality and politics arises as follows: The Strict Father and Nurturant Parent models of the family induce the two moral systems discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. The Nation As Family metaphor, in applying to the family models, also applies to the family-based moral systems, yielding conservative and liberal political worldviews.

Described from the ground up, this analysis of conservative and liberal worldviews may seem elaborate, but from the perspective of the structure of conceptual systems, it is actually very simple. Each of the elements in the analysis exists independently:

1. The two models of the family, which are culturally elaborated variants of traditional male and female models. These are rooted in long cultural experience.
2. The various metaphors for morality, in which morality is conceptualized as strength, nurturance, authority, health, and so on. These are grounded in everyday experiential well-

being: it's better to be strong rather than weak, cared for rather than not cared for, in control rather than not in control, healthy rather than sick, and so on.

3. The Nation As Family metaphor.

These elements, which exist independently, fit together naturally in certain ways. Each of the family models provides a natural organization of the metaphors for morality, as described in Chapters 5 and 6. The result is two opposing moral systems. The Nation As Family metaphor projects these two moral systems onto the domain of politics, yielding the conservative and liberal worldviews. In short, given the independent existence of the two family models, the metaphors for morality, and the Nation As Family metaphor, these two political worldviews are the minimal ways of using these conceptual elements to arrive at an approach to politics. The conservative and liberal worldviews are the results of a maximally economic use of existing conceptual resources to make sense of politics. And as we shall see below, variations on liberal and conservative worldviews are minimal variations on these models. But variations aside for the moment, the two worldviews are each very simply constituted. Each is a binding together of three kinds of independently existing elements. From the perspective of the human brain, this is very simple indeed.

EXPLANATION AND EVIDENCE

The kind of analysis I am presenting is known as cognitive modeling. It is perhaps the most common form of analysis within the cognitive sciences. The idea is to construct a model of how the mind, using natural cognitive apparatus (such as conceptual metaphors and radial categories), makes sense of some significantly wide range of phenomena, especially puzzling phenomena.

Plausible models have the kinds of properties that this model has. The most plausible models are those whose elements have an independent motivation and use minimal additional cognitive apparatus. The plausibility of the model rests on the plausibility of other claims. First, that the idealized models of the family presented are really cognitive stereotypes. Second, that the analysis of the metaphors for morality is a plausible one, based on evidence from inference and language. Thus, do we really understand morality as purity, or strength, or nurturance, and how can we tell? Some of that inferential and linguistic evidence was given above in the discussion of the metaphors. And plausible experiential bases for those metaphors were presented in Chapter 3. Third, is it plausible that our conceptual systems have a metaphor for conceptualizing a nation as a family? The considerations at the beginning of this section do seem to justify that conclusion. As conceptual analyses go in our discipline, this one has a high degree of initial plausibility. That is, it is the kind of model a cognitive linguist would expect to find.

The next question is whether the model accounts for the phenomena. These phenomena were discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. They are of three kinds. First, the model must explain why conservative and liberal political stands group together as they do. Take, for example, opposition to social programs, anti-environmentalism, anti-feminism, harsh penalties for criminals, and support of the right to own assault weapons. Why do they fit together? Second, the model must explain what puzzles liberals about conservatives and conservatives about liberals. It must explain why contradictions for one are obvious truths for the other. Third, it must account for the details of conservative and liberal discourse. It must account for how texts fit together and make sense, and it must account for how metaphorical language is used in those texts. Moreover, the model must be predictive. It must ac-

count for the modes of reasoning and metaphorical language in new texts—texts not yet produced. It must account for how conservatives and liberals come down on new issues. And it must account for new puzzles that arise. Getting any cognitive model to do all this is a tall order.

Very few of those outside the cognitive sciences are used to thinking about social and political issues in terms of the human mind. It is common to think of them in terms of economics or sociology or political philosophy or law or statistical studies that use survey data. To date none of those accounts, to my knowledge, have been able to make complete sense of the three kinds of phenomena considered here. So far as I have been able to discover, this hypothesis is the only serious attempt to explain all these phenomena together.

Since this hypothesis is new, it does not have the degree of confirmation that one would expect of more mature theories. At present, it is based solely on modeling—on whether the model is plausible and how well it accounts for the three types of data discussed. It appears to fit extremely well and to have held up predictively so far. Virtually every talk show and political speech I've listened to since working this out has confirmed the predictions of the model. That, to a cognitive modeler, is very strong empirical confirmation. But anyone would prefer to have additional confirmation, from, say, psycholinguistic tests and from survey data, if possible. I hope such studies can be undertaken in the future, but they would not be easy or straightforward. Psycholinguistic testing has begun to be able to discern the existence of conceptual metaphors in cognitive models, but no experimental paradigms of the complexity needed to test this hypothesis now exist (see References, A1, Gibbs 1994). Survey research has not yet developed an adequate methodology to test for the presence of complex metaphorical cognitive models such as these.

Let us now shift from discussing this analysis in terms of

cognitive models, evidence, explanation, and prediction to what it says about people. The analysis claims that we use unconscious cognitive models to comprehend politics, just as we use them in all other areas of our lives. Whenever we instantaneously understand a political speech, we are filling in what is not explicitly said in the speech through the use of these cognitive models. This analysis claims that the difference between conservative and liberal worldviews derives from different cognitive models of politics. The most fundamental difference, the analysis claims, the difference from which all other differences spring, is in the use of an idealized, stereotypical model of the family. The conservative model uses a Strict Father model of the family, while the liberal model uses a Nurturant Parent model of the family. Both conservative and liberal models then organize and prioritize common conceptual metaphors for morality so as to fit the family model. The resulting family-based moralities are linked to politics by a common Nation As Family metaphor. The result is two very different political worldviews.

It is important to note what the analysis does *not* claim. It does not claim that each person has only one idealized family model. Most of us probably recognize both models and use them differently. We may believe one and mock the other (though to mock it, we have to recognize it). Another possibility is that we have both models and use them differently, applying one model to family life and the other to politics.

I would not be surprised if many people applied the Strict Father model to how fathers should act and the Nurturant Parent model to how mothers should act. They may then have a model of the family with both a Strict Father and Nurturant Mother, with a separation of responsibilities and each functioning differently. Where the models contradict each other in family life, as they inevitably do, there are

many choices for resolution. Perhaps the father's model takes precedence, perhaps the mother's does, perhaps it is argued out on a case-by-case basis, or perhaps it just depends on who has the most energy that day. Now such a family, with different people using two distinct idealized family models, cannot be the basis for a coherent politics. To arrive at a coherent political worldview via the Nation As Family metaphor, one of the family models must be chosen, in the way the analysis indicates.

Of course, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, people do not necessarily have a single, coherent worldview based on a single model. For example, from 1968 to 1992 (with the exception of the Carter presidency), the voters selected a fairly conservative president and a fairly liberal Congress, creating what might be seen as a Strict Father executive and a Nurturant Mother Congress, thus reproducing a classic family model in the government, with strictness at the top and caring right below.

Thus, the analysis does not claim that there is always, or even mostly, any simple one-to-one correlation between family models and political worldviews. But I suspect that such one-to-one correlations do exist. A conceptual system with such a one-to-one correspondence between family and politics would be simpler, more unified, and more stable (or more rigid), and produce less cognitive dissonance than a system that uses different models at different times on different issues. The conservative focus on family values can be seen from this perspective as an attempt to unify the use of the Strict Father model for family life with its use as a basis for conservative politics. From the perspective of cognitive science, this is an extremely sophisticated and powerful political strategy.

It is time to move on from the general to the particular. Whatever technical or scientific merits this proposal may or may not have, its ultimate value to us as citizens is whether

it gives us real insight into our politics, which is what the next chapters are about. I will begin by showing first in Chapter 9 how these two moral systems create different categories of moral actions, of model citizens, and of demons. Then I will move on, in Chapter 10, to answer the questions we started with.

Moral Categories in Politics

Categories of Moral Action

A moral system defines how one views the world, how one comprehends hundreds of events, great and small, every day. One of the major ways in which a moral system characterizes worldview is through categorization. Each moral system creates a number of fixed major categories for moral action. Those major categories allow us to classify actions instantly into those that are moral and those that are not, with little or no reflection. Sometimes, we may have trouble fitting an action or event to a category, but mostly we barely notice that we are even classifying. These classifications may sometimes be reflected on consciously and classifications of actions may be changed when we reason consciously. But on the whole, our first unreflective classification stands.

CONSERVATIVE MORAL CATEGORIES

The conservative (Strict Father) and liberal (Nurturant Parent) moral priorities create two different systems for catego-

rizing moral actions. Let us look at them one at a time. Here is the conservative system:

Conservative categories of moral action:

1. Promoting Strict Father morality in general.
2. Promoting self-discipline, responsibility, and self-reliance.
3. Upholding the Morality of Reward and Punishment
 - a. Preventing interference with the pursuit of self-interest by self-disciplined, self-reliant people.
 - b. Promoting punishment as a means of upholding authority.
 - c. Insuring punishment for lack of self-discipline.
4. Protecting moral people from external evils.
5. Upholding the Moral Order.

I have listed five major categories. There may be more, but these are all used a great deal and will suffice for our purposes. Let us look at each category to see where it comes from in the moral system.

1. Promoting Strict Father morality.

Several metaphors imply a strict good-evil division, in particular, Moral Strength, Moral Boundaries, and Moral Authority. Moral Strength sees evil as a force in the world, reifying it and distinguishing it from good. Moral Boundaries are drawn strictly and clearly between right and wrong. And Moral Authority sets rules to be obeyed, rules that define what is right and distinguish it from what is wrong. The moral system itself, of course, is right—so right that it defines what right is. Defending that system, which defines the very nature of right and wrong, is *the* primary moral obligation. Actions promoting or protecting the moral system are therefore moral; actions against the moral system are therefore immoral.

2. Promoting self-discipline, responsibility, and self-reliance.

The primacy of Moral Strength implies that these are primary virtues. Actions promoting these primary virtues are thus moral; actions discouraging them are therefore immoral.

3. Upholding the Morality of Reward and Punishment

The very notions of reward and punishment are based on the metaphor of moral accounting, as discussed in Chapter 4.

Strict Father morality assumes that it is human nature that people operate in terms of rewards and punishments. Rewards for obedience and punishments for disobedience are crucial to maintaining moral authority; as such, they lie at the heart of this moral system and are thus moral. Actions that uphold the reward-punishment system are therefore moral. Actions against the reward-punishment system are immoral.

There are three important special cases. They are:

- 3a. Preventing interference with the pursuit of self-interest by self-disciplined, self-reliant people.

The pursuit of self-interest is a system of reward for being self-disciplined and self-reliant, which are primary moral requirements according to Moral Strength. Interfering with this system of reward for being moral is therefore immoral. Preventing such interference is therefore moral.

- 3b. Promoting punishment as a means of upholding authority.

In Strict Father morality, legitimate authority must be upheld at all costs or the moral system ceases to function. Punishment for violating authority is the main way in which authority is maintained. It is therefore moral to promote punishment for violations of legitimate authority and immoral to act against it.

3c. Insuring punishment for lack of self-discipline.

Moral Strength makes self-discipline a primary moral requirement and the lack of it immoral. Therefore, actions ensuring punishment for moral weakness are moral; actions going against punishment for moral weakness are immoral.

4. Protecting moral people from external evils.

Since protection from external evils is a fundamental part of Strict Father morality, protective actions are moral and inhibiting them is immoral.

5. Upholding the Moral Order.

Since the Moral Order defines legitimate authority, actions upholding it are moral, and actions going against it are immoral.

These categories of moral action greatly facilitate using the moral system. They provide a simplified, conventional way of putting the moral system into practice.

LIBERAL MORAL ACTION

Liberals, too, have categories of moral action, and not surprisingly, they look very different from conservative categories.

Liberal categories of moral action:

1. Empathetic behavior and promoting fairness.
2. Helping those who cannot help themselves.
3. Protecting those who cannot protect themselves.
4. Promoting fulfillment in life.
5. Nurturing and strengthening oneself in order to do the above.

Again, let us look at where they come from, one by one.

1. Empathetic behavior and promoting fairness.

The primacy of Morality as Empathy makes empathy a

moral priority. Morality as Fairness is a consequence; if you empathize with others, you will want them to be treated fairly. This makes empathetic actions and actions promoting fairness into moral actions. Correspondingly, a lack of empathetic behavior, or actions going against fairness, are immoral.

2. Helping those who cannot help themselves.

The priority given to Morality as Nurturance makes it moral to help someone who cannot help himself, and immoral not to do so if one can.

3. Protecting those who cannot protect themselves.

The priority of protection in Nurturant Parent morality makes it moral to protect those who cannot protect themselves, and immoral not to do so when one can.

4. Promoting fulfillment in life.

Moral Happiness and Moral Self-Development make it moral to promote fulfillment in life and immoral to work against it. Fulfillment includes developing your potential in a variety of areas, having meaningful work, being basically happy, and so on.

5. Nurturing and strengthening oneself in order to do the above.

To nurture properly, one must be strong and healthy and must feel nurtured oneself. Therefore acts of taking care of oneself or helping others take care of themselves are moral acts. Since being neglectful of one's health and strength imposes an unfair burden on others, it is immoral not to take care of oneself or to impede others from doing so.

For the sake of comparison, let us look at both moral category systems together:

Conservative categories of moral action:

1. Promoting Strict Father morality in general.
2. Promoting self-discipline, responsibility, and self-reliance.

3. Upholding the Morality of Reward and Punishment.
 - a. Preventing interference with the pursuit of self-interest by self-disciplined, self-reliant people.
 - b. Promoting punishment as a means of upholding authority.
 - c. Ensuring punishment for lack of self-discipline.
4. Protecting moral people from external evils.
5. Upholding the Moral Order.

Liberal categories of moral action:

1. Empathetic behavior and promoting fairness.
2. Helping those who cannot help themselves.
3. Protecting those who cannot protect themselves.
4. Promoting fulfillment in life.
5. Nurturing and strengthening oneself in order to do the above.

These categories define the first moral questions one “asks” unconsciously and automatically of any action. If it is in one of the categories, it is moral; if it is in the opposite category, it isn’t moral. Whatever other system of categories one may have—and any conceptual system has a great many—when one is functioning politically, these moral categories are primary. The categories define opposing moral worldviews, worldviews so different that virtually every aspect of public policy looks radically different through these lenses.

Take a simple example: college loans. The federal government has had a program to provide low-interest loans to college students. The students don’t have to start paying off the loans while they are still in college and the loans are interest-free during the college years. The liberal rationale for the program is this: College is expensive and a great many poor-to-middle-class students cannot afford it. This loan program allows a great many students to go to college who otherwise wouldn’t. Going to college allows one to get

a better job at a higher salary afterward and to be paid more during one's entire life. This benefits not only the student but also the government, since the student will be paying more taxes over his lifetime because of his better job.

From the liberal moral perspective, this is a highly moral program. It helps those who cannot help themselves (Category 2). It promotes fulfillment in life in two ways, since education is fulfilling in itself and it permits people to get more fulfilling jobs (Category 4). It strengthens the nation, since it produces a better-educated citizenry and ultimately brings in more tax money (Category 5); and it is empathetic behavior (Category 1) making access to college more fairly distributed (Category 1).

But through conservative spectacles, this is an immoral program. Since students depend on the loans, the program supports dependence on the government rather than self-reliance (Category 2). Since not everyone has access to such loans, the program introduces competitive unfairness, thus interfering with the free market in loans and hence with the fair pursuit of self-interest (Category 3a). Since the program takes money earned by one group and, through taxation, gives it to another group, it is unfair and penalizes the pursuit of self-interest by taking money from someone who has earned it and giving it to someone who hasn't (Category 3a).

I started with college loans because it is not as heated an issue as abortion or welfare or the death penalty or gun control. Yet it is a nitty-gritty issue, because it affects a lot of people very directly. To a liberal, it is obviously the right thing to do. And to a conservative, it is obviously the wrong thing to do. The metaphors for morality that give rise to these inferences are the following. For the liberals: Moral Empathy, Moral Nurturance, Moral Self-Development, and Moral Self-Nurturance. For the conservatives: Moral Strength, Moral Self-Interest, and Moral Accounting (the

metaphorical basis of the concepts of Reward and Punishment).

The point of this example is that policy debates are not matters of rational discussion on the basis of literal and objective categories. The categories that shape the debate are moral categories; those categories are defined in terms of different family-based conceptions of morality, which give priority to different metaphors for morality. The debate is not a matter of objective, means-end rationality or cost-benefit analysis or effective public policy. It is not just a debate about the particular issue, namely, college loans. The debate is about the right form of morality, and that in turn comes down to the question of the right model of the family. The role of morality and the family is inescapable, even if you are only talking about college loans policy.

Model Citizens and Demons

Conservative and liberal categories for moral action create for each moral system a notion of a model citizen—an ideal prototype—a citizen who best exemplifies forms of moral action.

CONSERVATIVE MODEL CITIZENS

In the conservative moral worldview, the model citizens are those who best fit all the conservative categories for moral action. They are those (1) who have conservative values and act to support them; (2) who are self-disciplined and self-reliant; (3) who uphold the morality of reward and punishment; (4) who work to protect moral citizens; and (5) who act in support of the moral order. Those who best fit all these categories are successful, wealthy, law-abiding conservative businessmen who support a strong military and a strict criminal justice system, who are against government regulation,

and who are against affirmative action. They are the model citizens. They are the people whom all Americans should emulate and from whom we have nothing to fear. They deserve to be rewarded and respected.

These model citizens fit an elaborate mythology. They have succeeded through hard work, have earned whatever they have through their own self-discipline, and deserve to keep what they have earned. Through their success and wealth they create jobs, which they "give" to other citizens. Simply by investing their money to maximize their earnings, they become philanthropists who "give" jobs to others and thereby "create wealth" for others. Part of the myth is that these model citizens have been given nothing by the government and have made it on their own. The American Dream is that any honest, self-disciplined, hard-working person can do the same. These model citizens are seen by conservatives as the Ideal Americans in the American Dream.

CONSERVATIVE DEMONS

Correspondingly, conservatives have a demonology. Conservative moral categories produce a categorization of citizens-from-hell: anti-ideal prototypes. These nightmare citizens are those who, by their very nature, violate one or more of the conservative moral categories; and the more categories they violate, the more demonic they are.

CATEGORY 1 DEMONS: Those who are against conservative values (e.g., Strict Father morality). Feminists, gays, and other "deviants" are at the top of the list, since they condemn the very nature of the Strict Father family. Others are the advocates of multiculturalism, who reject the primacy of the Strict Father; postmodern humanists, who deny the existence of any absolute values; egalitarians,

who are against moral authority, the moral order, and any other kind of hierarchy.

CATEGORY 2 DEMONS: Those whose lack of self-discipline has led to a lack of self-reliance. Unwed mothers on welfare are high on the list, since their lack of sexual self-control has led to their dependence on the state. Others are unemployed drug users, whose drug habit has led to their being unable to support themselves; able-bodied people on welfare—they can work and they aren't working, so (in this land of opportunity) they are assumed to be lazy and dependent on others.

CATEGORY 3 DEMONS: Protectors of the "public good." Included here are environmentalists, consumer advocates, advocates of affirmative action, and advocates of government-supported universal health care who want the government to interfere with the pursuit of self-interest and thus constrain the business activities of the conservatives' model citizens.

CATEGORY 4 DEMONS: Those who oppose the ways that the military and criminal justice systems have operated. They include antiwar protesters, advocates of prisoners' rights, opponents of police brutality, and so on. Gun control advocates are high on this list, since they would take guns away from those who need them to protect themselves and their families both from criminals and from possible government tyranny. Abortion doctors may be the worst, since they directly kill the most innocent people of all, the unborn.

CATEGORY 5 DEMONS: Advocates of equal rights for women, gays, nonwhites, and ethnic Americans. They work to upset the moral order.

The demon-of-all-demons for conservatives is, not surprisingly, Hillary Clinton! She's an uppity woman (Category 5, opposing the moral order), a former antiwar activist who is

pro-choice (Category 4), a protector of the "public good" (Category 3), someone who gained her influence not on her own but through her husband (Category 2), and a supporter of multiculturalism (Category 1). It would be hard for the conservatives to invent a better demon-of-all-demons.

These categories are extremely stable and they resist efforts at change. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich found this out shortly after the 1994 elections, when he sought to recategorize the best model citizens of all—large successful corporations and the people who run them. Reich attempted to use the conservative demonization of welfare recipients against the conservative conception of model citizens. He attacked big corporations and the ultrarich for being recipients of "corporate welfare." Reich pointed out that large corporations owned by the ultrarich receive from the government huge amounts of money that they do not earn: money from inordinately cheap grazing rights, mineral and timber rights, infrastructure development that supports their businesses, agricultural price supports, and hundreds of other kinds of enormous government largesse that come out of the taxpayer's pocketbook—an amount far exceeding the cost of social programs. If the government eliminated corporate welfare, Reich argued, then it could easily afford social programs to help the poor.

Reich's attempt to turn the conservatives' model citizens into conservative demons was doomed to failure, and it fell flat immediately. The reason is clear. The status of successful corporations and the ultrarich as model citizens has become conventionalized—fixed in the conservative mind. They are icons, standard examples to conservatives of what model citizens are. Moreover, they do not fit the stereotype of welfare recipients. They are seen as self-disciplined, energetic, competent, and resourceful rather than self-indulgent, lazy, unskilled, and hapless.

Reich's attempt to call attention to the enormous unearned

largesse bestowed by the government on big corporations failed because he did not really understand the conservative worldview and the cognitive structure underlying American politics. The conservative heroes and demons are what they are for the deepest of reasons, because conservatism rests on a widespread, deeply entrenched family-based moral system. You don't change that with a single speech.

LIBERAL MODEL CITIZENS

Liberals have a very different notion of a model citizen, again generated by liberal moral categories. The ideal liberal citizen is socially responsible, and fits as many of the liberal moral categories as possible. The model liberal citizen (1) is empathetic; (2) helps the disadvantaged; (3) protects those who need protection; (4) promotes and exemplifies fulfillment in life; and (5) takes care of himself so he can do all this. Model liberal citizens are those who live a socially responsible life: they include socially responsible professionals; environmental, consumer, and minority rights advocates; union organizers among impoverished and badly treated workers; doctors and social workers who devote their lives to helping the poor and the elderly; peace advocates, educators, artists, and those in the healing professions. Interestingly, there does not seem to be any identifiable type in American life that is a model citizen in all of these ways. There have certainly been individuals who have been models in one or another of these ways, e.g., Martin Luther King, Jr., Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, John and Robert Kennedy, and, for many, Hillary Clinton.

LIBERAL DEMONS

There is, of course, as rich a liberal demonology as there is a conservative one. Those who violate categories 1 to 5 are the monsters of society.

CATEGORY 1 DEMONS: The mean-spirited, selfish, and unfair—those who have no empathy and show no sense of social responsibility. Wealthy companies and businessmen who only care about profit are at the top of the list, because of their power and political influence.

CATEGORY 2 DEMONS: Those who would ignore, harm, or exploit the disadvantaged. Union-busting companies are a classic example, as are large agricultural firms that exploit farm workers, say, by exposing them to poisonous pesticides and paying them poorly.

CATEGORY 3 DEMONS: Those whose activities hurt people or the environment. They include violent criminals and out-of-control police, polluters, those who make unsafe products or engage in consumer fraud, developers with no sense of ecology, and large companies that make extensive profits from government subsidies (e.g., mining, grazing, water, and lumber subsidies) by contributing to the coffers of politicians.

CATEGORY 4 DEMONS: Those who are against public support of education, art, and scholarship.

CATEGORY 5 DEMONS: Those who are against the expansion of health care for the general public.

If there is a demon-of-all-demons for liberals, it is Newt Gingrich.

It should come as no surprise that conservative model citizens are often liberal demons, and conversely. Now that we know what conservatives and liberals consider basic moral categories, model citizens, and citizens-from-hell, other general political and social attitudes fall into place.

Incidentally, the theory given here explains many things: why we have the categories of moral actions that we have, why we have the model citizens we have, and why we have the demons we have. The categories for moral actions arise

from the metaphors in the moral system. The model citizens and demons arise from the categories of moral actions.

Categories of Policies

The college loan program is illustrative of the great gulf between conservative and liberal moral categories. But it is, in itself, not a very interesting example, since it is not general enough. College loans are not a great issue of our time, the way, say, affirmative action, environmentalism, and abortion are. A more enlightening way to look at the way moral categorization affects public policy is to consider how whole classes of policies fit into the moral categories of liberals and conservatives.

In the next chapter, we will begin to use conservative and liberal moral categories, model citizenry, and demonology to answer the questions we started with about the great issues. Why do stands on the great issues cluster as they do, with opponents of gun control also opposed to social programs, progressive taxation, gay rights, multiculturalism, and abortion, and so on, while proponents of gun control have the opposite views on these issues. What is the logic behind this clustering? And what is the logic that each side uses against the other?

VARIATIONS

As you read through the next several chapters, recall that their purpose is to account for those who (1) have a coherent politics, that is, those who are strictly liberal or strictly conservative, and (2) those liberals and conservatives who share the central model. But many readers either do not have a coherent politics or are not central cases of liberals or conservatives. As a result, many readers will feel, rightfully, that one position or other that I am discussing does not apply to

them. The reason, I believe, is that such readers are not prototypical, and I am describing central prototypes. Many readers thus will either fall under one of the variants of the central model, or have some mix of both liberal and conservative political attitudes. The parameters of variation on the central models will be described in Chapter 17, and those variations should account for a great many more readers' views.

The study of variations is a very important part of this project, since the analysis of the central cases predicts that certain ranges of variations should occur. Systematic variations based on fixed parameters of variation are not counterexamples to such a theory; rather they are confirmatory instances.

Social Programs and Taxes

The metaphor of the Nation As Family is part of the conceptual systems of both liberals and conservatives. In that metaphor, the government is a parent. But what kind of parent, according to what model of parenting?

Liberals apply the Nurturant Parent model. Consequently, it is natural for liberals to see the federal government as a strong nurturant parent, responsible for making sure that the basic needs of its citizens are met: food, shelter, education, health care, and opportunities for self-development. A government that lets many of its citizens go hungry, homeless, uneducated, or sick while the majority of its citizens have more, often much more, than these basic needs met is an immoral, irresponsible government. And citizens who are not willing to support such governmental obligations are immoral, irresponsible citizens.

Social programs are also seen by liberals as ways for the government to simultaneously help people (Category 2) and strengthen itself (Category 5). From this perspective, social programs are conceptualized metaphorically as investments—investments in presently unproductive citizens

(those who do not pay taxes and who use up government funds) to make them into productive citizens (those who do pay taxes and can contribute to society). The measure of a social program is whether it produces a return on the investment. A social program that doesn't work is a bad investment. The question is not whether to have social programs, but rather which ones work well, that is, which ones produce dividends in the long run.

Liberals also conceptualize social programs as investments in communities. By putting money into the hands of people who don't have it, the government creates jobs in poor communities. People with those jobs spend money, which creates more jobs, and so on. If this is done wisely, there can be a multiplier effect and the result can be a net creation of wealth for the society as a whole. Here the metaphor is one of investing in communities, instead of, or in addition to, investing in individuals. This too is in moral action Category 5.

Liberals also see many social programs as functioning to promote fairness (Category 1). They see certain people and groups of people as "disadvantaged." For historical, social, or health reasons, which are not faults of their own, such people have been prevented from being able to compete fairly in pursuit of their self-interest. Racism, sexism, poverty, the lack of education, and homophobia are seen not only as barriers to empathy and nurturance, but also as barriers to the free pursuit of self-interest and self-development by disadvantaged individuals and groups. For liberals, it is the job of the government to maintain fairness, in the service of both moral self-interest and self-development. Hence it is the job of the government to "level the playing field" for the disadvantaged. This is why liberals support affirmative action.

Conservatives, on the other hand, apply the Strict Father model of parenting to the Nation As Family metaphor. To them, social programs amount to coddling people—spoiling

them. Instead of having to learn to fend for themselves, people can depend on the public dole. This makes them morally weak, removing the need for self-discipline and will-power. Such moral weakness is a form of immorality. And so, conservatives see social programs as immoral, affirmative action included.

The myth of America as the Land of Opportunity reinforces this. If anyone, no matter how poor, can discipline himself to climb the ladder of opportunity, then those that don't do so have only themselves to blame. The Ladder-of-Opportunity metaphor is an interesting one. It implies that the ladder is there, that everyone has access to it, and that the only thing involved in becoming successful and being able to take care of oneself is putting out the energy to climb it. If you are not successful, then it is your own fault. You just haven't tried hard enough.

From this perspective, a morally justifiable social program might be something like disaster relief to help self-disciplined and generally self-reliant people get back on their feet after a flood or fire or earthquake. There is a world of difference, from the conservative perspective, between having government help a victim of a natural disaster (who does not have himself to blame for his misfortune) and having government help someone who is merely poor (who, in this land of opportunity, has only himself to blame for his poverty).

In addition, there is a related consideration that militates against social programs in the conservative worldview, what we have called the Morality of Reward and Punishment.

Strict Father morality assumes that it is human nature to be motivated by rewards and deterred by punishments. If people were not rewarded for being moral and punished for being immoral, there would be no morality. If people were not rewarded for being self-disciplined and punished for being slothful, there would be no self-discipline and society

would break down. Therefore, any social or political system in which people get things they don't earn, or are rewarded for lack of self-discipline or for immoral behavior, is simply an immoral system. Conservatives see the very existence of social programs as unnatural and immoral in this way.

It is for this reason that any form of socialism or communism is seen by conservatives as immoral, and why, for many conservatives, any social program is seen as a form of socialism or communism. Here is a particularly clear statement of the position, explicitly linking political conservatism with childrearing according to the Strict Father model. The statement is by James Dobson, from the updated version of his classic book, *The New Dare to Discipline* (References, B3, Dobson 1992). Dobson is the country's most influential spokesman for conservative family values among conservative Christians. The quotation comes from a section on the importance of behaviorist principles in raising children.

Our entire society is established on a system of reinforcement, yet we don't want to apply it where it is needed most: with young children. . . . Rewards make responsible efforts worthwhile. That's the way the adult world works.

The main reason for the overwhelming success of capitalism is that hard work and personal discipline is rewarded in many ways. The great weakness of socialism is the absence of reinforcement; why should a man struggle to achieve if there is nothing special to be gained? This is, I believe, the primary reason why communism failed miserably in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. There was no incentive for creation and "sweat equity." . . .

Communism and Socialism are *destroyers* of motivation, because they penalize creativity and effort. The law of reinforcement is violated by the very na-

ture of those economic systems. Free enterprise works hand in hand with human nature.

Some parents implement a miniature system of socialism at home. Their children's wants and desires are provided by the "State," and are not linked to diligence or discipline in any way. However, they expect little Juan or René to carry responsibility simply because it is noble of them to do so. They want them to learn and sweat for the sheer joy of personal accomplishment. Most of them are not going to buy it (Dobson, *The New Dare to Discipline*, pp. 88-89).

Here Dobson makes explicit the link between Strict Father family values and conservative politics. Social programs subvert human nature. They violate the very thing that, in Strict Father morality, makes morality possible: rewards for discipline and punishment for lack of it. Rush Limbaugh belittled the very idea of national health care as "Rodhamized medicine," after superdemon Hillary Rodham Clinton (References, C1, Limbaugh 1993, p. 171). When he did so, conservatives in his audience understood that he was invoking this view of the immorality of social programs in general.

As we shall see below, the principle of the Morality of Reward and Punishment plays an enormous role in the conservative worldview. The reward side rules out any government distribution of wealth or benefits that is not based on free market competition, and it makes the right to the disposition of private property absolute; the punishment side focuses the criminal justice system on retribution. That is a lot for one principle to do, and as we shall see it is central to a great many conservative stands, aside from social programs.

We can now see clearly why liberal arguments for social programs can make no sense at all to conservatives, whether they are arguments on the basis of compassion, fairness, wise investment, financial responsibility, or outright self-interest.

The issue for conservatives is a moral issue touching the very heart of conservative morality, a morality where a liberal's compassion and fairness are neither compassionate nor fair. Even financial arguments won't carry the day. The issue isn't about money, it's about morality.

President Clinton's Americorps program is a very clear example. It is a double social program: a college loan program and a program to help local communities. The Americorps program allows students to pay off their college loans by working for social programs in local communities.

Since the social programs are immoral for conservatives, so is any program that uses government money to pay for workers in such programs. The government's offer to pay off college loans in this way provides a financial incentive for students to work in such programs. Conservatives see such an incentive as a form of pressure placed by the government on students to engage in an immoral activity. Moreover, paying the students constitutes a second social program, which is doubly immoral.

From a conservative perspective, the students are being coddled through the government's provision of a ready-made way for them to pay off their loans; the disciplined conservative alternative would be for students to have to find jobs for themselves in the workplace to pay off loans. Since the students are not seen as doing honest, productive work in the free market when they work in a social program, they are not seen as earning their loan payoff. And since not every citizen can get loans paid off in this way, getting such a loan at low rates is a form of payment for something unearned. Even worse, from the conservative viewpoint, Americorps gives both students and people in communities the idea that the government and individuals *should* be engaging in such activities—that communities should have people paid by the government to come in and help and that helping in

such communities is an acceptable form of national service. Americorps, for conservatives, is immoral through and through.

Liberals, of course, have a different moral perspective on social programs. Nurturant Parent morality, applied to politics, makes social programs moral, as we saw above. A double social program—at the same time helping communities and the students who work in them—is doubly moral. And the idea that helping such communities is an excellent form of national service is another plus, which makes it triply moral. That is why it is one of President Clinton's favorite programs.

What we have here are major differences in moral worldview. They are not just differences of opinion about effective public administration. The differences are not about efficiency, or practicality, or economics, and they cannot be settled by rational argument about effective administration. They are ethical opinions about what makes good people and a good nation.

What is at issue in the debate over social programs is the very notion of what morality is and how morality applies to government. There is no morally neutral concept of government. The question is which morality will be politically dominant.

From this perspective, we can see why certain conservative proposals have puzzled liberals. Take, for example, Newt Gingrich's proposal that AFDC children be taken away from their mothers and placed in orphanages. How did this support family values? Or Nancy Reagan's alternative to programs to combat teen pregnancy and AIDS by the distribution of condoms to high school students and clean needles to impoverished drug addicts. The First Lady's proposed solution was not to have such programs, but instead to tell the high school students and drug addicts to "Just say no." Both the Gingrich and Reagan proposals seemed idiotic to

liberals, but made sense to conservatives. The reasons should now be relatively obvious.

Orphanages

Why should conservatives have proposed that the children of welfare mothers be put in orphanages, even though orphanages may cost more than giving welfare to help mothers to raise their children themselves. Welfare, as a social program, is immoral under conservative values. How does it serve family values to take children away from the only families they have ever known? If the family values are Strict Father values, the answer is clear. To conservatives the problem is the lack of Strict Father values, beginning with self-discipline. They see welfare mothers as not having those values themselves, and not raising their children to have those values. They see orphanages as institutions that will inculcate those values. They believe that, if the children of welfare mothers are raised to have Strict Father values, then the cycle of dependency, immorality, and lawlessness will stop, and that this will help solve the problems of crime and drugs as well. As to the observation that orphanages impose hardships on children and that the children would be denied their mother's love, the conservative reply is clear: These children need to learn the discipline to overcome hardships and they need to learn Strict Father values more than they need the love of a mother who doesn't teach those values. Orphanages may cost the taxpayer more, but if they contribute to a moral society they are worth paying for.

Just Say No

Nancy Reagan's proposed solution to the problem of drugs was to tell children to "Just say no." That idea made no sense to liberals, who saw drug problems as having to do

with despair over social conditions, with peer pressure, and with entrapment into addiction.

But to conservatives whose value system gives priority to Moral Strength, the problem of drugs is the personal lack of the moral strength to just say no. It is a problem of personal values, not of social change or drug treatment centers. The conservative answer to the drug problem is the inculcation of Strict Father values, especially the teaching of self-discipline. People without such discipline, who can't say no, are immoral and deserve punishment. They should be imprisoned for drug use.

This is the same as the conservative answer to teen pregnancy and the spread of AIDS. Don't give out condoms or clean needles, as liberals urge. That just encourages promiscuity. Instead, be tough and teach self-discipline, self-restraint, and abstinence. In a moral system in which morality is correlated with self-discipline and chastity and following societal norms, the moral people won't get pregnant or get AIDS. And the immoral people. . . . Well, they have to learn to be responsible for their actions and they deserve what they get if they don't learn. In the short run some people will get hurt, but in the long run, if a societal standard of behavior is set and adhered to, the nation as a whole will be better off.

IMMIGRATION

Within Strict Father morality, illegal immigrants are seen as lawbreakers ("illegals") who should be punished. People who hire them are just pursuing their self-interest, as they should, and so are doing nothing wrong. From the perspective of the Nation As Family metaphor, illegal immigrants are not citizens, hence they are not children in *our* family. To be expected to provide food, housing, and health care for illegal immigrants is like being expected to feed, house, and

care for other children in the neighborhood who are coming into our house without permission. They weren't invited, they have no business being here, and we have no responsibility to take care of them.

From the perspective of Nurturant Parent morality, powerless people with no immoral intent are seen as innocent children needing nurturance. For the most part, illegal immigrants fall into this category.

Illegal immigrants are seen as innocent poor people looking for a better life who are often exploited, for example, when they are lured or brought into the U.S. by employers who are willing to break the law to increase their profit. The stigma of illegality and the enforcement of the law should, in such cases, focus on law-breaking employers.

Illegal immigrants typically perform low-status tasks cheaply that citizens will not do for those wages: farm, sweatshop, and restaurant labor, housecleaning, childcare, gardening, odd jobs, and so on. They are a necessary part of the economy, keeping farm and garment-making profits high and food and clothing costs low. They allow families in the middle class and above to have two-job households by providing housecleaning, childcare, gardening, cheap fast food, and so on. When they do this, they support the lifestyles of better-off people, providing an important service to a great many people. They increase the nation's tax base by permitting middle-class families to have two incomes and allowing many industries to make high profits that are subject to taxation. Out of fairness, they deserve to be compensated for their low pay by having their basic needs guaranteed. Since illegal immigrants historically have become citizens, they should be seen as citizens in the making.

Through the Nation As Family metaphor, they are seen as children who have been lured or brought into the national household and who contribute in a vital way to that national

household. You don't throw such children out onto the street. It would be immoral.

Here we can see the Nation As Family metaphor playing a critical and almost direct role in the form of reasoning.

Taxation

Dan Quayle, in his acceptance speech at the 1992 Republican convention, attacked the idea of progressive taxation, in which the rich are taxed at a higher rate than the poor. His argument went like this: "Why," he asked, "should the best people be punished?" The line brought thunderous applause.

It should now be clear why, from the conservative worldview, the rich should be seen as "the best people." They are the model citizens, those who, through self-discipline and hard work, have achieved the American Dream. They have earned what they have and deserve to keep it. Because they are the best people—people whose investments create jobs and wealth for others—they should be rewarded. Taking money away is conceptualized as harm, financial harm; that is the metaphorical basis of seeing taxation as punishment. When the rich are taxed more than others for making a lot more money, they are, according to conservatives, being punished for being model citizens, for doing what, according to the American Dream, they are supposed to do.

Taxation of the rich is, to conservatives, punishment for doing what is right and succeeding at it. It is a violation of the Morality of Reward and Punishment. In the conservative worldview, the rich have earned their money and, according to the Morality of Reward and Punishment, deserve to keep it. Taxation—the forcible taking of their money from them against their will—is seen as unfair and immoral, a kind of theft. That makes the federal government a thief. Hence, a

common conservative attitude toward the government: You can't trust it, since, like a thief, it's always trying to find ways to take your money.

Liberals, of course, see taxation through very different lenses. In Nurturant Parent morality, the well-being of all children matters equally. Those children who need less care, the mature and healthy children, simply have a duty to help care for those who need more, say, younger or infirm children. The duty is a matter of moral accounting. They have received nurturance from their parents and owe it to the other children if it is needed. In the Nation As Family metaphor, citizens who have more have a duty to help out those who have much less. Progressive taxation is a form of meeting this duty. Rich conservatives who are trying to get out of paying taxes are seen as selfish and mean-spirited. The nation has helped provide for them and it is their turn to help provide for others. They owe it to the nation. What is punishment and theft to conservatives is civic duty and fairness to liberals.

There are, of course, other ways of conceptualizing taxation, proposals that stand outside of the Strict Father and Nurturant Parent models. These are proposals that come from the business community.

The government is commonly conceptualized as a business. If it is seen as a service industry, taxes can be seen as payment for services provided to the public. Those services can include protection (by the military, the criminal justice system, and regulatory agencies), adjudication of disputes (by the judiciary and other agencies), social insurance (as in Social Security and Medicare and various "safety nets"), and so on.

Under the conceptualization of government as a business that provides services to the public, the questions asked are whether the service is cost-effective and efficient, whether

the public is getting the kind of services it wants and needs, and whether the public is willing to pay for the services it wants. If taxes are conceptualized as what you pay for government services, then they are neither punishment nor theft nor civic duty.

One might, at first glance, think that such a conceptualization of government might be compatible with conservative moral views. The reasoning goes like this: Conservatives are pro-business. Why wouldn't they want to see the government operate as a business, in this case a service industry? It would force government to become efficient and cost-effective (see References, D1, Barzelay 1992).

Indeed, President Clinton's "Reinventing Government" program, under the direction of Vice-President Al Gore, has many of these elements. But as Rush Limbaugh would probably say if he got the chance, "A rose by any other name smells just as. . . ." The government may be downsized, streamlined, and made more efficient and cost-effective. It may be de-bureaucratized and made much more responsive to the public. Taxation may be reconceptualized as payment for services. But from the perspective of conservative morality, it is still taxation. It violates the Morality of Reward and Punishment in two ways. First, you don't have a choice as to whether to purchase this service. The government still takes the tax money you've earned, which by the Morality of Reward and Punishment, you deserve to keep. Second, it is still a huge system that does not work by the Morality of Reward and Punishment. It is an enormous system in which the incentive for profit motive does not apply, and the Morality of Reward and Punishment sees such systems as serving the immoral purpose of removing the incentive of reward, the very basis of morality.

You may metaphorically think of the government as a business, and bring principles of good business practice to it, and make it responsive to the public as a good service

industry would be, but the government will still not be a profit-making enterprise. That is why conservatives want to privatize government as much as possible. And it is why President Clinton's successes in streamlining government and making it more cost-effective did not earn him high marks with conservatives.

Taxation is not merely *a* moral issue; the very basis of morality is at stake! That is why the issue of taxation is at the very heart of conservative moral politics.

Military Spending

Ronald Reagan came into office pledging to spend less on government. Yet he increased the military budget significantly. Was this a contradiction?

In the summer of 1995, the conservative House of Representatives cut billions out of programs for the poor—\$137 million from Project Head Start alone. Yet the conservative House, ostensibly committed to budget cutting, allocated to the military \$7 billion more than it had requested. It also supported the reinstitution of expensive and controversial Star Wars research (see References, D2, S. Lakoff and H. F. York, 1989).

Why are conservatives, who say they want to spend less on government, allocating much more to the military than it even requests in inflated estimates? Given that the Cold War is over and we are not in danger of invasion, why do conservatives want to increase military spending, even though it means bigger government?

In the Strict Father model, it is the duty of the strict father to protect his family above all else. By the Nation As Family metaphor, this implies that the major function of the government is, above all else, to protect the nation. That is why conservatives see the funding of the military as moral, while the funding of social programs is seen as immoral.

There is more than a little irony in this. The military is, on the inside, a huge social program, with its own health care, schools, housing, pensions, education benefits, PX discounts, officers' clubs, golf courses, and so on—all paid for at public expense. But the military represents the strength of the nation, and strength has the highest priority in the Strict Father model.

Moreover, the military itself is structured by Strict Father morality. It has a hierarchical authority structure, which is mostly male and sets strict moral bounds. The ethic of moral strength has priority: Everything is keyed to hierarchical authority, self-discipline, building strength, and fighting evils. It is the principal governmental institution that embodies Strict Father morality. Supporting the military as an institution is supporting the culture of Strict Father morality. This makes the military sacrosanct to conservatives. Since it functions in support of conservative morality, conservatives see it as worthy of support even beyond its protective function.

Liberals, focusing on issues of nurturance, see other priorities as more important than the military. They note that the U.S. spends more on its military than the rest of the world combined. Given that we are not in danger of being invaded, and given the end of the Cold War, liberals see no need for much of the military spending. At present, the U.S. is prepared to fight two wars on two fronts, which is seen as overkill. We still maintain 100,000 NATO troops in Europe, which to many liberals is pointless. Much of the money spent on the military could be spent in much better ways, strictly from the point of view of cost-effective government.

But to conservatives, support for the military is support for conservative values. People who go through the military often enter with Strict Father moral values or acquire them. To spend less money on the military is to weaken Strict Father morality—and political conservatism. Correspondingly, for liberals, spending less money on the military

means freeing up more for social programs. That, for liberals, is a means to a moral end.

Morality, Not Just Money

Throughout this section of the book, I will be arguing that political policies have everything to do with moral visions—for both liberals and conservatives. The conservative political agenda, for example, is not merely to cut the cost of government. The conservative agenda, as we shall see, is a moral agenda, just as the liberal agenda is.

Consider, for example, the issue of the deficit. How did it get so large?

Liberals like to think of Ronald Reagan as stupid. Whether he was or not, those around him certainly were not. While constantly attacking liberals as big spenders, the Reagan and Bush administrations added three trillion dollars to the national debt by drastically increasing military spending while cutting taxes for the rich. They could count; they saw the deficit increasing. They blamed the increases on liberal spending, but Reagan did not veto every spending bill. Moreover, Reagan's own actions accounted for much of the deficit increase. Had financial responsibility and the lessening of spending been Reagan's top priorities, he would not have allowed such an increase in the deficit, simply by not cutting taxes and not pushing for a military buildup far beyond the Pentagon's requests.

While the deficit was increasing, there was a vast shift of wealth away from the lower and middle classes toward the rich. Liberals, cynically, saw this shift as Reagan and Bush making their friends and their political supporters rich. Certainly that was the effect. It is hardly new for the friends and supporters of politicians in power to get rich. This is usually seen as immorality and corruption, and with good reason. Many liberals saw Reagan that way.

But Ronald Reagan did not consider himself as immoral. Certainly he and his staff could tell that their policies were producing vast increases in the deficit, when they had come into office promising a balanced budget. Reagan was not forced to pursue deficit-increasing policies. Why did he do so?

I would like to suggest that he pursued deficit-increasing policies in the service of what he saw as overriding *moral* goals: (1) Building up the military to protect America from the evil empire of Soviet communism. (2) Lowering taxes for the rich, so that enterprise was rewarded not punished. Interestingly, for President Reagan as for any good conservative, these policies, however different on the surface, were instances of the same underlying principle: the Morality of Reward and Punishment.

What was evil in Soviet communism, for Reagan as for other conservatives, was not just totalitarianism. Certainly Soviet totalitarianism was evil, but the U.S. had supported capitalist totalitarian dictatorships willingly while overthrowing a democratically elected communist government in Chile. The main evil of communism for Reagan, as for most conservatives, was that it stifled free enterprise. Since communism did not allow for free markets (open to Western companies) or for financially rewarding entrepreneurship, it violated the basis of the Strict Father moral system: the Morality of Punishment and Reward.

Adding three trillion dollars to the deficit actually served a moral purpose for Ronald Reagan. It meant that, sooner or later, the deficit would force an elimination of social programs. He knew perfectly well that the military budget would never be seriously cut, and that a major increase in tax revenues to eliminate the deficit would never be agreed upon. In the long run, the staggering deficit would actually serve Strict Father morality—conservative morality—by forcing Congress to cut social programs. From the perspective of Strict

Father morality, Ronald Reagan looks moral and smart, not immoral and dumb as many liberals believe.

The ultimate conservative agenda, as I will be arguing in the following pages, is moral, not financial. It is a thorough political revamping of America in the service of a moral revolution, a revolution that conservatives believe will make Americans better people and improve American life. So far as I can tell, the main issue in every conservative political policy is morality—good versus evil. There is nothing surprising in this. Conservatives consider themselves moral people and they talk about morality and the family constantly. But to liberals, who have their own very different moral system, conservative policies are so immoral that any conservative discussion of morality is taken as demagoguery.

Of course, liberals also see their policies as moral and their overall politics as serving moral goals. Conservatives, however, talk as if liberals were degenerates opposed to morality; as if they were corrupted by special interests; as if they loved expensive and inefficient bureaucracy; as if they wanted to take away the rights of citizens. Each side sees the other as immoral, corrupt, and lunkheaded. Neither side wants to see the other as moral in any way. Neither side wants to recognize that there are two opposed, highly-structured, well-grounded, widely accepted, and utterly contradictory moral systems at the center of American politics.

The failure to see that politics is fundamentally about morality demeans American politics. It makes all politicians look immoral. And it hides the deep logic behind political positions.