

other groups (particularly the working-class groups) made much more use of the ethic of community, and a bit more use of the ethic of divinity.¹⁴

Soon after I arrived in Chicago, I applied for a Fulbright fellowship to spend three months in India, where I hoped to get a closer look at the ethic of divinity. (It had been the rarest of the three ethics in my dissertation data.) Because I was able to draw on Shweder's extensive network of friends and colleagues in Bhubaneswar, the capital city of Orissa, it was easy for me to put together a detailed research proposal, which was funded. After spending a year in Chicago reading cultural psychology and learning from Shweder and his students, I flew off to India in September 1993.

HOW I BECAME A PLURALIST

I was extraordinarily well hosted and well treated. I was given the use of a lovely apartment, which came with its own full-time cook and servant.¹⁵ For \$5 a day I rented a car and driver. I was welcomed at the local university by Professor Biranchi Puhar, an old friend of Shweder's, who gave me an office and introduced me to the rest of the psychology department, from which I recruited a research team of eager students. Within a week I was ready to begin my work, which was supposed to be a series of experiments on moral judgment, particularly violations of the ethics of divinity. But these experiments taught me little in comparison to what I learned just from stumbling around the complex social web of a small Indian city and then talking with my hosts and advisors about my confusion.

One cause of confusion was that I had brought with me two incompatible identities. On one hand, I was a

twenty-nine-year-old liberal atheist with very definite views about right and wrong. On the other hand, I wanted to be like those open-minded anthropologists I had read so much about and had studied with, such as Alan Fiske and Richard Shweder. My first few weeks in Bhubaneswar were therefore filled with feelings of shock and dissonance. I dined with men whose wives silently served us and then retreated to the kitchen, not speaking to me the entire evening. I was told to be stricter with my servants, and to stop thanking them for serving me. I watched people bathe in and cook with visibly polluted water that was held to be sacred. In short, I was immersed in a sex-segregated, hierarchically stratified, devoutly religious society, and I was committed to understanding it on its own terms, not on mine.

It only took a few weeks for my dissonance to disappear, not because I was a natural anthropologist but because the normal human capacity for empathy kicked in. I *liked* these people who were hosting me, helping me, and teaching me. Wherever I went, people were kind to me. And when you're grateful to people, it's easier to adopt their perspective. My elephant leaned toward them, which made my rider search for moral arguments in their defense. Rather than automatically rejecting the men as sexist oppressors and pitying the women, children, and servants as helpless victims, I began to see a moral world in which families, not individuals, are the basic unit of society and the members of each extended family (including its servants) are intensely interdependent. In this world, equality and personal autonomy were not sacred values. Honoring elders, gods, and guests, protecting subordinates, and fulfilling one's role-based duties were more important.

I had read about Shweder's ethic of community and had understood it intellectually. But now, for the first time in my life, I began to feel it. I could see beauty in a moral code