

unions were effective responses to the exploitation and terrible working conditions they faced. Franklin Roosevelt was the heroic leader who protected workers and defeated Hitler. Jews ever since have been among the most reliable voters for the Democratic Party.²⁶

My morality wasn't just shaped by my family and ethnicity. I attended Yale University, which was ranked at the time as the second most liberal of the Ivy League schools. It was not uncommon during class discussions for teachers and students to make jokes and critical comments about Ronald Reagan, the Republican Party, or the conservative position on controversial current events. Being liberal was cool; being liberal was righteous. Yale students in the 1980s strongly supported the victims of apartheid, the people of El Salvador, the government of Nicaragua, the environment, and Yale's own striking labor unions, which deprived us all of dining halls for much of my senior year.

Liberalism seemed so obviously ethical. Liberals marched for peace, workers' rights, civil rights, and secularism. The Republican Party was (as we saw it) the party of war, big business, racism, and evangelical Christianity. I could not understand how any thinking person would voluntarily embrace the party of evil, and so I and my fellow liberals looked for psychological explanations of conservatism, but not liberalism. *We* supported liberal policies because we saw the world clearly and wanted to help people, but *they* supported conservative policies out of pure self-interest (lower my taxes!) or thinly veiled racism (stop funding welfare programs for minorities!). We never considered the possibility that there were alternative moral worlds in which reducing harm (by helping victims) and increasing fairness (by pursuing group-based equality) were not the main goals.²⁷ And if we could not imagine other moralities, then we could not believe that conservatives were as sincere in their moral beliefs as we were in ours.

When I moved from Yale to Penn, and then from Penn to the University of Chicago, the matrix stayed pretty much the same. It was only in India that I had to stand alone. Had I been there as a tourist it would have been easy to maintain my matrix membership for three months; I'd have met up now and then with other Western tourists, and we would have swapped stories about the sexism, poverty, and oppression we had seen. But because I was there to study cultural psychology I did everything I could to fit into another matrix, one woven mostly from the ethics of community and divinity.

When I returned to America, social conservatives no longer seemed so crazy. I could listen to leaders of the "religious right" such as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson with a kind of clinical detachment. They want more prayer and spanking in schools, and less sex education and access to abortion? I didn't think those steps would reduce AIDS and teen pregnancy, but I could see why Christian conservatives wanted to "thicken up" the moral climate of schools and discourage the view that children should be as free as possible to act on their desires. Social conservatives think that welfare programs and feminism increase rates of single motherhood and weaken the traditional social structures that compel men to support their own children? Well, now that I was no longer on the defensive, I could see that those arguments made sense, even if there are also many good effects of liberating women from dependence on men. I had escaped from my prior partisan mind-set (reject first, ask rhetorical questions later) and began to think about liberal and conservative policies as manifestations of deeply conflicting but equally heartfelt visions of the good society.²⁸

It felt good to be released from partisan anger. And once I was no longer angry, I was no longer committed to reaching the conclusion that righteous anger demands: we are right, they are wrong. I was able to explore new moral matrices, each