

one supported by its own intellectual traditions. It felt like a kind of awakening.

In 1991, Shweder wrote about the power of cultural psychology to cause such awakenings:

Yet the conceptions held by others are available to us, in the sense that when we truly understand their conception of things we come to recognize *possibilities latent within our own rationality* . . . and those ways of conceiving of things become salient for us for the first time, or once again. In other words, there is no homogeneous “backcloth” to our world. We are multiple from the start.²⁹

I cannot overstate the importance of this quotation for moral and political psychology. We are multiple from the start. Our minds have the potential to become righteous about many different concerns, and only a few of these concerns are activated during childhood. Other potential concerns are left undeveloped and unconnected to the web of shared meanings and values that become our adult moral matrix. If you grow up in a WEIRD society, you become so well educated in the ethic of autonomy that you can detect oppression and inequality even where the apparent victims see nothing wrong. But years later, when you travel, or become a parent, or perhaps just read a good novel about a traditional society, you might find some other moral intuitions latent within yourself. You might find yourself responding to dilemmas involving authority, sexuality, or the human body in ways that are hard to explain.

Conversely, if you are raised in a more traditional society, or within an evangelical Christian household in the United States, you become so well educated in the ethics of community and divinity that you can detect disrespect and degrada-

tion even where the apparent victims see nothing wrong. But if you then face discrimination yourself (as conservatives and Christians sometimes do in the academic world),³⁰ or if you simply listen to Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech, you may find a new resonance in moral arguments about oppression and equality.

IN SUM

The second principle of moral psychology is: *There’s more to morality than barn and fairness*. In support of this claim I described research showing that people who grow up in Western, educated, industrial, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) societies are statistical outliers on many psychological measures, including measures of moral psychology. I also showed that:

- The WEIRDer you are, the more you perceive a world full of separate objects, rather than relationships.
- Moral pluralism is true *descriptively*. As a simple matter of anthropological fact, the moral domain varies across cultures.
- The moral domain is unusually narrow in WEIRD cultures, where it is largely limited to the ethic of autonomy (i.e., moral concerns about individuals harming, oppressing, or cheating other individuals). It is broader—including the ethics of community and divinity—in most other societies, and within religious and conservative moral matrices within WEIRD societies.
- Moral matrices bind people together and blind