

into verb conjugations, embeds it elsewhere. Until recently, Americans addressed strangers and superiors using title plus last name (Mrs. Smith, Dr. Jones), whereas intimates and subordinates were called by first name. If you've ever felt a flash of distaste when a salesperson called you by first name without being invited to do so, or if you felt a pang of awkwardness when an older person you have long revered asked you to call him by first name, then you have experienced the activation of some of the modules that comprise the Authority/subversion foundation.

The obvious way to begin thinking about the evolution of the Authority foundation is to consider the pecking orders and dominance hierarchies of chickens, dogs, chimpanzees, and so many other species that live in groups. The displays made by low-ranking individuals are often similar across species because their function is always the same—to appear submissive, which means small and nonthreatening. The failure to detect signs of dominance and then to respond accordingly often results in a beating.

So far this doesn't sound like a promising origin story for a "moral" foundation; it sounds like the origin of oppression of the weak by the powerful. But authority should not be confused with power.²⁸ Even among chimpanzees, where dominance hierarchies are indeed about raw power and the ability to inflict violence, the alpha male performs some socially beneficial functions, such as taking on the "control role."²⁹ He resolves some disputes and suppresses much of the violent conflict that erupts when there is no clear alpha male. As the primatologist Frans de Waal puts it: "Without agreement on rank and a certain respect for authority there can be no great sensitivity to social rules, as anyone who has tried to teach simple house rules to a cat will agree."³⁰

This control role is quite visible in human tribes and early civilizations. Many of the earliest legal texts begin by ground-

ing the king's rule in divine choice, and then they dedicate the king's authority to providing order and justice. The very first sentence of the Code of Hammurabi (eighteenth century BCE) includes this clause: "Then Anu and Bel [two gods] called by name me, Hammurabi, the exalted prince, who feared God, to bring about the rule of righteousness in the land, to destroy the wicked and the evil-doers; so that the strong should not harm the weak."³¹

Human authority, then, is not just raw power backed by the threat of force. Human authorities take on responsibility for maintaining order and justice. Of course, authorities often exploit their subordinates for their own benefit while believing they are perfectly just. But if we want to understand how human civilizations burst forth and covered the Earth in just a few thousand years, we'll have to look closely at the role of authority in creating moral order.

When I began graduate school I subscribed to the common liberal belief that hierarchy = power = exploitation = evil. But when I began to work with Alan Fiske, I discovered that I was wrong. Fiske's theory of the four basic kinds of social relationships includes one called "Authority Ranking." Drawing on his own fieldwork in Africa, Fiske showed that people who relate to each other in this way have mutual expectations that are more like those of a parent and child than those of a dictator and fearful underlings:

In Authority Ranking, people have asymmetric positions in a linear hierarchy in which subordinates defer, respect, and (perhaps) obey, while superiors take precedence and take pastoral responsibility for subordinates. Examples are military hierarchies . . . ancestor worship ([including] offerings of filial piety and expectations of protection and enforcement of norms), [and] monotheistic religious moralities . . . Authority Rank-