guide it to eucalyptus leaves. Humans, however, must learn what to eat. Like rats and cockroaches, we're omnivores.

Being an omnivore has the enormous advantage of flexibility: You can wander into a new continent and be quite confident that you'll find something to eat. But it also has the disadvantage that new foods can be toxic, infected with microbes, or riddled with parasitic worms. The "omnivore's dilemma" (a term coined by Paul Rozin)[37] is that omnivores must seek out and explore new potential foods while remaining wary of them until they are proven safe.

Omnivores therefore go through life with two competing motives: neophilia (an attraction to new things) and neophobia (a fear of new things). People vary in terms of which motive is stronger, and this variation will come back to help us in later chapters: Liberals score higher on measures of neophilia (also known as "openness to experience"), not just for new foods but also for new people, music, and ideas. Conservatives are higher on neophobia; they prefer to stick with what's tried and true, and they care a lot more about guarding borders, boundaries, and traditions.[38]

The emotion of disgust evolved initially to optimize responses to the omnivore's dilemma.[39] Individuals who had a properly calibrated sense of disgust were able to consume more calories than their overly disgustable cousins while consuming fewer dangerous microbes than their insufficiently disgustable cousins. But it's not just food that posed a threat: when early hominids came down from the trees and began living in larger groups on the ground, they greatly increased their risk of infection from each other, and from each other's waste products. The psychologist Mark Schaller has shown that disgust is part of what he calls the "behavioral immune system"—a set of cognitive modules that are triggered by signs of infection or disease in other people and that make you want to get away from those people.[40] It's a lot more effective to

prevent infection by washing your food, casting out lepers, or simply avoiding dirty people than it is to let the microbes into your body and then hope that your biological immune system can kill every last one of them.

The original adaptive challenge that drove the evolution of the Sanctity foundation, therefore, was the need to avoid pathogens, parasites, and other threats that spread by physical touch or proximity. The original triggers of the key modules that compose this foundation include smells, sights, or other sensory patterns that predict the presence of dangerous pathogens in objects or people. (Examples include human corpses, excrement, scavengers such as vultures, and people with visible lesions or sores.)

The current triggers of the Sanctity foundation, however, are extraordinarily variable and expandable across cultures and eras. A common and direct expansion is to out-group members. Cultures differ in their attitudes toward immigrants, and there is some evidence that liberal and welcoming attitudes are more common in times and places where disease risks are lower.[41] Plagues, epidemics, and new diseases are usually brought in by foreigners—as are many new ideas, goods, and technologies—so societies face an analogue of the omnivore's dilemma, balancing xenophobia and xenophilia.

As with the Authority foundation, Sanctity seems to be off to a poor start as a foundation of morality. Isn't it just a primitive response to pathogens? And doesn't this response lead to prejudice and discrimination? Now that we have antibiotics, we should reject this foundation entirely, right?

Not so fast. The Sanctity foundation makes it easy for us to regard some things as "untouchable," both in a bad way (because something is so dirty or polluted we want to stay away) and in a good way (because something is so hallowed, so sacred, that we want to protect it from desecration). If we had no sense of disgust, I believe we would also have no sense