

priest who refuses to speak Latin, or who considers himself a devotee of all gods?

In the remainder of the essay I advised Democrats to stop dismissing conservatism as a pathology and start thinking about morality beyond care and fairness. I urged them to close the sacredness gap between the two parties by making greater use of the Loyalty, Authority, and Sanctity foundations, not just in their “messaging,” but in how they think about public policy and the best interests of the nation.²³

WHAT I HAD MISSED

The essay provoked strong reactions from readers, which they sometimes shared with me by email. On the left, many readers stayed locked inside their Care-based moral matrices and refused to believe that conservatism was an alternative moral vision. For example, one reader said that he agreed with my diagnosis but thought that narcissism was an additional factor that I had not mentioned: “Lack of compassion fits them [Republicans], and narcissists are also lacking this important human trait.” He thought it was “sad” that Republican narcissism would prevent them from understanding my perspective on their “illness.”

Reactions from the right were generally more positive. Many readers with military or religious backgrounds found my portrayal of their morality accurate and useful, as in this email:

I recently retired from the U.S. Coast Guard after 22 years of service.... After I retired, I took a job with [a government science agency]. The [new office's] culture tends more towards the liberal independent

model.... What I am finding here is an organization rife with individualism and infighting, at the expense of larger goals. In the military, I was always impressed with the great deeds that could be accomplished by a small number of dedicated people with limited resources. In my new group, I am impressed when we can accomplish anything at all.²⁴

I also received quite a few angry responses, particularly from economic conservatives who believed I had misunderstood their morality. One such reader sent me an email with the subject line “Head up ass,” which he explained in this way:

I vote republican because I'm against other people (authority figures) taking my money (that I work hard for) and giving it to a non-producing, welfare collecting, single mother, crack baby producing future democrat. Simple... You're an over educated “philosopher” with soft hands who gets paid to ask stupid questions and come up with “reasonable” answers.... Go drop some acid and read some Jung.

Another angry reader posted to a blog discussion his own list of the “top fifteen reasons that people vote Democrat.” His number one reason was “Low IQ,” but the rest of his list revealed a lot about his moral matrix and its central value. It included the following:

- Laziness.
- You want something for nothing.
- You need someone to blame for your problems.
- You're afraid of personal responsibility or simply not willing to accept any.