

ALSO BY GEORGE LAKOFF

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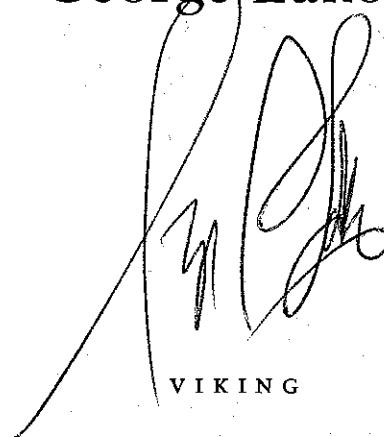
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# THE POLITICAL MIND

*Why You Can't Understand  
21st-Century Politics with  
an 18th-Century Brain*

George Lakoff

A large, stylized handwritten signature of George Lakoff, written in black ink, positioned over the publisher's name.

VIKING

program that has been working), and the FDA no longer having the resources to monitor food and drug safety trials. But they are about the same issue: the radical conservative political and economic agenda is putting public resources and government functions into private hands, while eliminating the capacity of government to protect and empower the public. The public has no conceptual framework to see all these as the same and to comprehend what this means, and with the stress of fear and worry and overwork, the public has little capacity to notice and to create the substantial neural structures needed to comprehend what is happening in hundreds of areas of life.

The Democratic leaders are not, as they say, connecting these dots. On the contrary, their appeal to supposed Enlightenment reason—conscious, logical, unemotional, disembodied, based on perceived self-interest, and open to rational discussion as classically conceived—plays into radical conservative hands. The facts and figures are given, but they are all about different things—violence in Iraq, children's health, drug tests. The Old Enlightenment reason approach not only fails, it wastes effort, time, and money. It does so not only because the public's mind is mostly unconscious, metaphorical, and physically affected by stress, but because its brain has been neurally shaped by past conservative framing.<sup>15</sup>

The same neural mechanisms behind the melodramas that tied so many people to the fate of Anna Nicole Smith—mechanisms beyond Enlightenment reason—are serving a major political purpose and hiding massive political and economic change.

With such an explanation of what is hidden and why, it becomes possible to consciously create a conceptual framework, a language, an imagery, and an appropriate emotional tone in which such major under-the-radar changes not only become visible, but their moral consequences become known. It is not easy, but it can be done—if you understand the problem.

## CHAPTER 2

### The Political Unconscious

Politics is about moral values. Every political leader presents his or her policies on the grounds that they are “right”—that is, they are moral. Yet basic conservative and progressive modes of thought start from very different perspectives on what constitutes morality, perspectives so different that they are virtually opposites.

How do we know this? After all, there is an opposing view, that all politics is a matter of money, power, and organization. Those are obviously vital to any winning politics. But if that were all there were to it, if there were no moral issues involved, then it would not matter who wins, except for who gets the patronage.

But in America today, moral issues are central. It does matter morally who wins.

And what does cognitive science have to do with this? The answer is the cognitive unconscious—the system of concepts that structure our brains but that we can't see directly. Most of what we understand in public discourse is not in the words themselves, but in the unconscious understanding that we bring to the words. As Charles Fillmore has shown, each word is defined relative to at least one conceptual frame.<sup>1</sup> Those frames evoke other frames in the system. Understanding involves drawing out the logic of the frames. In a great many cases, metaphorical thinking is used as well. What cognitive semanticists have found is that we think in terms of systems of concepts, systems that fit together and make sense. In a discourse, our systems of concepts are used to make sense of what is said overtly.

When we apply this technique of analysis to political speeches, interviews, call-ins on talk shows, op-eds and editorials, think tank reports, letters to the editor, blogs, and so on, certain recurrent patterns of thought emerge—general modes of thought based on assumptions about what is the right thing to do. Some of this is conscious and overtly there in the language. But 98 percent of it is unconscious, unseen, but making sense of what is actually said.

Though the Old Enlightenment mischaracterized the human mind, Enlightenment values nevertheless wrought the foundations of American democracy. A New Enlightenment should likewise articulate America's original values, both conscious and unconscious, and extend them further in the same direction. America was founded and developed as a progressive country, and it is crucial that its values be reclaimed and extended to fit the needs of our century.

Conservatives have excelled at articulating their values and ideas. It is time for progressives to do the same. My job here is to unlock the cognitive unconscious, to take progressive thought off the leash and to draw an accurate picture of conservative thought for the sake of comparison. Radical conservatives have also excelled at carrying out hidden objectives that fit their values. Allowing hidden objectives to be seen is another benefit of cognitive science.

Conservatives and progressives do not just have different goals or values. They have very different modes of thought. Neither mode is obvious. The political mind has to be probed in depth to be understood. What we shall see is complexity: many Americans make use of both conservative and progressive modes of thought in their politics, but apply them to different areas in different ways. There are regularities, but there is no clear scale from left to right (or color spectrum from blue to red). There are no moderates—that is, there is no moderate worldview, no one set of ideas that characterizes a “center” or “moderation.” People who are called “moderates” use conservative thought in some

issue areas and progressive thought in others, without falling on any linear left-to-right scale. Indeed, many so-called moderates have no moderation at all, and are quite passionate about both their conservative and their progressive views. For example, consider Chuck Hagel, an antiwar conservative, and Joe Lieberman, a pro-war liberal. Both are called “moderates,” but they have few beliefs in common and certainly do not share a single worldview.

The left-to-right scale that political pundits love is an inaccurate metaphor—and a dangerous one, for two reasons. First, it posits a political “mainstream,” a population with a unified political worldview, which does not exist now nor has it ever. Because radical conservatives have so dominated political discourse in America over the past thirty years, conservative ideas are being passed off as “mainstream” ideas, which they are not, while progressive ideas are being characterized as “leftist” and “extremist,” which they are not. Supreme Court justice John Paul Stevens, who was appointed to the Court as a conservative by Gerald Ford in the 1970s, is now considered a “liberal,” though he says he has not changed his views. One can speak of left and right, as in left hand and right hand, or left hemisphere and right hemisphere of the brain, without any linear scale in between.

The very use of the left-to-right scale metaphor serves to empower radical conservatives and marginalize progressives. Here's why: what is really happening in the brains of Americans is that there are two very general modes of thought, one fundamentally progressive, the other fundamentally conservative. Each can be applied to—that is, neurally bound to—special cases, in all sorts of ways, as when Joe Lieberman applies his conservative mode of thought to Iraq and school vouchers, while applying his progressive mode of thought in other areas. Some people have no fixed binding of a mode of thought to an issue area, but may go back and forth, or not know what to think.

At the beginning of the 1970s, most Americans used the progressive mode of thought on most issue areas. *Roe vs. Wade* seemed settled, social security was secure, public education was

a fixed institution, unions were strong, the separation of church and state was largely unchallenged, and taxation was understood as providing necessary government services. Since then, more people have been applying the conservative mode of thought to more issue areas, and the progressive mode to fewer, though the progressive mode is still widely used by the majority of Americans in most areas. Thus, polls show that most Americans agree with Democrats on most issues; though, for reasons we shall see, they don't vote accordingly.

At the same time, conservative modes of thought and language have come to dominate political discourse in the media. We can see this in the everyday use of conservative language and the ideas that go with it: *illegal immigrants*, not *illegal employers* or *illegal consumers*; *war in Iraq*, not *occupation of Iraq*; *surge*, not *escalation*; *supporting the troops*, not *squandering tax money*, and so on. Though the progressive mode of thought expresses the ideals of American democracy as seen in our founding documents, it has become less and less dominant in public discourse. The denial of habeas corpus, unrestricted tapping of citizens' phones, and routine torture have brought forth little discussion of the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Those who are thoroughgoing progressives hold to American democratic ideals on just about all issues. They are the bedrock of our democracy. But, when seen metaphorically on a left-to-right scale, the bedrock of our democracy is on one side—the “extreme left.” The left-to-right scale metaphor makes it look like the bedrock of our democracy is “extreme.” And conservatives have been characterizing defenders of traditional American ideals like civil liberties, the welcoming of immigrants, and public education as extremists.

Accordingly, the left-to-right scale metaphor creates a metaphorical “center” with about a third of voters located between the two “extremes”—even though their views vary every which way and don't constitute a single mode of thought at all.

Metaphor is a normal, and mostly unconscious, mechanism of

thought. It is sometimes harmless, and at other times can be used for good or ill. The left-to-right scale metaphor is not harmless. It is being politically manipulated to the disadvantage of American democratic ideals.

And yet the left-to-right scale metaphor is no concocted hoax. It is real as a metaphor; it is in people's brains. Even though it is grossly inaccurate, many people use it. My job here is to make you think twice about it, and then stop using it. If you can. It won't be easy. Thinking that way is a reflex. You *will* think in terms of the left-to-right scale. Try to catch yourself and stop. Overcoming misleading metaphors that are physically in your brain is never easy.

### Progressive Thought and the Politics of Empathy

Behind every progressive policy lies a single moral value: empathy, together with the responsibility and strength to act on that empathy. Never forget “responsibility and strength,” because there is no true empathy without them.

During the conservative reign we have seen what Barack Obama has called an empathy deficit—a failure to care, both about others and each other. Caring is not just feeling empathy; it is taking responsibility, acting powerfully and courageously. You have to be strong to care, and to act on that care with success.

The ethics of care shapes government. Care requires that government have two intertwined roles: protection and empowerment. Protection is more than just the army, police, and fire department. It means social security, disease control and public health, safe food, disaster relief, health care, consumer and worker protection, environmental protection.

Empowerment by the government is everywhere: highways and bridges, so you can go where you want to go and ship products; the Internet and satellite communications, to keep you in contact with the world; public education, to open the world up to you and to provide skilled workers to business; the banking

system, to allow bank loans, whether you're buying a house or your company is buying another company; the SEC, to allow the stock market to function; the court system, to enforce contracts and protect patents. Nobody makes a dime in this country without being empowered by our government. There are no self-made men or women. It's a myth!

The role of progressive government is to maximize our freedom—and protection and empowerment do just that. Protection is there to guarantee freedom from harm, from want, and from fear. Empowerment is there to maximize freedom to achieve your goals.

Progressive government is, or should rightly be through protection and empowerment, the guarantor of liberty. That is what a life-affirming government is about.

Part of the genius of America came in the form of taxes, which used to be paid to the king of England before the Revolution. They were not abolished, but were instead directed toward protection and empowerment of the citizens of this country.

Corporations make use of government empowerment more than ordinary citizens. I drive my car on freeways; corporations send out fleets of trucks. I get a bank loan for my house; corporations get loans to buy other corporations. Corporations thus make compound use of government empowerment, and that is why they—and their investors—should be paying more, not less, than ordinary citizens for sustaining the empowering function of government.

Protection and empowerment are part of the moral mission of government. That is why governmental budgets are moral documents. Government is fundamentally different from business. The first responsibility of a business is to make money; the first responsibility of a government is to protect and empower its citizens. Businesses sell you hamburgers and TVs and rent you cars. The government is supposed to ensure that food and drugs and drinking water are safe; to maintain roads and bridges; to provide education; and to control the money supply to make sure that neither inflation nor unemployment gets too high.

When might the privatization of government functions be appropriate? When there is no moral mission involved, when the life-affirming role of government is not at stake. For example, suppose a government agency has a fleet of cars. It might be more efficient or economical to just rent them from Hertz or Avis. There is no moral mission involved. But when it comes to testing the safety of food or of drugs, a clear moral mission is involved: protecting the public. The danger in privatization is that the profit motive may intervene and undermine the moral mission. We have seen this repeatedly in cases where drug companies fake data on their tests for the sake of profits, which has led to the death of people taking their drugs.

Empathy leads to recognizing that unfair and discriminatory treatment is a form of harm requiring government protection. This correlates with the idea that we are all equal, and that the denial of equality counts as harm. This is the moral basis of civil rights laws—voting rights laws, antidiscrimination laws, and so on. It is also the moral basis of labor law. The right to unionize, for example, recognizes the unfair advantage that employers have over employees in negotiating the conditions of their employment, and OSHA recognizes the need for worker protection.

Empathy is the basis for the concept of a fair and responsible market—a market whose job is to create wealth and distribute resources in such a way as to respect the protective function of government, sustain its empowering function, and treat everyone in the market as fairly as possible. Fairness means that employees should ideally be paid according to their work, their productivity, and their contribution to the society as a whole.

Empathy also forms the moral basis of class action suits, in which companies or government agencies that harm groups of citizens can be sued both for the harm caused and for “punitive damages” to give the companies an incentive not to harm the citizenry again. These are carried out in the civil justice system, which is like the criminal justice system except that the only punishment is monetary and that the detectives and the prosecuting

attorneys are not government employees paid by taxpayers, but are instead civil justice attorneys—trial lawyers paid out of damages assigned by the courts. This means that civil justice attorneys tend to take only cases that they think they can win and where the harm is great enough that the damages will pay them for the time they spend on the case. The civil justice system is the last line of protection for the public against unscrupulous or irresponsible corporations.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the most important governmental protection is protection from the power of the government itself. That is why we have a system of checks and balances, with the power of government split between the legislature, executive, and judiciary. It is also why we have frequent elections. The idea is to avoid dictatorial powers via a balance of power and to avoid the exertion of unwarranted power for an unlimited amount of time. This is the moral basis behind the idea of the openness of government, so that governmental operations will be transparent and can be criticized when appropriate and prosecuted when necessary.

Empathy is also the moral basis of laws protecting citizens from abuse by the government. Habeas corpus—which protects citizens from being arrested without a charge, held without legal counsel or incommunicado, and with no requirement that the state show its evidence—is fundamental to our liberty. Also fundamental to liberty is the right of privacy and the need for the state to obtain a warrant stating reasonable cause before it can wiretap or get access to other private information.

Progressives have a range of attitudes toward the market. Some believe that it is possible for large corporations to function morally, for the public good, and to make that their highest priority, while making enough profit to thrive. Others believe that large corporations will almost always function to make money first and foremost. Their faith in markets rests on either tight governmental regulation or careful market construction for the public good.

But many progressives are keenly aware of, and tend to be sus-

picious of, corporations that lobby to serve their profit, not the public interest, and who will go with profit over the public interest when the chips are down.

Progressives also tend to favor small businesses over large ones, businesses with strong unions, and those where there is a lot of competition.

Progressives are hardly antibusiness. But they believe that government has a crucial moral mission to play—protection and empowerment, as we have observed, that in many cases inherently cannot be carried out by private enterprise.

It should be clear that empathy and responsibility are at the heart of progressive thought. But things are not so simple. Not all progressives are the same.

### The Neoliberal Mode of Thought

Progressive thought today begins with empathy and responsibility, with government having the twin moral missions of protection and empowerment. What I will call “neoliberal thought” has the same moral basis, but overlays another mode of thought upon it. Neoliberal thought embraces the Old Enlightenment view of reason: it is conscious, logical, literal, universal, unemotional, disembodied, with the function of serving interests, one’s own or those of others.

Neoliberal thought takes emotion as irrational and therefore ineffectual and weak, while it sees reason as rational, efficacious, and strong. Though it starts intuitively with an ethics of empathy and care, neoliberal thought tries to achieve care by setting up programs for the material interests of the disadvantaged, and to target the disadvantaged through programs for members of disadvantaged demographic groups (African Americans in the inner city, college students needing loans, children of lower-income families, middle-class workers, and so on).

The implicit moral intuition seems to be that empathy defines what counts as market success and failure. Where the market fails

to provide for some demographic group, government should step in with an economically based program, either to restructure the market by law or to provide funding, either directly or through subsidies. But the concepts of empathy and of market failure are never discussed overtly. Indeed, there is no discussion in public discourse of what market failure or success is, how to tell when there is a market failure, and what to do about it.

The neoliberal mode of thought further assumes that lacks demonstrate needs. Accordingly, there is a focus on objective evidence for the needs of these programs via statistics showing lacks: things that can be objectively measured, facts and figures, surveys, statistics, presentation of evidence that, *prima facie*, is supposed to argue for the programs. For example, 47 million people lack health care, so-and-so many college students lack affordable college loans, a disproportionate number of African American young men are in jail for nonviolent crimes, and so on.

From the perspective of real reason, each such program is in principle highly commendable, providing that real reason is taken into account—providing that the “facts” really are objective (in the sense of being above prejudice); that the surveys take into account the cognitive unconscious—the frames and metaphors used in the survey instruments; that no presupposed content is hidden in the statistics; and that the evidence converges from multiple sources, as is required in science. In short, real reason is committed to realism—a realism that takes real reason itself into account. This is informed self-consciousness, and it is far more demanding than Old Enlightenment reason.

I mention this because neoliberals sometimes mistake real reason for relativism, because real reason recognizes that there are multiple ways in which the brain sees reality. I have previously criticized neoliberals for assuming that just citing facts and figures will carry the day politically, when what is needed is an honest, morally based framing of the facts and figures, showing their moral significance, and conveyed with the appropriate emotions and with words, images, and symbols that really communicate. When

conservatives answer liberals’ facts and figures with no facts or figures, but with their own morals-based frames presented with emotion and symbolism, their framing will win. Conservative frames will trump liberals’ frameless—and hence meaningless—facts. That’s one reason why neoliberals should pay attention to real reason and use frames that reveal truths and emotions that carry moral importance.

But the neoliberal mode of thought extends well beyond unframed facts and figures. Neoliberals’ focus on Old Enlightenment reason leads them away from stating overtly the moral basis of their proposals, which flow from empathy and responsibility. Instead, they argue from interests—material interests of members of demographic groups—trying to reach the moral vision of empathy and responsibility from the interests of group members. The argument is: It is in our political interest to help others achieve their material interests. If we do that, they’ll vote for us. The programs: reduced middle-class taxes; cheaper loans for college students; housing vouchers for the homeless; green jobs for inner-city African Americans; citizenship for immigrants without papers; protecting pensions for public employees; health care for children of the poor. All of these are commendable.

Their intuitive impetus is the morality of empathy. But the basis of the argument is group interests, not empathy. Why does this matter? Because political thought begins with moral premises, since all political positions are supposed to be correct. To get the public to adopt progressive moral positions you have to activate progressive moral thought in them by openly—and constantly—stressing morality, not just the interests of demographic groups.

Focusing on interests rather than empathy plays into the hands of conservatives in many ways: It allows them to criticize as “special interests” the groups whose interests are served. It angers people in demographic groups whose interests are not being served, and gives conservatives an opportunity to look moral, rather than just playing partisan politics. It fails to even state the progressive moral vision of empathy and responsibility,



protection and empowerment. It gives support to the conservative version of the "free market" as the moral pursuit of self-interest that helps us all, because it activates in people's brains the idea of the morality of pursuing interests through the market. This helps conservatives fight against progressive values that are not materialistic—the arts, education for its own sake (not just for better jobs), environmental protection, and so on. And it leads to the use of the rational actor model in foreign policy, in which states are seen as people acting "rationally" to maximize their material self-interest.

The rational actor model in foreign policy hides the needs of real people—individuals who are poor, hungry, jobless, homeless, diseased, uneducated, being exploited, being oppressed. It takes empathy and responsibility toward people out of foreign policy, replacing it with state self-interest and the interests of our individual citizens with the "national interest"—GDP growth, corporate interests, military advantage, and so on. It leads to neoliberalism in foreign policy, in which "free markets" are seen as always creating wealth, which ought in theory to help everybody, but instead serve the interests of American and other multinational corporations over the needs and aspirations of real people.

Neoliberal thinking in terms of facts and figures on the one hand and serving the interests of demographic groups on the other also leads to "issue silos," the isolation of one issue from another—food and drug safety; children's health care; controlling military contractors—as if there were no general moral principle and political issue governing all of these. But there is: privateering (see chapter 7). Privateering is the destruction of the capacity of government to carry out its moral missions, together with the privatization of government functions with no public accountability and the enrichment of corporations at the public's expense.

Unfortunately, if you have to argue just on the basis of facts and figures, then the facts and figures about the lack of FDA food and drug inspectors have no overlap with the facts and figures

about Blackwater security guards in Iraq, which have no overlap with the figures about children's health care. Neoliberal thought misses the overarching moral and political issue governing and connecting these and dozens, if not hundreds, of other cases.

Neoliberal policy think tanks therefore tend to be silos—cranking out issue-by-issue policies, while not addressing the deeper threats to our democracy, such as the threat of privateering. Their thought also leads to policy as technocratic solutions and "rational systems" to be instituted through legislation and implemented in government. The assumption is that the rational system of law, the enforcement of law, government regulation, and the courts will win the day. Meanwhile, conservatives have figured out ways to undermine all such strategies, by defunding or reassigning regulators, hiring lobbyists in government positions, letting corporate lobbyists write laws, refusing to enforce laws, and getting their judges into the courts. Let us call this "administrative undermining." Because Old Enlightenment reason creates issue silos, the general case of administrative undermining has not even been named, much less called a general threat to democracy and made an issue of. Old Enlightenment reason is not even up to the job of making the moral case that such general conservative policies as privateering and administrative undermining are threatening democracy.

Neoliberalism also has certain elitist tendencies that it cannot recognize as elitist. If you believe that reason is literal, logical, and universal and that your policies are based on reason, then those policies could not conceivably be elitist because every rational being would have to be in favor of the same policies because they would reason the same way. But if reason is really neither literal, logical, nor universal, then imposing policies from the top down, from policy think tanks to Congress and the courts, does smack of elitism. Even taking polls that frame policies from your perspective rather than from the perspective of others is a form of elitism that comes out with pronouncements like "Americans believe..." followed by your framing of the policy. And anything



that smacks of elitism gives credence to the conservative charge that liberals are elitists.

Crucially, neoliberal thought cannot even recognize its own framing as framing. If Old Enlightenment reason is literal—if it always reflects the world directly and fits the rational structure of reality—then there cannot be any honest alternative framings. If you accept Old Enlightenment reason, then framing cannot involve real ideas and moral principles; it can only be about messaging; it can only be spin. The neoliberal failure to understand how brains and minds really work hides ideas and moral principles put forth by progressives who are not neoliberals.

Most dangerous of all, Old Enlightenment reason, being literal and universal, cannot recognize conservative framing as framing. Instead, it tends to take conservative language and concepts at their face value. If conservatives say there is a “war on terror,” those following the neoliberal mode of thought will repeat “war on terror” and argue within the conservative frame. They may argue against conservative policy, but if they stay within the frame, they are activating and reinforcing the frame rather than challenging it and replacing it. The very idea that we think in terms of frames and metaphors is not merely foreign to neoliberal thought, it is inconsistent with it.

The political effect is that neoliberals tend to surrender in advance to conservatives, simply by accepting their frames.

Neoliberal reason, besides starting with self-interest, also depends on the idea of optimization: Let’s get all we can get, even if it’s not all that much. This is incrementalist thinking: better to get a little something now than nothing at all, even if it means accepting conservative framing. What’s wrong with that? In some cases, everything. The question is whether the incrementalist solution will be a long-lasting one. Take health care. Insurance companies get their money by *denying* care, by saying no to as many people in need as they can get away with, while maximizing the premiums they get from healthy people. Health insurance will always work this way. It is not the same as care; “coverage,” when

you read the fine print, may not even include care. If neoliberal incrementalists establish a profit-maximizing insurance-based health care plan for the country, it will not be a step toward a system that eliminates health insurance companies. Instead, it will solidify their grip and make real health care reform that bypasses the insurance companies impossible. Incrementalism can lead to disaster.

The result again is that neoliberals often wind up not even stating, much less fighting for, the progressive moral position. The entire territory of the brain is left to conservatives. There is a difference between pragmatic compromise starting with progressive moral values, and pragmatic compromise conceding those values in advance, without those values even being stated, much less tested.

Perhaps the saddest case is neoliberal economics as applied to other countries. The best statement I have seen of the link between Old Enlightenment reason and neoliberal economics is given by Al Gore in *The Assault on Reason*:

Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations* and America’s Declaration of Independence were published in the same year. In both, men were understood to be units of independent judgment, capable of making decisions upon the basis of freely available information, the collective result being the wisest possible allocation of wealth (in the case of the former) and political power (in the case of the latter).

Capitalism and democracy shared the same internal logic: Free markets and representative government were both assumed to operate best when individuals made rational decisions—whether they were buying or selling property or accepting and rejecting propositions.<sup>3</sup>

Gore goes on to point out that this view is disaster because money made in the market and political power interact in “incestuous ways.”

But Gore's description follows from neoliberal thought based on Old Enlightenment reason. What we see there, first, is a misrepresentation of American democracy, which (as the historian Lynn Hunt has observed)<sup>4</sup> is rooted in empathy, in connecting viscerally with others (presumably via our mirror neuron circuitry and pathways to and from the prefrontal and posteromedial cortices, and elsewhere), allowing us to share experience with others and therefore to comprehend a common humanity as the basis of equality. That is the real moral basis of the Enlightenment. Gore's description, however, fits the neoliberal understanding, based on Old Enlightenment reason, used for the sake of self-interest both in business and politics. But just as you can't get to empathy from self-interest, you can't get to democracy from the market.

That has been the disaster of neoliberal economics as applied to the third world. Privatization without empathy eliminates the progressive moral capacities of government—protection and empowerment—and with it what made America a thriving democracy. In lacking empathy for the people of third world countries, neoliberal economics all too often leads to the corporate taking of their land, their water, their natural environment, their culture, their way of life, their dignity, and their freedom and safety.

Old Enlightenment rationality, applied to foreign policy and free trade, makes neoliberal economics sound fair to all, when it isn't.

Finally, there is the way neoliberal thought affects how campaigns are run. It buys into the metaphor of the left-to-right scale—with disastrous results.

Because neoliberals believe thought is literal and logical, they cannot make sense of the reality that people can simultaneously have two inconsistent worldviews and use them in different areas of life without even noticing. Universal reason says there is only one rational mode of thought. Anyone who argues against you must be either mistaken (in need of the facts), irrational (needing to have their reasoning corrected), or downright immoral. The

belief in Enlightenment reason leads to the inability to recognize opposing worldviews, and hence to the left-to-right scale.

Accepting the left-to-right scale leads to the logic—and the claim—that to get more votes you have to move to the right. This actually has three counterproductive effects for progressives:

1. Giving up on policies that fit the progressive moral worldview and hence alienating your base;
2. Accepting policies that fit the conservative moral worldview, thus activating the conservative worldview in voters, which helps the other side; and
3. Not maintaining a consistent moral worldview at all, which makes it look as though you have no values.

The stability of neoliberal thought varies. Some people use all of it all the time. Some even define their very identity by it. Others dip into it, thinking that way regularly on certain issues or when pressured by a friend or colleague.

Neoliberal thought arises from the Old Enlightenment view of the mind. It is anything but a trivial matter, since it has important political consequences. One of the things cognitive science teaches us is that when people define their very identity by a worldview, or a narrative, or a mode of thought, they are unlikely to change—for the simple reason that it is physically part of their brain, and so many other aspects of their brain structure would also have to change; that change is highly unlikely.

For this reason one cannot simply expect a confirmed neoliberal thinker to look "rationally" at the evidence from neuroscience and cognitive science, follow his general tendency to respect science, and then change the way he thinks. The best we can hope for from confirmed neoliberals is that they will, because of their Enlightenment commitment to open-mindedness, keep reading and realize that their very mode of thought is at issue politically in case after case.

What is such an open-minded neoliberal to do? First, the

hardest part: Learn to think outside the Enlightenment—in terms of worldviews, frames, metaphors, narratives, and so on. Learn to argue powerfully and emotionally from the moral perspective of empathy and responsibility, protection and empowerment. Point out that this is the moral basis of our democracy, and argue on a patriotic basis. Give up on the left-to-right scale and on the idea of moving to the right to get more votes. Look for generalizations across issues. Support the development of think tanks and other policy shops that go across issues—in fact, develop issues from the moral system and the general role of government down to specific cases. Never accept conservative framings of the issues, even in arguing against them; offer your own. End support for neoliberal economics at the global level. If you have to compromise with conservatives, start the negotiations from your own moral position—empathy and responsibility, not neoliberal self-interest.

There are many cases where neoliberal thought coincides on policies with conservative thought. We shall soon see why.

### Conservative Thought and the Politics of Authority

Conservative thought has a very different moral basis than progressive thought. It begins with the notion that morality is obedience to an authority—assumed to be a legitimate authority who is inherently good, knows right from wrong, functions to protect us from evil in the world, and has both the right and duty to use force to command obedience and fight evil. He is “the Decider.” Obedience to legitimate authority requires both personal responsibility and discipline, which are prime conservative virtues. Obedience is enforced through punishment. In large institutions, there will be a hierarchy of authority, used, among other things, to maintain order. Loyalty is required to maintain the hierarchy. Freedom is seen as functioning within such an order: As long as you follow the rules laid down for you, you are free to act within that order. A sign on a military base in the American South in 2007 read, “Obedience Is Freedom!” As President James E. Faust

of the Mormon church explains it, “Obedience leads to true freedom. The more we obey revealed truth, the more we become liberated.”<sup>5</sup> And in the famous words of Rudy Giuliani, “Freedom is about authority.”<sup>6</sup>

It is common for institutions to be personified. We understand churches as having beliefs, newspapers as having opinions, unions as making decisions, and country clubs as being uppity. In the law, corporations are legally “persons” with First Amendment and other rights. The same is true of the institution of the market. Progressives, as we have seen, believe that markets ideally should be moral and treat people fairly.

For conservatives, the market is seen metaphorically as an institution personified as a legitimate authority who makes rational decisions (“Let the market decide”), as imposing market discipline, and as rewarding discipline and punishing the lack of it. Prosperity is seen as a mark of discipline, which is in turn seen as moral, since discipline is required to obey moral laws and whatever is required by those in authority. By the logic of this system of thought, if you are not prosperous, you are not disciplined, and therefore cannot be moral, and so deserve your poverty. It follows that if people are given things they have not earned, they become dependent and lose their discipline and with it their capacity to obey moral laws and legitimate authority.

We can now see where neoliberals and conservatives converge. In conservative thought, people are born bad—greedy and unscrupulous. To maximize their self-interest, they need to learn discipline, to follow the rules and obey the laws, and to seek wealth rationally. The market imposes discipline. It works rationally by rules and laws, and requires disciplined rational thinking. It rewards those who acquire such discipline and punishes those who do not. The market, from this perspective, is fair and moral.

Neoliberal thought applies Enlightenment rationality to the market. Markets are ideally constructed to be fair and moral, though they may need government regulation to guarantee it.

Rational choice in a well-regulated market will lead to an optimal, natural distribution of wealth. Well-regulated markets, from the neoliberal perspective, are fair and moral.

In trade policy, neoliberals and conservatives often agree that what is uppermost is the "national interest," optimizing the overall wealth of the country as measured by GDP and corporate wealth—in competition with other countries who are trying to maximize their wealth. Here neoliberalism, like conservative free trade policy, is about maximizing American wealth. Neoliberal thought and conservative thought coincide.

Incidentally, this is anything but a new development.<sup>7</sup> Adam Smith's concept of the free market was originally a liberal proposal to free the poor and the powerless from economic oppression. As such, Smith's ideas were adopted into the French Revolution. Smith, for example, favored certain wage regulations: "When the regulation... is in favor of the workmen, it is always just and equitable; it is sometimes otherwise when in favour of the masters."<sup>8</sup> Smith argued against an inequitable division of wealth: "No society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which the far greater part of the members are poor and miserable. It is but equity, besides, that those who feed, clothe, and lodge the whole body of the people, should have such a share of the produce of their own labour as to be themselves tolerably well fed, clothed, and lodged."<sup>9</sup>

But by 1800, Edmund Burke and others had reframed Adam Smith's ideas as fitting the conservative worldview, arguing against government interference in what became a *laissez-faire* view of the free market.<sup>10</sup> Contemporary neoliberalism and radical conservatism continue these interpretations of what is meant by the "free market," with conservatives dominating the public debate.

The conservatives' market, as a moral authority in itself, is supposed to be "free" of outside interference—from the government. It is also seen as conferring economic freedom—freedom to make money in business any way you can. What progressives see

as government protection (moral), conservatives see as government interference (immoral) that imposes restrictions on making profits. Regulations to protect consumers and workers limit profits; the civil justice system, which protects consumers, threatens profits in lawsuits; and taxation, which sustains our system of protection and empowerment, takes away profits. Conservatives rarely talk about government empowerment and act as if it does not exist—except in the case of corporate subsidies. Thus conservatives tend to be antiregulation, antiunion, against class action suits, and antitaxation.

Not only do conservatives not talk about the government empowerment of business, they also miss a central truth about deregulation, privatization, and corporations.

Under the Bush administration, Food and Drug Administration funding for the testing of prescription drugs was cut, resulting in the deregulation of significant prescription drug testing, and thus in the privatization of such testing, since it was then up to the drug companies. Wyeth, in the case of fen-phen, and Merck, in the case of Vioxx, misrepresented test results for the sake of profits, thereby causing thousands of heart attacks and many deaths.

The myth is that the deregulation or privatization of a moral mission of government eliminates government. But it doesn't. Large corporations also govern our lives—often making life-and-death decisions that affect us. Government isn't eliminated. It is just shifted from the public sector, where there is an ethic of protection and public accountability, to the private sector, where there is an ethic of profit and no public accountability. The principle here is the "conservation of government." Deregulation and privatization do not eliminate government; they only make it unaccountable and take away its moral mission.

But conservatives cannot admit this, because it would fly in the face of the idea of "free enterprise." The "free market" doesn't free us from government; it just gives us unaccountable government without a moral mission.

Now consider the Bush administration's doctrine of the "unitary executive." The doctrine claims unprecedented powers for the president and restricts the powers of Congress previously assumed under the idea of "checks and balances." For example, President Bush has used "signing statements" more than eight hundred times to either refuse to enforce a passage in a law passed by Congress or to interpret it to his liking. He has assumed the power to imprison citizens without charges, violating habeas corpus, our most important guarantee of freedom. He has permitted torture in violation of international law, and has assumed the power to wiretap citizens without a warrant. He has refused to allow Congress its traditional role of overseeing the executive branch, has challenged Congress's power to subpoena members of the executive branch to testify under oath, and has effectively made law through hundreds of executive orders. He has challenged the appointment of independent counsels. The "unitary" aspect of the unitary executive has been used to prevent any branch of government, such as the Environmental Protection Agency or the State Department, from carrying out its moral mission when it contradicts the will of the president. For example, the EPA was prohibited from suing the Defense Department to get it to clean up toxic waste at military bases. The claim of the "unitary executive" is that this would be like the president suing himself. It is a metaphor that defines a new and frightening "common sense" that can deny the moral mission of government.

Progressives have rightly seen such accrual of powers by the president as antidemocratic, violating the balance of powers specified in the Constitution and assuming powers akin to those of a dictator.

Conservatives have supposedly been against "big government" as restricting freedom and threatening the "liberty" of citizens. But except for figures like John Dean and Bob Barr, they have not objected to the doctrine of the unitary executive—to wiretapping without a warrant, to the suspension of habeas corpus, to the refusal to enforce selected provisions of the laws passed by Con-

gress. Why should conservatives, who see themselves as defenders of liberty against an overly powerful intrusive government, not be outraged by the most powerful and intrusive government in our history? Indeed, why should they vocally support it?

The answer is clear. Conservative morality is the morality of obedience. For example, note what happened when Steven Bradbury, head of the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel, testified in July 2006 before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) asked whether the president was right or wrong on the Hamdan case—whether the president had the authority to void all normal legal protections and to set up military tribunals at Guantánamo. Bradbury's response: "The president is always right."

What is remarkable about this answer is that it is coming from a man whose job is supposed to be to tell the president what is legal and what is not. It is his job to determine whether the president is right.

Would a progressive president be "always right"? Hardly. The reason is that the authority of a progressive president would not be seen by conservatives as "legitimate," since such a president would not abide by the conservative moral system. For conservatives, their moral system comes first. It is the moral system that must be defended at all costs.

What we learn from cognitive science—from looking at the mode of thought used in current-day conservatism—is that George W. Bush is not himself the source of the authoritarianism of his administration. It is general conservatism—the mode of thought itself.

Take the example of health care. Former presidential candidate Rudy Giuliani framed health care as a commodity—like buying a flat-screen TV set. The market should take care of health care, he said. As in the case of flat-screen TVs, competition in the market should bring the price down.

But health care is a matter of protection, not a commodity. It is a matter of pain and suffering, of life and death. Many people

die, or suffer terrible pain, for lack of adequate health care. No one dies for lack of a flat-screen TV. Protection is a moral mission, for the government, but not for business.

Take other forms of protection. Is police protection a commodity? Should you have to buy your police protection, say, from competing security services? Burglars? With guns? Sorry, you're not up to date on your premiums. You'll just have to let them rob you, or maybe kill you. Or fire protection? Is it a commodity? Sorry, your house will have to burn down. You didn't pay your premiums. Health care is just as much a matter of fundamental protection. It shouldn't be sold like insurance. The issue is not just a matter of cost, though one-third of the cost of private health care goes for profit and administration, while Medicare only spends 3 percent on administration and none on profiteering.

Administration? That's not just secretarial help, though the paperwork is considerable. To understand "administrative costs," a brief look at one of the old Nixon tapes is enlightening. Here is John Ehrlichman talking to Nixon:

**EHRlichman:** Edgar Kaiser is running his Permanente deal for profit. And the reason he can—the reason he can do it—I had Edgar Kaiser come in—talk to me about this and I went into it in some depth. All the incentives are toward less medical care, because—

**PRESIDENT NIXON:** [unclear]

**EHRlichman:**—the less care they give them, the more money they make.

**PRESIDENT NIXON:** Fine. [unclear]

**EHRlichman:** [unclear] and the incentives run the right way.

**PRESIDENT NIXON:** Not bad.<sup>11</sup>

The "not bad" was said with an intonation of admiration—admiration for finding a way to make money by not providing health care, by denying health care. That is what most "administrative costs" are about. They are the costs of finding ways to

deny people care. Like making money by not growing crops—a scam, but much worse, since getting payments for not growing corn does not result in people dying, or living in pain.

The question is: Why should Nixon have seen this plan as a good thing? Why didn't he react with outrage at anything so callous?

The conservative view of the market is only part of the answer. Edgar Kaiser was doing what conservatives think one is supposed to do—use your entrepreneurial skills to make money any way that's legal. Another part of the answer is the absence of progressive morality, the absence of empathy for the people getting hurt. Nixon was identifying with the entrepreneur, not with the people getting less medical care. That's a fundamental difference. Finally, there is the last part: individual responsibility. Everyone is supposed to be taking care of himself. Let the buyer beware. No one's forcing them to get their health care that way. Except that now, with HMOs, virtually all health care is like that.

What's wrong with Medicare for all? If we take the profit and "administration" out of health care and stop treating it as a commodity, enough money could be saved to cover everybody. But from a conservative perspective, it would be immoral: no one should have their health care paid for by anyone else, lest they become dependent, lose their discipline, and be unable to function morally.

But from a progressive point of view, there is a moral bottom line here: health is fundamentally life-affirming; denial of care when health and life are at stake is fundamentally life-denying.

### Framing Comes Before Policy

The health care example shows something deep and important about the relation between framing and policy. If health care is framed as "health insurance," then it will be seen through an insurance frame, and the policy will fit that frame: it will be a business, with profits, administrative costs, premiums, actuaries,

outsourcing, care criteria, denial of care to maximize profits, and many people not buying insurance even if it is required by law.

Whereas if health care is seen as protection—on a par with police and fire protection, food safety, and so on—then it becomes part of the moral mission of government, where the role of government is protection and empowerment, which in turn is based on a morality of empathy and responsibility. In this case, policy proposals will look more like Medicare for all.

Many people get policy and framing backward. Policy is about fitting frames—moral frames. The mistake is when people think framing is about selling policy. When a PR firm sells a policy honestly, the visual and linguistic framing of its ads should fit the moral framing of the policy. When the ads are deceptive, the deception is that the ads are linked to a supposed moral framing inconsistent with the one the policy is really based on. Either way, moral framing precedes policy.

In its moral basis and its content, conservatism is centered on the politics of authority, obedience, and discipline. This content is profoundly antidemocratic, whereas our country was founded on opposition to authoritarianism. Yet conservatism also lays exclusive claim to patriotism. There is a contradiction here. How do conservatives get around it?

The answer can be found in the word “conservatism” itself. Those who call themselves by that label typically say they are in favor of conserving the best of the past traditions. Yet contemporary “conservatives” are often quite radical, wanting to impose near-radical values where they had not been before, such as eliminating habeas corpus and other safeguards of liberty, eliminating checks and balances and supporting the powers of the “unitary executive,” abolishing public education, and so on. Fiscal conservatism used to be seen as holding back on government spending, but today it means accumulating an astronomical deficit as a way to justify cutting social programs and government protections, while supporting militarism. That is hardly “conservative” in the traditional sense of preserving.

In place of the reality of conserving the best of the past—public education, the balance of powers, the separation of church and state, habeas corpus—many right-wing radicals have created mythical narratives governed by radical conservative values that they want to go “back” to. One such narrative is “originalism” in judicial decisions, where “meaning” is a supposed “original meaning.” The “original meaning” is somehow always in line with radical conservative values. There is a narrative of the wonders of homeschooling when homeschooling is rarely all that good. There is the mythical narrative of America as an original “Christian nation,” though many of the founding fathers were deists and a nation of Christians does not equal a “Christian nation.” There is the narrative of war as noble, when it rarely has been. There is the narrative that corporate agribusiness is a return to the family farm, when it is actually destroying the family farm. There is the narrative of American exceptionalism, in which America is inherently good and has an evangelistic duty to spread its way of life—and when it fails or harms people, it is because it was betrayed from within by “defeatists,” by cowards who would “cut and run,” by “leftist extremists,” and so on. Mythical narratives are the stuff of politics, and contemporary conservatism is rife with them.

### Biconceptualism

Terms like “conservative,” “liberal,” and “progressive” do not, and cannot, do justice to the complex reality of our politics and our experience as humans. There are indeed two worldviews in use, general progressivism and general conservatism, as we have just discussed them, but they do not exist in separate spheres. Though many self-identified “conservatives” use the general conservative worldview in areas that matter for them, they may use the general progressive worldview in other areas. The converse is true about self-identified “liberals” and “progressives,” who may be progressive on domestic policy and conservative on foreign



policy, or conservative on economic policy and progressive on everything else.

Barry Goldwater, "Mr. Conservative," had the general conservative worldview for foreign and military policy and economic policy, but had the general progressive worldview about Native American rights, about religion, about gays in the military ("You don't have to be straight to shoot straight"), and about governing itself, where he believed in honest, open, and cooperative government as opposed to government by obedience. At the time, he was the most prominent example of the term "conservative," though pure "conservatives" today would see him as not nearly conservative enough because, though he was a conservative at heart, he was nonetheless a partial progressive in significant ways. That made him "biconceptual."

But what made him a biconceptual conservative and a partial progressive, rather than a biconceptual progressive and a partial conservative? The answer is identity. Goldwater identified himself with his conservative views. He took them as defining who he was. Identity is crucial to politics.

Biconceptualism is often unconscious. Many self-identified "conservatives" have many, many progressive views without being aware of it. How is this possible? How can contradictory political views go unnoticed?

To understand biconceptualism better, think for a minute of the case of Saturday-night and Sunday-morning value systems. The same person can happily and without a pang of conscience drink, smoke, gamble, carouse, and be adulterous on Saturday night, while genuinely adhering to the opposite values in church on Sunday morning. Brains make this possible.

### Behind Biconceptualism

The brain mechanism of biconceptual thought is mutual inhibition, where both worldviews exist in the same brain but are linked to nonoverlapping areas of life. The activation of one worldview

naturally inhibits the other. And the contradiction goes happily unnoticed unless the mistress shows up pregnant in church confronting the wife.

Political worldviews are like that, which is why there are so many biconceptuals. The brain makes possible such mutually inhibitory worldviews over different areas of life. Each is a coherent system of concepts in itself, and they coexist happily if they can be kept apart, like Saturday night and Sunday morning with mistress and wife never meeting.

But wait a minute! Isn't the guy with the Saturday-night and Sunday-morning values a hypocrite? Aren't his Sunday-morning values supposed to apply to Saturday night as well? And from the perspective of his Saturday-night values, wouldn't he see himself as a self-righteous dweeb on Sunday morning? How can he live with himself?

A "hypocrite" is defined relative to what we will call a value-consistency frame, in which values are supposed to be consistent and all-encompassing, the same ones used in all cases. If you have value consistency, you have "integrity," otherwise you are a "hypocrite."

Pure progressives and pure conservatives often consider biconceptual political leaders hypocrites when they apply different worldviews to different issues. But biconceptualism is simply a fact about brains. We are human beings and we had better understand what it means to be one. The "hypocrite" may not even notice the "hypocrisy" if his brain automatically and unconsciously switches back and forth depending on context.

Many progressives considered Bill Clinton a hypocrite for his support of NAFTA, which promoted the outsourcing of jobs and allowed the dumping of American corn on Latin American markets, impoverishing small farmers in those countries, and had no environmental or labor protections. But Clinton was a biconceptual on economic policy, looking at free trade through the eyes of Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin and Wall Street.

Many conservatives consider George W. Bush a hypocrite for his stand on immigration—for favoring the granting of citizenship

to those who entered the country without papers, and for supporting a guest worker program. Bush claims to have empathy for hardworking Latinos trying to make a life in America, and he also has primary loyalty to business interests who need the workers.

The true biconceptual does not see himself as a hypocrite at all, since the switch is automatic and unconscious, and he or she does not apply different worldviews to the same issue area. The mistress and wife live in different houses. Area by area, there can be consistency of values. It's only when you go across issue areas that an inconsistency arises.

But isn't it simpler to live by a value-consistency frame?

In most cases, yes. If you have a single, all-encompassing worldview, you use the same basic values all the time. It's easier to be a total conservative or a total progressive.

But given a human brain, it can be almost as easy to be biconceptual—except that moral contradictions do occur and resolving them does take work by the brain, in particular the ventromedial prefrontal cortex. But if the contradiction is resolved unconsciously, which happens as Drew Westen has shown, it is not even noticed.<sup>12</sup>

A biconceptual may not have an utterly clear division between those areas that are understood in terms of general progressivism and those understood in terms of general conservatism. For example, some people don't know what to think about abortion and can see two sides of the issue. Such folks are said to "go back and forth on the issue."

Biconceptualism is made possible by the brain. First, there is mutual inhibition, which permits conflicting modes of thought, but only one at a time. Second, there is the difference between general modes of thought versus the special cases. Neural binding is the mechanism for applying a general mode of thought to a special case, say, applying general conservatism to health care, or applying general progressivism to global warming.

In many cases the bindings are long-term or permanent; sometimes they are short-term and may change. Someone who starts

out being a conservative on an issue may change; that is, the neural bindings from the conservative mode of thought to the details of the issue may be replaced by neural bindings from progressive thought to the same issue. Someone who has no fixed binding between the abortion issue and either general progressivism or general conservatism is said to "have no opinion." Someone who has weak bindings to both might be said to be "confused."

The two worldviews are modes of reasoning, sometimes conscious, most often unconscious. They are general, above and across issue areas. General conservative reasoning and general progressive reasoning can occur on any issue—in economic policy, in foreign policy, on the environment, about social programs, about education and health care, about religion, and so on. You can pick out general conservative and general progressive reasoning when you look at arguments for or against particular positions, as we did earlier in the chapter.

Can there be authoritarian progressives? In a word, yes. One reason is that means and ends can function as different domains of experience. Thus one can have progressive ends but authoritarian conservative means. One can even, in the extreme, be an authoritarian antiauthoritarian. Imagine someone who runs an advocacy group that is antiauthoritarian in its goals, but runs the group itself in an authoritarian way. Certain union leaders may be hierarchical and punitive in their methods, but progressive in their aims. Indeed, the leader of any progressive organization can function like that. There is a name for people with progressive goals and conservative authoritarian means: militants!

### How Can You Effect Change?

What is the brain mechanism whereby people who call themselves conservatives or independents come to have more progressive views?

Imagine a conservative who is biconceptual, already having partial progressive views. That means that he or she has both

worldviews, mutually inhibiting each other, but with the conservative worldview generally stronger—with more receptors at the synapses, which makes the conservative worldview more likely to be bound to specific issue areas. If his or her general progressive worldview is activated more and more, then its synapses will grow stronger, and it will become increasingly likely that the progressive worldview will start binding to more issue areas.

How do you activate a biconceptual's progressive worldview? By getting him or her to think and talk about those issue areas where they are already progressive! That is, by finding areas where they already agree with you and talking with them about those areas, casting progressives as heroes, and by implication, conservatives as villains. Conservatives have done the equivalent for decades.

To change minds, you must change brains. You must make unconscious politics conscious. Because most of what our brains do is unconscious, you can't find out how people's brains work by just asking them. That is why neuroscience and cognitive science are necessary.

Neither progressives nor conservatives have described their views as I just have. What I have done is to look behind the veil of conscious thought to see the principles underlying the way both progressives and conservatives really reason, usually unconsciously.

This is bound to be controversial, and it should be. It is important to understand political thought. If that thought is unconscious, it is all the more important to understand it, since unconscious thought has a more powerful effect than conscious thought. When thought is conscious, you can discuss it, question it, try to counter it. When it is unconscious, it has free rein.

## CHAPTER 3

### The Brain's Role in Family Values

**W**hy do certain people, most of them self-identified as conservatives, find certain acts of love—premarital, extra-marital, or homosexual—more sinful than war or torture?

Why should a conservative living in the Midwest find it personally threatening when gays get married in San Francisco or Massachusetts?

Why doesn't a conservative government take better care of its veterans, and why don't veterans and their families rebel en masse?

Why do many progressives object to the death penalty on moral grounds, while not being opposed to abortion on the same grounds?

Why do progressives feel a sense of responsibility for righting the wrongs of past generations?

And why should we find progressive and conservative values and modes of thought outside of politics proper—in kindergartens, Little League coaching, churches, summer camps, and so on?

Why should political values and modes of thought pervade our society?

The analysis of chapter 2—the politics of empathy and authority—did not go far enough to explain all these apparent contradictions, or hypocrisies, some would say. To answer these questions and many others, we need to move to the study of family values, some of which I discussed in my book *Moral Politics*. Since writing that book I've encountered new research on the workings of

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12. Antonio and Hanna Damasio, personal communication.

13. Marco Iacoboni, *Mirroring People: The New Science of How We Connect with Others* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008). I highly recommend this excellent popular book on mirror neurons.

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