ALSO BY GEORGE LAKOFF

Metaphors We Live By
with Mark Johnson

Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things:
What Categories Reveal About the Mind

More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor
with Mark Turner

Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind
and Its Challenge to Western Thought
with Mark Johnson

Where Mathematics Comes From: How the Embodied
Mind Brings Mathematics into Being
with Rafael Núñez

Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think

Don't Think of an Elephant! Know Your Values and Frame
the Debate: The Essential Guide for Progressives

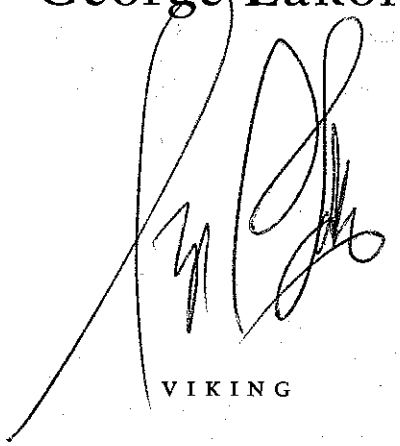
Thinking Points: Communicating Our
American Values and Vision
with the Rockridge Institute

Whose Freedom?: The Battle over America's Most Important Idea

THE POLITICAL MIND

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

George Lakoff



VIKING

CHAPTER 4

The Brain's Role in Political Ideologies

Our moral narratives have two parts, both of which are physically in our brains. The first is the dramatic structure of the narrative, with roles like hero, villain, victim, helper, and so on performing actions and undergoing effects. The second is the emotional structure, what Damasio has called "somatic markers," linking the dramatic structure to positive and negative emotional circuitry. They provide the emotional texture of simple narratives. Because they are neurally bound, the emotional structure of the narrative (anger, fear, relief) is inseparable from the dramatic structure (villainous action, battle, victory).

And when simple narratives are neurally bound together into complex narratives, simple emotional textures become emotionally very complex. As we have just seen in the case of metaphor, what is complex for us to explain is part of the learned structure of the brain that is easy for the brain to use.

Narratives are brain structures that we can live out, recognize in others, and imagine, because the same brain structures are used for all three kinds of experiences. Moral narrative is physical through and through.

The Brain's Morality

Morality is fundamentally about well-being—the well-being of oneself, others, and the groups one belongs to: family, community, business, nation. Our feelings of well-being and ill-being correlate with the activation of the positive and negative emotional

pathways. Our brains are wired to produce experiences of well-being and ill-being. These are linked to sites in the forebrain, the prefrontal cortex, which embody our ability to make moral judgments and do moral reasoning, both conscious and unconscious. The mechanisms for moral judgments in the brain are bound to the mechanisms for positive emotions (well-being) and negative emotions (ill-being): joy and satisfaction versus anger, fear, anxiety, and disgust.

Primary metaphors, as we have seen, arise when two different kinds of experiences regularly occur together and activate two different brain areas at the same time, over and over. As it turns out, our experiences of well-being and ill-being correlate regularly, especially in childhood, with many kinds of other experiences. In general, if an experience of well-being regularly occurs together with another experience, *X*, then there will be a reasonable probability that we will acquire a metaphor of the form Morality is *X*.

For example, we typically feel disgust when we eat rotten food and good when we eat pure food. This leads to the conceptual metaphor Morality is Purity; Immorality is Rottenness. We commonly feel fearful in the dark and relieved and happy when it becomes light out. This leads to the conceptual metaphor Morality is Light; Immorality is Darkness.

The result is that we learn an extensive system of mostly unconscious primary metaphors for morality and immorality just by living normally in the everyday world, within a culture and a family. We just live. Our brains do the work. As a result, from the time we are children, we go around with a whole system of metaphorical thought for what is right and wrong. Such metaphorical thought actually governs moral thought and action, especially in politics, as we shall see.

Moreover, if a correlation between experiences occurs widely around the world, then the corresponding conceptual metaphor for morality should occur widely around the world. So far as we have be able to determine, this seems to be true.

One of the most widespread metaphors for morality is what I

have called Moral Accounting. It is based on a simple fact about well-being: you are better off if you have the things you need than if you don't.

This gives rise to the metaphor Well-Being is Wealth. When we speak of "poor Harry," we generally do not mean that he lacks wealth, but that he is unfortunate, that he lacks well-being. When we speak of a rich life, we are not talking about money, but about a life filled with experiences that produce well-being.

Suppose you do something to help me, to increase my well-being. Metaphorically, according to Well-Being is Wealth, increasing my well-being is like giving me money. I can say things like, "I'm in your debt," or "How can I ever repay you?" Principles of very basic accounting and the concept of paying debts, when combined with the Well-Being is Wealth metaphor, provide a rich and widespread way of understanding what moral action is.

Suppose you do something to harm me. Metaphorically, decreasing my well-being is incurring a debt. There are a number of alternatives. If I decide on retribution, I can say, "I'll make you pay for that!" As I exact retribution, I can say triumphantly, "Payback time!" If convicted of a crime and sent to prison, you can "pay your debt to society."

Alternatively, I can decide on restitution and say, "You owe me!" Or I can balance the moral books by taking revenge—taking something of value from you. Another possibility is forgiveness: canceling the debt.

Moral Accounting is also the basis of the philosophy of utilitarianism—the greatest good for the greatest number. Utilitarianism is the metaphor taken literally: it provides an arithmetic of goodness. The famous case for it goes like this: You are a rail-yard switchman who sees a runaway train about to kill five people. You can save them if you switch the train to another track. But that track has a person on it who will be killed if you switch the track. The moral dilemma: Do nothing and five die. Switch the track and five are saved, but one dies as a direct result of your action. One dead or five dead, you make the choice. Moral arithmetic.

Because there are many forms of well-being and ill-being that we normally experience, there are correspondingly many metaphors for morality. Below is a table listing a number of them. Each entry contains a statement of the form "You are better off if you can *X*," a conceptual metaphor roughly of the form Morality is *X*, and, where appropriate, some linguistic examples.

You are better off if...	*Morality Is...*	*Linguistic Examples*
You are better off if you can stand upright than if you cannot	Morality is Uprightness Immorality is Being Low	An upstanding citizen High moral standards Above reproach A low thing to do Underhanded Stoop to that A snake
You are better off if you are functioning in the light than in the dark	Morality is Light Immorality is Darkness	Snow White The Prince of Darkness White hats Black hats A white knight Black-hearted
You are better off if you eat pure food than if you eat rotten food	Morality is Purity Immorality is Rottenness	Pure as the driven snow Purification rituals A rotten thing to do That was disgusting Tainted by scandal Stinks to high heaven
You are better off if you are strong than if you are weak	Morality is Strength Immorality is Weakness	Stand up to evil Show your backbone A flip-flopper—no backbone

You are better off if you are healthy than if you are sick	Morality is Health Immorality is a Disease	Terrorism is spreading The contagion of crime A sick mind Exposed to pornography
You are better off if you are physically attractive than if you are not	Morality is Beauty Immorality is Ugliness	A beautiful thing to do It's getting ugly around here
You are better off if you are treated fairly than if you are not	Morality is Fairness Immorality is Unfairness	An unfair labor practice A fair market Fair trade
You are better off if you know the truth than if you don't	Morality is Honesty Immorality is Deceit	He cheated on his wife Make an honest woman of her
You are better off if you are happy than if you are miserable	Morality is Happiness Immorality is misery	A happy coincidence A miserable thing to do
You are better off if you are with your community than if you are not	Morality is following a path Immorality is deviating Morality is staying within boundaries Immorality is transgression	A sexual deviant The path of righteousness A transgression You crossed the line Follow the Ten Commandments
You are better off if you are cared for than if you are not	Morality is Caring Immorality is Not Caring	He's a caring person You don't give a damn about anyone

You are better off if...	*Morality Is...*	*Linguistic Examples*
You are better off if, as a child, you obey your parents than if you don't	Morality is Obedience Immorality is Disobedience	Obey the law Don't defy the law He's guilty of insubordination He's misbehaving She's resisting authority
You are better off if you have discipline than if you lack discipline	Morality is Discipline Immorality is Lack of Discipline	He just can't control himself He shows no self-restraint
You are better off if you are free of oppression than if you are not	Morality is Freedom Immorality is Oppression	Throw off your chains! Let my people go
People are better off if others are generous than if they are selfish	Morality is Generosity Immorality is Selfishness	A giving person What a miser!
You are better off if you don't challenge those with more power than you than if you do	The Moral Order Morality is Maintaining Order Within a hierarchy of power	A society in chaos Law and order Uppity

There are more, but I think you get the idea.

The last of these, the Moral Order metaphor, deserves special comment. The logic behind the metaphor is this: since we owe everything we are—our very existence—to the workings of nature, nature is seen as moral. In short, over history, natural hierarchies of power emerge. Since they are natural, and nature cannot be immoral, traditional hierarchies of power are moral.

According to the logic of the metaphor, to find out who is most moral, look at who has been, over history, most powerful in

the hierarchy: God above Man, Man above Nature, Adults above Children, Western Culture above Non-Western culture, America above other nations, Men above Women, Whites above Non-whites, Straights above Gays, Christians above Non-Christians (or majority religion over minority religion). Not a pretty metaphor, but an all too common one.

It has been the basis for discrimination, and even mass murder, when those lower in the hierarchy are seen as lesser beings or even nonhuman. Today it is the basis for racism, sexism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, genocide, ethnic cleansing, and the hunting of species into extinction. In earlier days, it was the basis for notions of nobility—a most powerful king, and a hierarchy of warlords known as "nobles," so called because their power and wealth was seen as a sign of morality and hence purity and inherently deserved social status. Even the Great Chain of Being had a version of this in which, say, the lion, the most powerful of predators, was known as the "king of beasts" and portrayed as noble.

An important reaction against this metaphor often goes unrecognized: the Reverse Moral Order metaphor, the idea that the oppressed are more moral than their oppressors. We see this, for example, in arguments defending suicide bombing or extreme violence by those who are oppressed.

The Bodily Nature of Morality

Metaphor is not just a matter of words. We think metaphorically. All thought is brain activity, and the neural theory of metaphor explains why we have the primary metaphors we do. Primary metaphor arises from embodied experience, from two experiences that regularly occur together. It should not be surprising then that metaphors can have behavioral effects.

Chen-Bo Zhong and Katie Liljenquist have shown in a set of remarkable experiments that the Morality is Cleanliness metaphor affects the behavior of subjects: a threat to one's moral purity induces the need to cleanse oneself literally. Purification rituals in

cultures around the world and lyrics like "Wash your sins away in the tide" suggest this, but the experiments have confirmed it.[1]

The experimenters asked students to recall either an ethical or unethical behavior in their past. Students who remembered their own unethical behavior were more likely to act as if they felt unclean. On a word-completion task that followed, the "unethical memory" students were more likely to say that the unfinished word "W__H" was "WASH" instead of "WISH," and that "S__P" was "SOAP" instead of, say, "STEP."

In a second experiment, students were told that the study was to determine if handwriting was linked to personality. Some students copied out stories of ethical behavior (helping a coworker); others, stories of unethical behavior (sabotaging a coworker). They were then asked to rate the desirability of various products. Some were cleansing products (Crest toothpaste, Dove soap, etc.) and others were not (Post-it Notes, Energizer batteries, etc.). Those who copied out unethical stories rated cleansing products much higher than noncleansing products. In another version, students were asked to take as a free gift either a pencil or an antiseptic wipe. Those who wrote of the unethical deed were twice as likely to take the antiseptic wipe.

The conceptual metaphor Immorality is Disgust also has physical effects. Physical disgust and moral disgust lead to similar facial expressions and physiological activation (lower heart rates and clenching of the throat), and recruit overlapping brain regions in the lateral and medial orbitofrontal cortex.[2]

Similar results have been found for the conceptual metaphor Morality is Generosity, Immorality is Selfishness. Jorge Moll and Jodan Grafman, neuroscientists at the National Institutes of Health, scanned the brains of volunteers who were told to think about one of two scenarios: donating a sum of money to charity, or keeping it for themselves. The volunteers thinking about helping others more than themselves showed increased activity in the neural pathway for positive emotions involving the limbic system—usually associated with the pleasure of eating or sex. The

sense of pleasure correlates with the production, when activated, of the neurotransmitter dopamine. In short, when we do good, we feel good—we feel a sense of well-being.[3]

In addition, mirror neuron and associated research tells us that we are born with a capacity for empathy. Configurations of face and body muscles correlate with emotions through a two-way pathway via the insula, to the reward and punishment centers in the limbic system: we have facial expressions for happiness, sadness, anger, disgust, and so on. Via mirror neuron circuitry, we can feel what it is like to have those muscular configurations. That means that you can not just sense the musculature of someone else experiencing emotions, you can also feel what someone else feels; that is, you can feel the emotions that go with the musculature. We have the physical capacity to feel the joy and pain of others in ourselves physically. There is a neural mechanism that says in your very nervous system: You will feel better if you do unto others as they would have you do unto them.

In addition, the mirror neuron system (in the right inferior frontal gyrus and the bilateral inferior parietal lobes) is more active during the preparation of complementary joint actions than during the preparation for imitative actions. In short, we are not just pre-wired for empathy, but for cooperation.[4]

The Visceral Force of Empathy

The metaphors for morality arise from bodily experiences of well-being. They are not "mere" metaphors, not extraneous; they are neither arbitrary nor disposable. They tell us what the heart of morality is.

Empathy is at the center of the progressive moral worldview. When Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans and scenes of drowning and suffering victims were shown on TV, the result was massive empathy on a national scale. Americans sent money, volunteered to help, and hundreds of thousands offered their own homes to house the victims. The nationwide empathy had a political effect:

the Bush administration was seen as callous and uncaring, and it marked the turning point for the administration's political popularity.

The effect of empathy is powerful. During the Vietnam War, the TV pictures of wounded soldiers and coffins coming home day after day helped to turn Americans against the war. More recently, such pictures have been banned by the Bush administration since the beginning of the Iraq War. But as the violence in Iraq increased, pictures of dead and maimed Iraqis filled our TV screens, again with an empathic effect increasing the unpopularity of the war. The scandal at Walter Reed Hospital, with pictures of mistreated wounded veterans, aroused empathy once more, again bringing down even further the Bush administration's popular support.

As the Walter Reed scandal unfolded in March 2007, there appeared in the journal *Nature* the results of a remarkable study about the power of empathy. It pointed out that conscious rational decision-making is centered in the frontal lobes. That includes moral decision-making of a purely calculative nature, based on utilitarianism—the greatest good for the greatest number, for example, deciding in the abstract that one person should be sacrificed to save five others. However, the study showed very different results when the moral decisions involved direct one-on-one physical interaction where empathy was aroused—smothering a crying baby or pushing someone in front of a train to save other lives. There, for normal people, empathy interfered with any abstract moral calculus, either overriding it or raising serious moral qualms.

The locus of empathic decision-making, the study revealed, is the ventromedial prefrontal cortex. People who have had brain injuries or strokes in that region, however, showed no such qualms. They treated the one-on-one direct contact cases just like the utilitarian moral calculus cases, even when it involved suffocating a baby. Empathy is normal, and it takes a special education (such as basic training in the army), a special heartlessness, or a brain injury to disengage it.[5]

In short, empathy is morally powerful, and its political power seems to arise from its moral force, which in turn is a consequence of brain structure—of the fact that we have mirror neuron circuitry linked via neural pathways to the emotional and other regions of the brain central to empathy.

Here is where the brain gets interesting for politics. Morality is about right behavior, behavior that leads to well-being. The metaphors for morality are grounded in a wide variety of experiences of well-being. Each such metaphor characterizes one idea of what right behavior is about; for example, Care, Obedience, Discipline, Fairness, Order, Cleanliness, Purity. But instead of a random system of utterly different conceptions of morality, our brains organize these views of what is right into two systems of moral and political thought. What makes this possible?

A brain is a physical system. It works by least-energy principles, like any other physical system. Given two possibilities in a given situation, it will take the least-energy path in that context. That is called the "best fit" property of neural systems. The brain always seeks a local best fit. Think of it this way:

Suppose neuron A is connected to neurons B and C.

B and C are mutually inhibitory; the firing of one tends to inhibit the other to some extent, depending on the strength of the firing.

B has a lot of receptors at the synapse with A, while C has few receptors at its synapse with A.

A fires, releasing the same amount of neurotransmitters into the gap where both synapses are.

The large number of receptors at B's synapse will pick up more chemical input (from neurotransmitters) than the small number of receptors at C's synapse.

Thus, B is more likely to fire than C, for simple physical reasons, and the more it fires, the more receptors build up at the synapse. And for the same reason, B will tend to fire more strongly than C, and to inhibit the firing of C.

Now suppose that neuron C also takes input from neuron D, and that the synapse on C, where C links to D, has a lot of receptors.

So if D and A fire at the same time, C's firing is determined by the input from both A and D. Think of D as supplying a "context." Then C's probability of firing and its strength of firing in that context may be greater than B's. In that case C will tend to fire and inhibit the firing of B. Context matters.

This is greatly oversimplified, of course. What it important is that such a situation can have political ramifications. Suppose A, B, C, and D are not single neurons, but rather complex circuits within conceptual systems. Suppose B and C characterize strict and nurturant morality respectively—the moral worldviews of general conservatism and general progressivism—within the brain of a biconceptual, someone who has both general models structured so that one inhibits the other. Suppose that A stands for the circuitry characterizing the idea of the "war on terror." Without additional context, it will tend to activate B, the conservative authority-based worldview, and with it support for conservative policy and the Bush administration.

Now suppose that D is Hurricane Katrina, which strongly activates C, empathy and the progressive empathy-based worldview and antipathy toward Bush and conservatives, while inhibiting the conservative authority-based worldview and inhibiting support for conservatives and Bush.

This is a guess at what happened in the brains of many Americans during Katrina, when empathy for the victims arose and support for Bush and conservatives fell precipitously.

I would guess that something similar happened during the Terri Schiavo case. Empathy went not to Terri, who had been brain-dead for many years, but to the responsible family members who bore the burden of difficult decisions. When conservatives tried to interfere with the family's deliberations, they generated empathy toward Terri's husband and antipathy toward the president and other conservatives. And I would guess that the same happened in the Walter Reed Hospital scandal, when the horrible treatment of veterans generated empathy toward them and antipathy toward the conservative administration.

There is a moral here for progressives: The more they can activate empathy in the public, the more support will be available to them and the worse conservatives will do. Correspondingly, the more conservatives can generate fear in the public, the more support they will generate, and the more that will inhibit support for progressives.

If this is true, then progressives should be talking more about their moral worldview—about empathy, responsibility, and hope—rather than accepting fear-based frames to think and talk within. Instead of moving to the right and activating the conservative worldview, stay without your own moral universe and activate the progressive worldview.

The primary metaphors for morality include Morality as Strength, Fairness, Order, Cleanliness, Purity, and so on. They are learned automatically and are general. They are not specific to the family.

At the heart of the nurturant and authoritarian models of the family are two central metaphors of morality: Morality is Care and Morality is Obedience to Authority. They are fundamentally what the nurturant parent and strict father models are about.

Other metaphors for morality happen to "fit better" with one of these family models than with the other. Let us begin with a simple example. Intuitively, Morality is Strength fits well with Morality is Obedience to Authority, since an authority requires strength to command obedience. It sounds simple enough, but the neural mechanism required is interesting.

The concept of strength is independent of the concept of obedience to authority. But strength may be required to force obedience, and you learn a frame in which strength is used to command obedience.

Whenever literal obedience to authority is activated as a concept, that frame receives some activation, linking strength to the exercise of authority. When that frame is not activated, the concept of strength functions independently. That frame linking

strength and obedience to authority defines a "fit" of one concept to another. It is easier to activate strength with obedience than obedience by itself.

That "fit," therefore, also occurs between the metaphors Morality is Obedience and Morality is Strength. Though the metaphors arise independently, since they come from different experiences, the self-organizing function of the brain unites them as part of the same metaphor system.

Why should masculinity be a political issue? Why should Harvey Mansfield, the conservative Harvard government professor and hero to neoconservatives, write a book called *Manliness*? Why should conservatives be trying to feminize Democratic male candidates and officeholders?

Why should conservatives be pushing for long sentences for nonviolent drug offenders? Why should they support a three strikes law? And why should they, at the same time, support President Bush's commutation of Scooter Libby's jail sentence?

The answers to these and many other political questions come out of the primary metaphor that a Governing Institution is a Family plus the structures of the strict father and nurturant parent families. The family structure organizes ideas that, in principle, could be separate in politics. But because the family structure is mapped onto politics, the ideas that come together in the family structure are projected as a whole onto politics.

Masculinity is a good example. It is vital in a strict father family, where there is a strong gender differentiation and paternalistic male values are central. The strict father, to be effective, cannot be effeminate or weak. He must act like a "real man."

And why are conservatives punitive? It is assumed, in a strict father family, that the only way to teach a child right from wrong is to punish him for doing wrong. The lack of punishment is seen as a moral failing of the strict father. Moreover, the point of punishment—that is, physical "discipline"—is to get children to discipline themselves mentally so that they will do what the father says, to do right not wrong. Such discipline is seen as the only way to produce moral people.

Drugs are seen as taking away discipline, and hence taking away the capacity to be a moral person and the capacity for self-reliance. Drug addicts are also seen as leading others to take drugs, and hence leading to the immorality and lack of self-reliance of others. For this reason, conservatives see taking drugs as a serious offense against their moral system, even though the person taking drugs may not be violent or otherwise criminal. Since a refusal to punish for an offense is seen as a moral failing by a conservative, conservatives insist on strict punishment for nonviolent drug offenders. This is reinforced by the Moral Order metaphor whenever the offender is nonwhite, an immigrant, or a poor person.

Scooter Libby, on the other hand, was seen as upholding the authority of the president, and his crime was not seen as a real crime. Indeed, he was seen as holding up the moral system, since the strict father system depends on the unquestioned authority of the strict father. Libby was loyal. And loyalty to the strict father is loyalty to the moral system itself, and is seen as a virtue, not an offense.

What is happening here is that the strict father family as a cultural entity binds together elements of a family-based moral system: masculinity, strength, obedience, discipline, punishment. Metaphors preserve inferences as much as possible. And so the way that these elements of a family-based moral system fit together is preserved under the metaphor of a Governing Institution is a Family.

The bottom line: the existence in American culture of two very different models of the family, in the presence of the primary metaphor of a Governing Institution is a Family, gives rise to two very different ways of conceptualizing governing institutions—including different moral worldviews and modes of thought. These arise unconsciously.

When they remain unconscious, there can be serious political effects.

The Brain and Biconceptualism

The two modes of thought described so far are quite general, and versions of both have been found in just about everyone studied. We all have both progressive and conservative worldviews, applied in different areas and in different ways.

Neural binding—the binding of a general worldview to a specific issue area—makes this possible. We saw some of this in chapter 2. Suppose the issue area is religion. Progressive Christianity sees God as a nurturant parent, and imposes the nurturant moral view on the institution of the church and on what it means to be a good Christian: you have empathy for people who are poor, sick, hungry, or homeless, and you act politically to help them.

A conservative fundamentalist Christian might well have the opposite views on all these issues, with God as a strict parent, threatening the punishment of eternal damnation for violating God's commandments as interpreted by the clergy.

Then there are the biconceptuals. The National Council of Evangelicals believes in a strict father God who rewards with heaven and punishes with hell, in the absolute truth of the Bible, and in the right to proselytize. But recently it has been taking seriously those progressive parts of the Bible calling for good stewardship of the earth and fighting global warming, for antipoverty programs and health care, and for putting an end to torture. It has both strict and nurturant worldviews, and applies them in different areas.

There are self-identified conservatives who are indeed conservative on family values, gun control, and fundamentalist Christianity, but who are progressive in a number of areas: they love the land, like to hunt and fish, hike and camp. They resent big corporations exercising mineral rights by building oil rigs, installing mine shafts, and digging open-pit mines on their ranches, and in the process poisoning their wells and ponds and streams, interfering with ranching, and leaving an unsightly mess. They want

progressive communities, where officials care about people, act responsibly, openly, and honestly, and where people care about each other, cooperate, and do community service.

In short, contextual "best fit" plus neural binding allows general progressive and conservative worldviews to be applied to specific cases in different ways—and sometimes in opposite ways. What is preserved in such binding to specific issue areas are the values and modes of reasoning brought to bear on such issues.

Then there are the independents and swing voters, who are biconceptuals with both progressive and conservative modes of thought at the general level, but who do not have fixed neural bindings to all specific issue areas. They may "go back and forth" on issues.

It should be remembered that "best fit" does not always mean perfect fit. For example, the general conservative worldview can be fitted to the issue area of immigration in a number of ways, depending on which priority is chosen:

1. Business interests, which require a continuing supply of cheap labor;
2. Law-and-order enthusiasts, who see legalization of immigrants without papers as "amnesty" for criminals;
3. Racists, who want to keep America as "pure" as possible; and so on.

Numbers 2 and 3 are consistent, allowing some racists to hide their racism under a banner of law and order. Numbers 1 and 2 are not consistent given the realities of American life. At this writing, no compromise has been figured out. The result is a schism on this issue, even among pure conservatives.

Do disagreements on these issues mean that conservatism is breaking down? Not at all. Each position is a conservative position. It's just that there is wiggle room within conservatism, as there is within progressivism. Disagreements about how to apply general conservative thought to specific issue areas are common.

That does not imply that conservatism is breaking down—quite the contrary.

Nor does it mean that progressivism is breaking down when progressives have disagreements about priorities. Should open-pit coal mines be banned on environmental grounds with miners losing jobs, or should the miners' jobs be protected over the environment? One can be both for the environment and for jobs as a progressive, and still face the dilemma, because it is not about progressive versus conservative values. On the other hand, one may be supporting the coal mines to protect corporate profits, not jobs. Then it does become a matter of progressive versus conservative views. Reasons matter.

The Brain's Politics

Politics is about real-world power and the way we understand morality. The bitterness in politics is partly about who has power and patronage and the control of money and resources that goes with political power. But the wider and deeper emotionality and bitterness is about morality, about whose moral system will rule. That is what public political discourse is mainly about. And public discourse has an enormous effect upon the outcome of elections.

For the most part, moral worldviews are within the cognitive unconscious. They are not discussed openly in public discourse. But cognitive science and neuroscience allow us to better understand what the shouting is about. The question now is what to do about it.

PART II

POLITICAL CHALLENGES FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY MIND

Fillmore, "Frame Semantics," in Linguistic Society of Korea, ed., *Linguistics in the Morning Calm* (Seoul: Hanshin), 111–38. Charles Fillmore, "Frames and the Semantics of Understanding," *Quaderni di Semantica* 6 (1985): 222–53.

6. Vittorio Gallese and George Lakoff, "The Brain's Concepts: The Role of the Sensory-Motor System in Conceptual Structure," *Cognitive Neuropsychology*, 22(2005): 455–79.

7. Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error* (New York: Grosset/Putnam) 1974), 174. Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza* (New York: Harcourt, 2003), 147–50.

8. Srini Narayanan, "Moving Right Along: A Computational Model of Metaphorical Reasoning About Events," *Proceedings of the National Conference on Artificial Intelligence*, 1999 (AAAI '99): 121–28. Feldman, *From Molecule to Metaphor.*

9. Dan P. McAdams, *The Redemptive Self: Stories Americans Live By* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). Dan P. McAdams, *The Person: A New Introduction to Personality Psychology*, 4th ed. (New York: Wiley, 2006). McAdams and his colleagues at the Northwestern University Psychology Department have shown that it is common for people to live out the Redemption narrative. He suggests that personality involves living out narratives.

10. http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB122/index.htm#kubark.

11. Feldman, *From Molecule to Metaphor*, 213–15.

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.

14. Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007).

15. For a full discussion, see chapter 7.

2. The Political Unconscious

1. Charles Fillmore, "An Alternative to Checklist Theories of Meaning," in *Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society* (Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Lingustics Society, 1975), 123–31. Charles Fillmore, "Frame Semantics," in Linguistic Society of Korea, ed., *Linguistics in the Morning Calm* (Seoul: Hanshin), 111–38. Charles Fillmore, "Frames and the Semantics of Understanding," *Quaderni di Semantica* 6 (1985): 222–53.

2. http://www.rockridgeinstitute.org/research/lakoff/tortreform.

3. Al Gore, *The Assault on Reason* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2007), 72.

4. Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: Norton, 2007).

5. J. E. Faust, "Obedience: The Path to Freedom," *Ensign*, May 1999, 45.

6. *New York Times*, March 29, 1994.

7. An excellent discussion of this history is Emma Rothschild's *Economic Sentiments: Adam Smith, Condorcet, and the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2001), especially chapter 2.

8. Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, R. H. Campbell and A. S. Skinner, eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 157–58.

9. Ibid., 96.

10. Rothschild, *Economic Sentiments*, 64.

11. From the Nixon tapes. Quoted in Michael Moore's movie *Sicko.*

12. Drew Westen, *The Political Brain* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007).

4. The Brain's Role in Political Ideologies

1. Chen-Bo Zhong and Kate Liljenquist, "Washing Away Your Sins: Threatened Morality and Physical Cleansing," *Science* 313, no. 5792 (September 8, 2006): 1451–52.

2. Dan Jones, "Moral Psychology: The Depths of Disgust," *Nature* 447 (June 14, 2007): 768–71.

3. J. Moll et al., "Human Fronto-Mesolimbic Networks Guide Decisions About Charitable Donation," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA* 103, no. 42 (October 17, 2006): 15623–28.

4. Marco Iacoboni, *Mirroring People: The New Science of How We Connect with Others* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008).

5. J. Greene et al., "The Neural Basis of Cognitive Conflict and Control in Moral Judgment," *Neuron* 44 (October 14, 2004): 389–400.

5. A New Consciousness

1. Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: Norton, 2007).

2. George Lakoff, *Don't Think of an Elephant!* (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green, 2004). George Lakoff and the Rockridge Institute, *Thinking Points* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006).

6. Traumatic Ideas: The War on Terror

1. http://www.cfr.org/publication/13432/.