

Moral Maps, "First World" Conceits, and the New Evangelists

RICHARD A. SHWEDER

ECONOMISTS' BRAINS: \$2.39 A POUND!

Does cannibalism have nutritional value or is it just a form of high cuisine? Although this question is a topic of solemn debate in anthropology, at grand ceremonial occasions anthropologists are known to have a sense of humor. Being an anthropologist, I thought I would begin this chapter with an admittedly baroque variation on an old joke about the market for brains in Papua New Guinea.

This guy from the "First World" walks into a gourmet food store in Papua New Guinea. He goes to the meat section, where he sees a bill of fare designated "assorted westerners." It contains two general offerings: evangelical missionaries (religious and secular), who think it is their mission in life to make our world a better place by their moral lights, and romantic relativists, who think whatever is, is okay and actually seem to like it here. He notices many delicacies, all neatly arranged in bins.

The first bin has a sign that says "Economists' Brains from the World Bank: \$2.39 a Pound!" The label on the bin reads, "These people want to

loan us lots of money at very favorable rates (which of course we are never going to pay back), if only we will do things more like the way they do things in the West. They want us to formalize contracts, create an independent judiciary, and prohibit the preferential hiring of members of one's own ethnic group. And that's just for starters."

The sign on the second bin says "Protestant Ethicists' Brains: \$2.42 a Pound." The label reads, "These people want us to change our work habits and our ideas about the good life. They want us to stop wasting our time on elaborate rituals for dead ancestors. They want to loan us lots of money at very favorable rates (which of course we are never going to pay back), if only we will start thinking about things the way they think about things in the West (or at least in the very northern sections of the West). Northern Western folk are convinced that everything is nefarious except the impersonal pursuit of work and that only the rich will be saved. They tell us that 'sustainable growth' is the contemporary code word for the adoption of Protestant values. They believe that God blesses men in the sign of their material prosperity, especially their purposefully amassed wealth. They want us to be saved. They want to save us."

The sign on the third bin says "Monocultural Feminists' Brains: \$2.49 a Pound." The label reads, "These people want us to change our family life, gender relations, and reproductive practices. They want us to devalue the womb, which is associated in their minds with 'bad' things such as big families, domesticity, and a sexual division of labor. They want us to revalue the clitoris (which is associated in their minds with 'good' things such as independence, equality, and hedonic self-stimulation) as the biological essence of female identity, and as the symbol and means of female emancipation from men. And they want NATO to send in a 'humanitarian' invasion force unless we promise to join the National Organization of Women and the League of Women Voters."

The sign on the final bin says "Anthropologists' Brains: \$15.00 a Pound." The label reads, "These people think we should just take the money and run!"

Dismayed, our visitor walks over to the guy behind the counter and he says, "What's this! Haven't you heard about the moral superiority of the West (or at least of the northernmost sections of the West)? Don't you know that the reason we [in the 'First World'] are better than you [in the 'Third World'] is that we are humanists who endorse the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Man? Don't you know that when it comes to brains there is basic oneness to humankind? Don't you know that the major reason for differences in the world [variations in 'human capital'] is that people in the southern sections of the globe grow up in impoverished cultures ['cul-

tures of poverty']? That is why they are badly equipped for life on the information highway and in the global fast lane. That is why they are untrustworthy, corrupt, undisciplined, unskilled, and poor. Okay, I can understand a slight difference in price for economists' brains, Protestant ethicists' brains, and monocultural feminists' brains (\$2.39 a pound/\$2.42 a pound/\$2.49 a pound), but \$15.00 a pound for anthropologist's brains? That's ridiculous! It's illogical! It's unfair! It defies 'transparency'!"

The guy behind the counter replies: "Do you know how many anthropologists we had to kill before we could find a pound of brains?"

So I admit to feeling a bit brainless writing for a volume whose contributors include so many distinguished scholars and evangelists from disciplines other than my own. Lawrence Harrison recruited me to this effort by stating, with characteristic candor, that he wanted me to write as a skeptic and critic because he thought I believed in "culture" but not in "progress." He said that he was planning to invite other types of skeptics and critics as well, such as those who believe in "progress" but not in "culture."

I do believe in progress, at least in a limited sense (more on that below). And I suspect that the precise sense in which I believe in culture (more on that too) may not seem very helpful (or even sensible) to those who have argued here that "culture matters."¹

What does it mean to say that "culture matters?" It depends on who is speaking. The theme of this volume is expressive of an intellectual stance known as "cultural developmentalism." For a cultural developmentalist, the assertion that "culture matters" is a way of saying that some cultures are impoverished or backward, whereas others are enriched or advanced. It means there are good things in life (e.g., health, domestic tranquillity, justice, material prosperity, hedonic self-stimulation, and small families) that all human beings ought to want and have but that their culture keeps them from wanting and/or having.

Here is how you can tell if you are a cultural developmentalist. Do you like to inspect the globe with an ethical microscope and draw "moral maps" of the world? Or, doing what amounts to pretty much the same thing, do you like to construct "quality of life" indicators that can be used to rank cultures, civilizations, and religions from better to worse? If you are a cultural developmentalist, you probably feel deeply disturbed by the staying power and popularity of various ("archaic") ways of life and ("superstitious") systems of belief because you think they are relatively devoid of truth, goodness, beauty, or practical efficiency. You probably want to "enlighten" the residents of the "dark continents" of the world. You probably want to lift them up from error, ignorance, bad habits, immorality, and squalor, and refashion them to be more progressive, more democratic, more scientific, more civic-

mindful, more industrious, more entrepreneurial, more reliable, more rational, and more like (the ideal) us.

Culture matters for me too but in a rather different sort of way: If I were ever to refer to a "culture of poverty," I would probably reserve the expression for ascetic communities in which the renunciation of wealth and the repudiation of worldly goods had been positively valued as an objective good. Furthermore, given my conception of precisely how culture counts, I might even try to find some merit in that conception of the good.

Although the idea of an "impoverished culture" is not exactly an oxymoron, it has played almost no part in my own field research. To make matters worse, my commitment to the very idea of "culture" has its source in an interest in other cultures as sources of illumination (Shweder 1991, 1993, 1996a, 1996b, 1997; Shweder et al. 1998). I have never put much stock in the view that holds that a good reason for becoming interested in other cultures is that they are impediments to the realization of some imagined universal aspiration of all people to be more like northern Europeans. And while I certainly believe in the importance and moral decency of our way of life, I do not believe in our moral superiority over all the rest.²

Thus I do not think that northern Europeans have a corner on the market for human progress. I do not believe that cognitive, spiritual, ethical, social, political, and material progress go hand in hand. Societies in command of great wealth and power can be spiritually, ethically, socially, and politically flawed. Many vital, intellectually sophisticated, and admirable cultures, places where philosophers live in mud huts, have evolved in environments with rudimentary technology and relatively little material wealth. Hence, I do not believe that either "we" or "they" have implemented the only credible manifestation of the good life.

Obviously, I am one of the heretics at this revival meeting and it is not the greatest of feelings. So let me continue my presentation with a couple of confessions, which will perhaps reduce some of my anxiety over being drafted as a designated skeptic.

CONFESSION 1: I AM AN ANTHROPOLOGIST

My first confession, of course, is that I am an anthropologist. Unfortunately, given all the turmoil in the profession of anthropology these days, this confession is not very informative. It carries no implications (as it would have fifty years ago or even twenty years ago) for how I might feel about the concept of culture, whether I am for it or against it or whether it makes me laugh or cry.³

For the sake of accuracy in describing the current scene in anthropology, let me note that there was a time in anthropology when such words as "primitive," "barbarian," "savage," or even "underdeveloped" were put in quotation marks, if they were used at all. There was a time when the idea that there is only one way to lead a morally decent and rational life, and it's our way, would have been seen, quite frankly, as obscene.

But things have changed. Monocultural feminism has put an end to any facile relativism in anthropology and has given a new meaning to the idea of "political correctness." So, along with the international human rights movement and various agencies promoting Western-style globalization (UNICEF, WHO, perhaps even NATO), there are plenty of anthropologists these days who take an interest in other cultures mainly as objects of scorn. The slogan "It is not cultural, it's [fill in the blank: criminal, immoral, corrupt, inefficient, barbaric]" (or alternatively, "It is cultural and it's [fill in the blank: criminal, immoral, corrupt, inefficient, barbaric]") has become the rallying cry for cultural developmentalists, Western interventionists of all kinds, and some schools of cultural anthropology as well.

I regret this ironic turn of events. Cultural anthropology was once a discipline that was proud of its opposition to ethnocentric misunderstanding and moral arrogance as well as its anti-colonial defense of other ways of life. That was yesteryear.

These days there are plenty of anthropologists (the post-culturalists) who want to disown the concept of culture. They think the word "culture" gets used in bad faith to defend authoritarian social arrangements and to allow despots to literally get away with murder. Indeed, as the world of theory in cultural anthropology turns, it seems to be "déjà vu all over again." Despite a century of objections by anthropological pluralists, relativists, and contextualists such as Franz Boas, Ruth Benedict, Melville Herskovits, Robert LeVine, Clifford Geertz, and others, an intellectual stance reminiscent of late nineteenth-century "white man's burden," cultural developmentalism is back. The self-congratulatory, up-from-barbarism theme of (certain versions of) Western liberalism (including the sensational accusation that African mothers are bad mothers, human rights violators, and mutilators of their daughters) has once again become fashionable on the anthropological scene, at least among those anthropologists who are the most politically correct.¹

The current scene within anthropology is sufficiently complex (and perverse) that there are even anthropologists who think they own the concept of "culture" but do not want anyone, including themselves, to do anything with it. I am not one of them. Regardless of whether the idea of culture makes me laugh or cry, I like it a lot. I can't get rid of it. I find we can't live by ecumenism alone. Membership in some particular tradition of meanings is an es-

sential condition for personal identity and individual happiness. In my view, "thick ethnicity" and cultural diversity both have their place and are part of the natural and moral order of things. I do not think Mother Nature wants everyone to be alike.

What do I mean by "culture"? I mean community-specific ideas about what is true, good, beautiful, and efficient. To be "cultural," those ideas about truth, goodness, beauty, and efficiency must be socially inherited and customary; and they must actually be constitutive of different ways of life.

Alternatively stated, culture refers to what Isaiah Berlin called "goals, values and pictures of the world" that are made manifest in the speech, laws, and routine practices of some self-monitoring group.

There is a lot more packed into that definition than I can unpack in a single chapter. There is the notion that actions speak louder than words and that "practices" are a central unit for cultural analysis. That is one reason I don't much like value questionnaires and find it hard to feel enthusiastic about research based on the analysis of official creeds or on endorsement patterns for abstract stand-alone propositions.⁵

Furthermore, one of the things "culture" is certainly not about is "national character." I am not going to have much to say about "national character" studies here, but they went out of fashion about forty years ago, and for good reason. They went out of fashion because it is far better to think about human behavior and motivation the way rational choice theorists or sensible economists do, rather than the way personality theorists do. Rational choice theorists think about action as something emanating from "agency." That is to say, action is analyzed as the joint product of "preferences" (including goals, values, and "ends" of various sorts) and "constraints" (including "means" of various sorts, such as causal beliefs, information, skills, and material and non-material resources), all mediated by the will of rational beings. This stands in contrast to the way in which personality theorists think about behavior. Personality theorists think about action as "forced." They try to explain action as the joint product of two types of vectors, one pushing from "inside," called "person" (described in terms of generalized motives and "sticky" global traits), and the other pushing from "outside," called "situation."

Looking for types of persons as a way of explaining cultural practices has not proved very useful. If one tries to characterize individuals in terms of personality traits or generalized motives, one usually discovers that "individuals within cultures vary much more among themselves than they do from individuals in other cultures" (Kaplan 1954). One also discovers that if there is any modal type at all (e.g., an "authoritarian personality type" or a personality type with a "need for achievement"), it is typically characteristic of no

more than about one-third of the population. It has long been recognized among psychological anthropologists and cultural psychologists that (quoting Melford Spiro 1961) "it is possible for different modal personality systems to be associated with similar social systems, and for similar modal personality systems to be associated with different social systems." Looking for types of personalities to explain differences in cultural practices is a dead end (see Shweder 1991).

CONFESSION 2: I AM A PLURALIST

My second confession is that I am a cultural pluralist. My version of cultural pluralism begins with a universal truth, which I refer to as the principle of "confusionism." A "confusionist" believes that the knowable world is incomplete if seen from any one point of view, incoherent if seen from all points of view at once, and empty if seen from "nowhere in particular." Given the choice between incompleteness, incoherence, and emptiness, I opt for incompleteness while staying on the move between different ways of seeing and valuing the world.

This version of cultural pluralism is not opposed to universalism. Culture theorists do not divide into only two types, those who believe that anything goes (the "radical relativists") and those who believe that only one thing goes (the "uniformitarian universalists"). I strongly believe in "universalism," but the type of universalism I believe in is "universalism without the uniformity," which is what makes me a pluralist. In other words, I believe there are universally binding values but that there are just too many of them (e.g., justice, beneficence, autonomy, sacrifice, liberty, loyalty, sanctity, duty). I believe that those objectively valuable ends of life are diverse, heterogeneous, irreducible to some common denominator such as "utility" or "pleasure," and that they are inherently in conflict with each other. I believe that all the good things in life can't be simultaneously maximized. I believe that when it comes to implementing true values there are always trade-offs, which is why there are different traditions of values (i.e., cultures) and why no one cultural tradition has ever been able to honor everything that is good.

Cultural pluralism has other implications, some of which are highly provocative. For example, there is the claim that the members of the executive board of the American Anthropological Association did the right and courageous thing in 1947 when they decided not to endorse the U.N. Declaration of the Rights of Man on the grounds that it was an ethnocentric document. In 1947, anthropologists were still proud of their anti-colonial defense of alternative ways of life (see Shweder 1996b).

PROGRESS AND PLURALISM: CAN THEY COEXIST?

Pluralism does not imply the rejection of the ideas of progress and decline. Progress means having more and more of something that is "desirable" (i.e., something that should be desired because it is "good"). Decline means having less and less of it. Name a specific "good" (e.g., taking care of parents in old age, eliminating contagious disease), and we can make objective judgments about progress with respect to that "good." If maximizing the likelihood of child survival during the first nine months after birth is the measure of success, then the United States is objectively more advanced than Africa and India. If maximizing the likelihood of child survival during the first nine months after conception (in the womb) is the measure of success, then Africa and India (where abortion rates are relatively low) are objectively more advanced than the United States (where abortion rates are relatively high).

Of course there is much that is discretionary (i.e., not dictated by either logic or evidence) in any decision about how to name and identify specific "goods" and thus morally map the world. For example, the sheer quantity of life, or "reproductive fitness," is the measure used by evolutionary biologists for estimating the success of a population. By that measure of success—the genetic reproduction of one's tribe or ancestral line—how are we to evaluate the birth control pill, the legalization of abortion, and the reduction of family size in the high-tech societies of the First World? Do we narrate a story of decline?

Or, to select a second example, what type of story should we tell about "quality of life" measures such as life expectancy at birth? The longer lived a population, the greater the frequency of chronic illness, the greater the likelihood of functional impairment, and hence the higher the aggregate amount of pain (a true qualitative measure) experienced by that population. Good things (e.g., more years of life, no physical pain) do not always correlate. A longer life is not unambiguously a better life, or is it? Or, if longevity is a measure of success, then why not also numerousness or sheer population size, with China and India at the top of the list?

And why life expectancy at birth? What principle of logic or canon of inductive science dictates that standard for drawing moral maps and for assessing cultural progress? Why not life expectancy at age forty or, for that matter, at conception? Why not take the more comprehensive life-course perspective of the fetus and not just its later viewpoint as a newly born infant? As noted, if one considers the hazards of the womb the First World and former Second World look worse off than many societies in Africa and Asia. Consider how different our life expectancy tables would be if we factored in the 20 to 25 percent abortion rates in the United States and Canada or the 50-plus per-

cent abortion rates in Russia, as compared to rates as low as 2 to 10 percent in India, Tunisia, and some other parts of the "underdeveloped" world.

The pro-life/pro-choice debate (I am pro-choice) is not the issue here. The issue is the discretionary aspect of moral mapping and the degrees of freedom one has in deciding whose ideals are going to be selected as the gold standard of the good life. As societies become technologically sophisticated, rates of abortion often rise, thereby lowering the life expectancy rate of the population (assuming that life expectancy is calculated from the point of conception rather than at birth). In some parts of the world, often in those parts of the world where reproductive success and large families are valued, early childhood is a relatively dangerous time of life. In other places, often in high-tech places where small families are valued and the womb is no longer thought of as a sanctified ground, the real dangers come earlier in life, and if you are an unwanted child, the womb can be hazardous to your health.

Once a particular "good" is selected and named, objective assessments of advance and decline can be made. That type of value-specific assessment is quite different, however, from any form of triumphal progressivism, which tries to pick out some one cultural tradition as superior to all the rest. Things can be made to seem either better or worse, depending on the criteria of value that you choose to select. When it comes to reviewing all the many potentially good things in life, cultural pluralists believe that there are pluses and minuses to most long-standing cultural traditions (see Shweder et al. 1997). And when it comes to constructing narratives about progress, they believe that there is lots of room for discretion (and ideology) in how one tells the story of who is better and who is worse.

It is also possible to make such value-specific judgments about progress without believing in the overall superiority of the present over the past, or that most changes are for the good. It is even possible to make criterion-specific judgments of progress and decline while being a "neo-antiquarian," that is, someone who rejects the idea that the world woke up, emerged from darkness, and became good for the first time yesterday or three hundred years ago in northern Europe. A "neo-antiquarian" does not think that newness is a measure of progress and is quite prepared, in the name of progress, to revalue things from distant places and from out of the distant past.

Pluralists do make critical judgments. Indeed, the "stance of justification" is so central to my style of cultural analysis that I would define a "genuine" culture, a culture deserving of appreciation, as a way of life that is defensible in the face of criticism from abroad. Pluralism is the attempt to provide that defense of "others," and not only as a corrective to the partiality and exaggerations of various modern forms of ethnocentrism and chauvinism (including the claim that the West is better than all the rest), although that is reason

enough. Right now, with the fall of communism and the rise of global capitalism, including the expansion of our Internet, we (in the West) feel full of ourselves. It is at times such as these that we might do well to remember that Max Weber, the author of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, did not voice a preference for Protestantism over Catholicism or for the North over the South. He was a critical pluralist who put out warnings about the "iron cage" of modernity, about the impersonal rules of the bureaucratic state that redefine one's moral obligations to kith and kin as a form of "corruption," and about the hazards of an unbridled economic rationality.

Throughout history, whoever is wealthiest and the most technologically advanced thinks that their way of life is the best, the most natural, the God-given, the surest means to salvation, or at least the fast lane to well-being in this world. In the sixteenth century, Portuguese missionaries to China believed that their invention of clocks, of which they were very proud, was knock-down proof of the superiority of Catholicism over other world religions (Landes 1998, 336-337). For all I know, their mechanical timepiece may have been counted as an argument in favor of absolute monarchy. Dazzled by our contemporary inventions and toys (e.g., CNN, IBM, Big Mac, blue jeans, the birth control pill, the credit card) and at home in our own way of life, we are prone to similar illusions and the same type of conceits.

MILLENNIAL PROPHECIES: THREE IMAGES OF THE "NEW WORLD ORDER"

These are confusing times, especially when one tries to imagine the broad outlines of the "new world order" that is likely to replace the old capitalist/communist/underdeveloped "three worlds" scheme.

One reason for the confusion is that the self-congratulatory, "enlightenment" origin story about the ascent of secularism, individualism, and science has taken its lumps in the 1990s and may not be all that useful for predicting the direction of change in the early twenty-first century. Thirty years ago, many social scientists predicted that, in the modern world, religion would go away and be replaced by science. They predicted that tribes would go away and be replaced by individuals. They were wrong. That has not and will not happen, either globally or locally. Multiculturalism is a fact of life. The former Second World, once an empire, is now many little worlds. The development of a global world system and the emergence of local ethnic or cultural revival movements seem to go hand in hand. At the limit, political succession may even have its rewards for cultural minority groups. The potential rewards include direct receipt of financial aid and military protection from various power centers, and perhaps even a voice at the United Nations.

Moreover, many of us now live in nation-states composed, as Joseph Raz has put it, "of groups and communities with diverse practices and beliefs, including groups whose beliefs are inconsistent with each other." We will continue to do so, if for no other reason than the reality of global migration and the fact that community and divinity are essential goods and must be acknowledged for the sake of individual identity and human progress. Of course, life in such a world can be hazardous, especially for members of immigrant or minority groups living in multicultural states or for members of different civilizations or cultures who are in geopolitical conflict. In such a world, one hopes that it is not just culture that matters but also a particular pluralistic conception of culture because the right conception of culture can be useful in minimizing some of the risks associated with "difference" and with multicultural life.

There is a second reason these are confusing times. It would be nice to have in hand a valid general causal explanation for the wealth and poverty of peoples, cultures, or nations, but we don't. If by "causation" we mean what J. S. Mill meant by it—all the necessary conditions that are jointly sufficient to produce an effect—I think we must admit that we do not really know what causes economic growth. Sicily in the fifteenth century, Holland in the sixteenth century, Japan today; social scientists can pick a people, culture, or nation and tell a plausible story about some of the reasons for economic failure or success, in that case. But that is a far cry from a general causal theory. Try listing all the potential causal conditions for wealth production mentioned by David Landes (1998) in his monumental economic history of the world. Then ask yourself this question: Are any of those conditions sufficient to produce economic growth? The answer is no. Are any of those conditions even necessary?

Having guns did it here. Having Jews did it there. In this case it was immigration policy; in that case it was having access to quinine. In this case it was freeing the serfs; in that case it was the availability of fossil fuel. In this case it was the weather; in that case it was willingness to trade with outsiders. In this case it was having good colonial masters; in that case it was high consumer demand. In this case and that case it was luck. Singapore is not a liberal democracy, but it is rich. India is the world's most populous democracy, but it is poor. Sweden in the eighteenth century was a sparsely populated democracy, and it was poor too. People who are religiously orthodox and don't believe in "gender equality" (e.g., Hasidic Jews) can be rich. Fully secularized egalitarian societies (e.g., former communist countries in Eastern Europe) may fail to thrive from an economic point of view. In 1950, Japan had "Confucian values" (which at the time didn't look very "Western") and was poorer than Brazil. In 1990 Japan had the same "Confucian values," which

all of a sudden seemed very "Protestant-like," as Japan outstripped Brazil. If I were a cynic, I would say that our most able economic historians are really good at identifying some of the unnecessary conditions that might have been jointly sufficient to produce wealth in any particular special case. Less cynically, I think it is fair to say that despite many impressive post hoc historical accounts of the case-specific conditions that have promoted growth, one is entitled to feel confused about the general causes of economic success, if by "causation" we mean what J. S. Mill meant when he defined the term.

How then are we to grasp the big changes that are taking place in the "world order"? What is the relationship between "globalization" (the linking of the world's economies), "westernization" (the adoption of Western ideas, ideals, norms, institutions, and products), and economic growth? If you keep your ear to the ground these days, you can hear many prophecies or speculations about the shape of the "new world order." I will conclude by mentioning three.

*Prophecy 1: The West Is Best and Will Become Global
(or at Least It Should Try to Take Over the World)*

The prediction here is that Western-like aspirations will be fired up or freed up by globalization and will be the cause and the concomitant of economic growth. Western-like aspirations include a desire for liberal democracy, the decentralization of power, free enterprise, private property, individual rights, gender equality, and so on, and perhaps even a taste for Western products. With regard to "globalization," "westernization," and "economic growth," this prediction imagines causal effects in all directions. Basically, this is the Western "enlightenment" origin story universalized and projected into the future.

*Prophecy 2: Others Will Have a "Piece of the Rock" and
Hold On to Their Distinctive Culture Too*

In the early 1970s, I had a Sudanese student who did his Ph.D. on attitudes toward modernization among African students, using a beliefs and values questionnaire. He discovered that the "materialism" factor in his questionnaire was orthogonal to the "individualism" factor; one could value material wealth without giving up the collectivist values of the tribe. The Saudi Arabians liked that message so much they hired him to teach in their universities. Perhaps that is why Samuel Huntington's thesis (1996) that the West is unique but not universal and that other civilizations do not need to become like us to benefit from the technologies of the modern world is so popular in

the non-Western world. This prediction imagines globalization and economic growth without deep cultural penetration from the West. Cultures and civilizations are encouraged to remain diverse while everyone gets a piece of the pie.

*Prophecy 3: A Liberal Ottoman-Style Empire with
Two "Castes" (Cosmopolitan Liberals and Local Non-Liberals)*

I associate the first prophecy with Francis Fukuyama (1992) and the second with Samuel Huntington (1996). Let me conclude with my own augury. Imagine a world order that is liberal in the classical sense. Its leaders assume a "stance of neutrality" with regard to substantive cultural issues. They don't condition aid and protection on changes in local gender ideals, forms of authority, kinship structures, or coming of age ceremonies. They don't try to tell the members of different cultural groups that they have to live together or love each other or share the same emotional reactions, aesthetic ideals, and religious beliefs. They don't try to tell them how to run their private lives or that they must have private lives. Imagine that in this world order various sanctioning mechanisms make it possible to enforce minimal rules of civility: exit visas are always available, and no aggression is permitted across territorial boundaries. Imagine that such a world system is set up to support decentralized control over cultural issues and hence to promote local cultural efflorescence. Such an emergent "new world order" might look like a post-modern Ottoman "millet system" on a global scale.

I imagine this system would be two tiered and operating at two levels, global and local. I imagine its personnel will belong to two "castes." There will be the cosmopolitan liberals, who are trained to appreciate value neutrality and cultural diversity and who run the global institutions of the world system. And there will be the local non-liberals, who are dedicated to one form or another of thick ethnicity and are inclined to separate themselves from "others," thereby guaranteeing that there is enough diversity remaining in the world for the cosmopolitan liberals to appreciate. The global elite (those who are cosmopolitan and liberal) will, of course, come from all nationalities. In the new universal cosmopolitan culture of the global tier of the world system, your ancestry and skin color will be far less important than your education, your values, and your travel plans. It is already the case in the postmodern cosmopolitan world that you don't have to grow up in the West to be Western any more than you have to grow up in the southern world to adopt an indigenous Third World point of view. Finally, I imagine that it would be possible in this "new world order" for individuals to switch

tiers and castes in both directions, moving from global liberalism to local non-liberalism and back, within the course of a single life.

With regard to globalization, westernization, and economic growth, I would hazard this guess. If it should turn out as an empirical generalization that economic growth can be pulled off relying only on the shallow or thin aspects of Western society (e.g., weapons, information technology, Visa cards), then cultures won't converge, even as they get rich. If economic growth is contingent on accepting the deep or thick aspects of Western culture (e.g., individualism, ideals of femininity, egalitarianism, the Bill of Rights), then cultures will not converge and will not develop economically because their sense of identity will supersede their desire for material wealth.

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Richard Shweder's note 1, which follows, evoked reactions by Daniel Etounga-Manguelle, Carlos Alberto Montaner, and Mariano Grondona. These comments appear after the footnote, along with a further comment by Richard Shweder.

COMMENTS OF MONTANER, ETOUNGA-MANGUELLE, AND GRONDONA, WITH FURTHER COMMENTS BY SHWEDER

Carlos Alberto Montaner

Richard Shweder's comment is typical of those who expect Third World reactions from Latin Americans. He simply doesn't understand that Latin America is an extension of the West. I don't understand why Shweder thinks that we ought to resign ourselves to authoritarian governments and economic models that condemn half of our people to misery when the entire world—beginning with the Japanese—believes that it was admirable when Japan copied the production techniques and social organization of the West. Perhaps the Brazilian *favelas*, with their infinite, barbaric misery, seem picturesque to him. I cannot accept those subhuman conditions. I believe that they must be eradicated and that the people living in them must have a chance for a better, more human life.

How do I know what Latin Americans want? It's very simple: by following migration trends. Surveys demonstrate that half or more of the populations of Mexico, Colombia, and Guatemala, among others, would abandon their countries for the United States. Why? Because the United States offers them what they don't find in their own countries.

What Shweder says of "these representatives from the 'Third World' play[ing] the part of disgruntled 'insiders'" could also be applied to the Americans who are concerned about improving subhuman conditions in the black and Puerto Rican ghettos. If he is to be consistently uncritical of the values and attitudes of a culture, then he should have no problem with the Sicilian *omertà*.

Daniel Etounga-Manguelle

As a "disgruntled insider" and "cosmopolitan intellectual" from Africa, I appreciate the opportunity to comment on Richard Shweder's note. I do so with some diffidence. After all, I am responding to a Western scholar who identifies himself as more "indigenous" than I am because he "has done years of fieldwork in rural villages in . . . Asia and understands and sees value in the traditions of 'others.'"

I have to confess that I failed to receive the "intellectual and moral guidance and material aid" I expected at the Harvard symposium, so I am going to tell the truth: We Africans really enjoy living in shantytowns where there isn't enough food, health care, or education for our children. Furthermore, our corrupt chieftaincy political systems are really marvelous and have permitted countries like Mobutu's Zaire to earn us international prestige and respect.

Moreover, surely it would be terribly boring if free, democratic elections were organized all over Africa. Were that to happen, we would no longer be real Africans, and by losing our identity—and our authoritarianism, our bloody civil wars, our illiteracy, our forty-five-year life expectancy—we would be letting down not only ourselves but also those Western anthropologists who study us so sympathetically and understand that we can't be expected to behave like human beings who seek dignity on the eve of the third millennium. We are Africans, and our identity matters!

So let us fight for it with the full support of those Western scholars who have the wisdom and courage to acknowledge that Africans belong to a different world.

Mariano Grondona

There is a methodological difference between Richard Shweder and Latin Americans like Carlos Alberto Montaner and myself. Shweder's goal, were he focused on Latin America, would be to understand it. We want to change it. Anthropologists need the societies they study to remain relatively static and predictable, like an entomologist studying bees or ants. Montaner and I, on the other hand, have an existential approach to our region: It is "our" world—where we come from—which we love. Because of our commitment to it, we want it to advance to new levels of human fulfillment, closer to those in the developed world.

One must ask who represents Latin America better, Shweder and other foreign social scientists or Montaner and myself? We belong to our region. We feel it. The fact that millions of Latin Americans are "voting with their feet" as they migrate to the developed countries and that the overwhelming electoral majorities are supporting progressive governments throughout our region eloquently testifies that our views and concerns are widely shared.

To be sure, we travel back and forth between Latin America and the developed countries. But these experiences do not alienate us from Latin America. Rather, they both increase our concern about conditions, particularly for poor people, in Latin America and focus us on what needs to be done to change those conditions. Like the vast majority of our countrymen, we want our nations to have the democratic stability, justice, opportunity for advancement, and prosperity that we find in the advanced countries.

*Richard A. Shweder's Reply to Montaner,
Etounga-Manguelle, and Grondona*

As far as I can tell nothing in note 1 (or in my chapter) recommends authoritarian rule, a life of squalor, or death at an early age. In authoritarian power orders, those in power act in such a way that only their own interests are served, and no one can stop them from doing so. I think the world would be a far better place if there were no such orders of power. And nothing suggests that we must be uncritical or accepting of the received ideas, attitudes, and practices of any cultural tradition, including our own. As I state in my chapter, "Pluralists do make critical judgments. Indeed, the 'stance of justification' is so central to my style of cultural analysis that I would define a 'genuine' culture, a culture deserving of appreciation, as a way of life that is defensible in the face of criticism from abroad."

If one truly cares to achieve some appreciation of a cultural tradition, one must usually engage in some participant observation and in a process of sympathetic understanding. One initially tries to bracket all ethnocentric reactions and discover what is good, true, beautiful, or efficient in the ideas, attitudes, and practices of "others." There is no guarantee that appreciation will be achieved. There is no guarantee that everything that is, is okay or "genuine." Ideas, attitudes, and practices that are demonstrably bad, false, ugly, or inefficient should be criticized and perhaps even changed. So much for red herrings and the bogeyman of radical relativism. My essay is in fact a critique of both radical relativism ("whatever is, is okay") and ethnocentric monism ("there is only one way to lead a morally decent, rational and fulfilling life, and it's our way"), although by my lights I did not see many radical relativists at the conference.

In a moment I will respond to one or two other points raised by Carlos Alberto Montaner, Daniel Etounga-Manguelle, and Mariano Grondona. First, however, I want to focus on what was actually said in note 1, namely, that in the postmodern world, one should be skeptical of all claims to authority based on the equation of citizenship (or national origin) with "indigenous" voice. And I want to tell you a story, which illustrates that point.

Rabindranath Tagore is modern India's most acclaimed poet. He was a recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, a spokesman for the India nationalist movement, and an admirer, interpreter, and literary beneficiary of the classical Sanskrit literatures of India. In 1877, Tagore visited England for the first time. He was sixteen years old. He went there to study law. In his book *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding*, Wilhelm Halbfass quotes Tagore's impressions:

I had thought that the island of England was so small and the inhabitants so dedicated to learning that, before I arrived there, I expected the country from one end to the other would echo and re-echo with the lyrical essays of Tennyson; and I also thought that wherever I might be in this narrow island, I would hear constantly Gladstone's oratory, the explanation of the Vedas by Max Mueller, the scientific truth of Tindall, the profound thoughts of Carlyle and the philosophy of Bain. I was under the impression that wherever I would go I would find the old and the young drunk with the pleasure of "intellectual" enjoyment. But I have been very disappointed in this.

Apparently, the young Tagore, a political and civic "outsider" to the British Isles, was culturally more English and spoke the English language far better than most Englishmen. His reference to Max Mueller is highly pertinent to note 1 because it was Max Mueller, a German philologist and "orientalist" who taught at Oxford, to whom Hindu Brahmins turned to learn about Sanskrit and their own classical literary traditions.

This situation of "outsiders" and "insiders" trading places and keeping each other's valuable cultural heritages in play is not unusual, especially in the contemporary world. We live in a world where Afro-Caribbean scholars translate ancient Greek texts, where scholars from Africa, Asia, and Europe write perceptive books about the United States, and where the Max Mueller effect is alive and well. For example, Gusii intellectuals from Kenya, some of whom are quite expert in Western philosophy and science, read Robert LeVine's work (conducted from the 1950s through 1990s) to learn about the meaning, value, and history of Gusii norms and folkways. The main point of this observation is a simple one: Statements about the pros and cons of a cultural tradition do not gain authority and should not be granted authority on the basis of claims to ancestry, membership, or national origin.

Note 1 was an aside, a parenthetical remark about my fascination with one aspect of the structural organization of the conference. The conference was choreographed in such a way that there was one session in which all the speakers from the "Third World" participated, and they spoke pretty much with one voice, supporting the idea that "Western civilization" is superior to all the rest. Now, of course, this idea is not unpopular in many capitals of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It is especially popular among those Western, westernized, or westernizing elites who tend to view the received beliefs, attitudes, and everyday practices of non-Western peoples, even their own countrymen, as unenlightened, superstitious, magical, authoritarian, corrupt, or otherwise unworthy or embarrassing. But that type of wholesale acceptance of "Western modernity" over non-Western "traditionalisms" of various kinds has never been the only voice in town in either the "West" or the "East," the "North" or the "South," the "developed" or the "underdeveloped" world. Had there been other types of voices in the session, the voice of "Third World" intellectuals who might speak with pride and admiration about "indigenous" ideas, attitudes, and practices, the session would perhaps have been less fascinating. Perhaps I would not have been led to wonder about the use of "insider" testimonials from the "Third World" to lend authority to the idea that the Protestant "First World" really got it right.

Carlos Alberto Montaner and Mariano Grondona are impressed by migration patterns, by the fact that "millions of Latin Americans are 'voting with their feet'" in favor of the "developed" world. The first time I ever heard the "voting with your feet" argument was in the 1960s, when a famous conservative made the argument that black migration patterns into South Africa far exceeded black migration patterns out of South Africa. He interpreted this as evidence that black Africans were voting with their feet in favor of the apartheid government of South Africa over other African states! I suspect they were not voting or expressing their moral and cultural preferences at all—just going where there were higher-paying jobs.

Daniel Etounga-Manguelle seems to imply that one cannot live a dignified life and a life that is distinctively African at the same time. As I stated in my essay, I am not a

fan of broad categories such as "Latin American" or "African" as ways of identifying cultural communities—Bahia is not San Paolo, the Yoruba are not the Masai. Nevertheless, I do believe, as did Edward Sapir, that "the societies in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached." For a pluralist, "distinctness" or "difference" is not a term of disparagement. With complete respect for all three of my critics, whose sincerity I never doubted, whose company and conversation I much enjoyed, and whose testimonials and arguments I found fascinating, I fully confess to rejecting the idea that the only or very best way to be dignified, decent, rational, and fully human is to live the life of a North American or a northern European.

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