

Except at the instinctual level, human action "moves" (is "motivated") from out of the perpetual dialog between "the way things are" (rather, are perceived: world-picture/story) and "what to do" (moral decision-making). Marriage is the more vital analogy: myth (i.e., world-story) and morals "are living together" (in Greek, *symbiosis*). This myth/morals conflation is currently referred to as "values."... This thinksheet is about this interior process of character-formation and its educational and social implicates.

1. Let's begin with a working model of myths/morals: "AB" is the "provincial" mind of traditional societies. Moral areas where the myth is strong are strongly sanctioned: morals are under tight control. True also of neo-traditional societies such as the USSR, which is both puritanical and corrupt. Mass. had "AB" vis-a-vis sports on Sunday and has "AB" vis-a-vis the sport of dog-fighting any day of the week (recently, 57 spec-

	MYTHS	MORALS
strong	A	B
weak	C	D

tators arrested: Mass. continues to believe that you can legislate morality). Pre-Depression USA was "AB" in general morals largely because the Protestant world-view dominated public education....Since the early 1930s, the USA has been sliding from "AB" to "CD": myth and morals have been sagging into weakness. No longer a traditional society, we are now "pluralistic" (which means generally confused while encavistically clear, a condition for which "fragmented" is more accurate than is "pluralistic"). To paraphrase Lincoln, can any nation so reconceived endure, or will it "perish from the earth"? Nobody knows. Some fresh breezes are blowing, people become enchanted/disenchanting with various "values" (so functioning, traditionally called "idols"), "peace" being a current favorite, along with "justice" ("equality"). The biblical myth/morals symbiosis is undergoing extensive revival with, unfortunately, little if any reformulation to accomodate new light. Various vitalisms, centrally heated by the new physics and the new biology, are offering themselves as salvific. The old progressivisms, bio- (Darwin, Spencer) and socio- (Marx), remain very much alive and kicking. But no mythic-moral vision and passion has so seized the American folk as to provide us with interior unity and coherence: how could we not be in foreign-policy trouble when we are in deep trouble over what is deep and high and wide, over the depths and reach of our hearts? To make matters even worse, the religion/education split, which is a bastard version of church/state separation, has given "God" (i.e., our traditional biblical myth/morality vision and life) to church and "Evolution" (i.e., the elevation of evolution to the cultic level of "the way things are") to the school: schools, and consequently the media, are specifically atheist, teaching that the world-impulse is "natural" (selection) rather than supernatural and "spontaneous" (generation) rather than by divine action. In public education, tax money is being used to destroy the mythic-moral base and purpose of the church. Since tax money is used to support only one of these antagonists, it's not a fair fight; and one result is that not only church but society in general is becoming increasingly alienated from public education. But I'm not in favor of letting the public schools wither away: more than any other institutions they have potential for providing America with unity and coherence. Rather, I'm in favor of reeducating public-school personnel so that they can deal fairly with our society's basic myth/morality divide. A tough project, for it requires conversion from scientism to science, from Evolution(ism) to evolution, from metaphysical dogmatism to metaphysical modesty, from world-view partisanship to world-view openness (with, however, the individual teacher's freedom to witness). A tough project, too, because we are being constantly brainwashed by the media against the biblical view and in favor of the Great God Evolution (e.g., Carl Sagan, priest of the TV series "Cosmos"). A tough project, because the biblical view is being distorted by so-called creationists crying out for equal time for God along with evolution (a specious intermedite posture, on the way to "driving our Darwin")....A complex society is a confused society only when no one mythic-moral vision is dominant. Our society is confused because it's not yet clear which of the two visions is dominant, though it is clear that tax money is being used for one against the other. Our present confusion is both "AC"

OVER

* (4) is now in the past: By freeing nature of superstitions, desacralizing it and historicizing the origin-story (the Lord of history coming to be seen also as nature's Creator and Lord), the Bible made modern science possible.

(a mythomachy with the contending myths both strong and weak depending on the particular enclave in view) and "BD" (the enclaves clashing as to "what's really important" in human behavior, and what's right/wrong//good/bad//good/evil). The essence of the First Amendment is that while government must legislate in order to keep you from hurting me and (less important) me from hurting you (less important because I'm not as inclined to hurt you as you are to hurt me, I think when paranoid), government is to do nothing to give advantage to any one mythic-moral vision over against the other(s)--a conviction and legislation which historians of culture say is America's single contribution to world civilization. On the authority of the First Amendment, I am complaining that the public-school system is in violation of the principle of separation of church and state; and, unless it mends its ways, is in peril of destruction.... On our grid, two possible relationships remain: (1) "AD"--which is our situation in a number of senses: (a) Morals are weak--"crime in the streets," "white-collar crime," etc.--because, while the biblical mythic-moral vision remains stronger in ours than in any other Western society, the myth-cult-morals connection has been severely weakened; (b) The quality of the Evolution myth, which is now strong, erodes instead of supporting our traditional American values: Herbert Spencer's "survival of the fittest" (PRINCIPLES OF BIOLOGY, III, Chap.12, "Indirect Equilibrium") ratifies rapacious capitalism and consumerism, as does his "Progress is ... a necessity.... a part of nature" (SOCIAL STATICS, I, Ch.2.4)--none of which is alleviated by his "Education has for its object the formation of character" (Ib., II.xvii.4). And "BC"--which is our situation in that various segments of our society have strong fixations on certain values virtually deracinated from metaphysical underpinnings, as though the values were an *sich*, self-authenticating and -validating. Sanctional support for such values is usually *ad hominem*, viz., "everybody knows" and "everybody believes." Aided by our culture's endemic anti-intellectualism, this situation is shallow and flaccid, often parading itself as Eisenhower-like toleration ("It doesn't matter what you believe so long as you practice it.").

2. The origin-story or "myth" we tell ourselves, our children, and others (German, *Anfangspunkt*) is, to use weaving as analogy, the woof on which we weave the rest of our meanings-values. In the USSR, and in USA public-education&media, that beginning-point is the notion that everything began with inorganic "nature". If, instead of feeling like a story, this feels to you like the truth, you have proof that you have bought into this myth: it's yours, and you're its. In your education, were any alternatives presented as possibly true? E.g.: (1) The ancient Greeks' consistent view that reality is an organism combining, on the anthro-model, mind (intelligence) and body (vitality); (2) The Late-Renaissance view that the universe is a machine, God-made and at least to some extent self-operating; (3) The Hindu-Buddhist view that the beginning-point is spirit, with variants in Kazantzakis (who here combined East and West) and Rudolf Steiner ("anthroposophy"); (4) Vitalism's view that life (élan vital, Bergson) is the beginning point: not inorganic but organismic "nature"; (5) the biblical view that "nature" is only a creature of God, "Creator of heaven and earth"; (6) the post-Darwinian view that we have to do, as beginning-point, ^{with} not "nature" but "process" (more a derivative of our modern historical sense than of observation of "nature"). When it comes to origins and ultimates, there are no bare facts--only clothed facts: that we can prove and teach, with the exemplary modesty Jacob Brownowski's shows in his video-series "The Ascent of Man."

3. Of the options, I believe the biblical is the nearest to adequate and the most humanizing; to that I witness, and that I argue for--but without the provincial dogmatism of the past, which is now ignorant or dishonest. Behind our democracy is "the American character," which was shaped and moved by the persuasion that God, Creator of heaven and earth, is our Ruler and Judge and Savior-Deliverer from evil, sin, and death. Spinoff values are: (1) Confidence, for the God who made all things "very good" has the power to achieve goodness in history and is trustable without qualification; (2) Motivation to learn and obey God's commandments and will, which are foundational to "nature" itself and thus to history; and (3) Integration of ourselves and of all things in praise of life's Source and Destiny.* God precedes "nature," as do both history (Collingwood) and grace (Barth). This is the vision and passion now badly deteriorated along with its attendant morality, in AMERICA.