



Beyond A Weapons Mythology

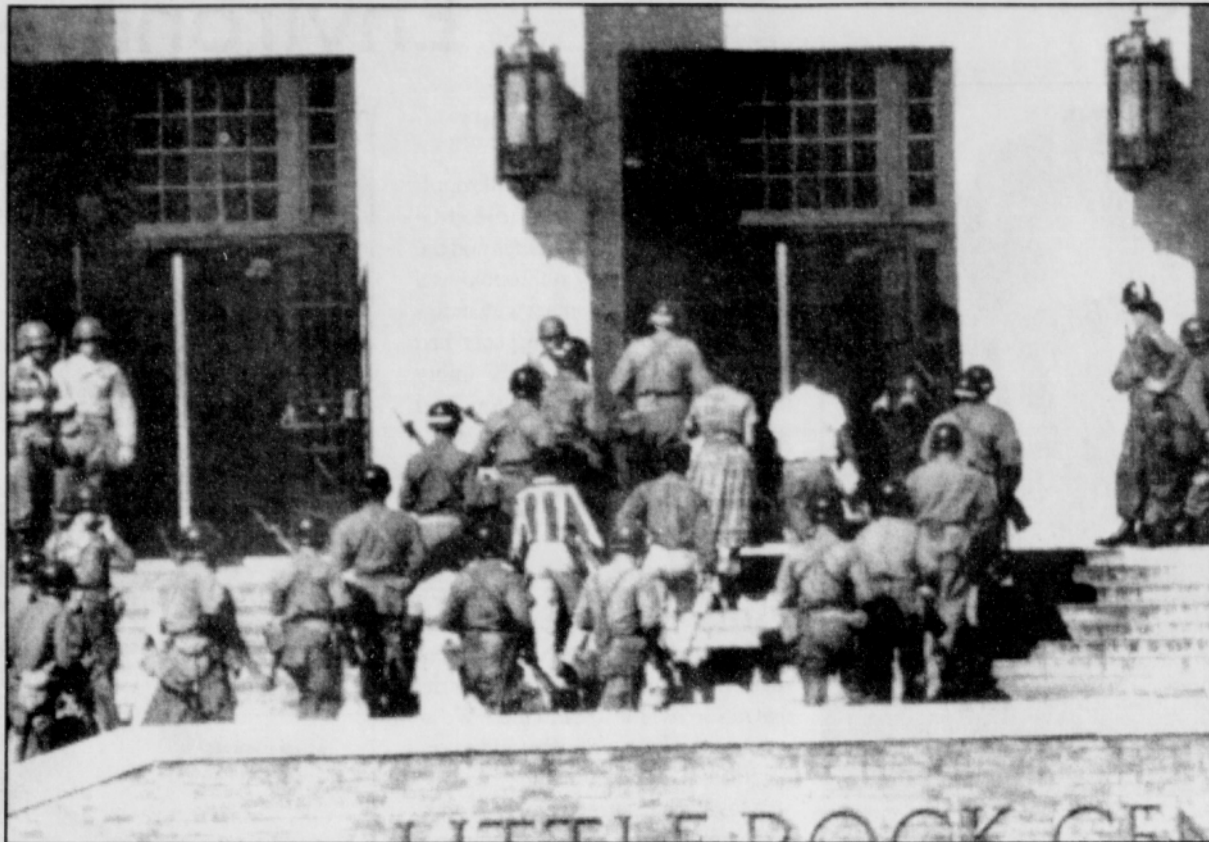
By JENNIFER ALDRICH

A society's myths, the stories that it tells about heroes and villains, are the building blocks and product of culture. Myths shape a culture while at the same time expressing and perpetuating its values. Myths imparted to us from a young age help form our world views, compelling and constraining our behavior.

Mythology is imparted through stories. Induction into the mythology of a culture starts at birth, with songs and nursery rhymes, and continues throughout life. The stories that we hear and tell as adults reinforce those first lessons from the cradle.

Weapons are a significant part of our national mythology. Books, movies, electronic games, children's fairy tales — all are filled with images of guns, swords, missiles, even nuclear bombs. By the process of continual exposure and reinforcement, we begin to believe a fallacy — that weapons are the best tools for dealing with conflict. Our children play with guns and, like children of any species, learn adult behavior through their games. Toy stores are stocked with all the weapons of war — realistic-looking, imparting a sense of power to the user. Weapons of destruction are so commonplace in movies that it's rare action-adventure film that doesn't fill the screen with death and massive ruin in the first five minutes.

Nuclear weapons give us a destructive capability almost beyond imagining. We can annihilate nations with the turn of a key and we're heady with the power that confers. The United States presides over an elite club of nations that have this power. And other nations want to join the club! Images of joyous Indians reacting to their government's announcement of a nuclear test demonstrate how pervasive a weapons mythology is in other cultures as



well.

But our power has outstripped our sensibilities. We understand the irrational nature of living under the constant threat of oblivion, of being unable to walk the streets of our cities at night, yet we profess to know no better way. As the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. so elegantly stated, "Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided man."

We can no longer afford a weapons mythology. The ability to destroy nations with nuclear warheads, to escalate ourselves into a war which nobody can win, which could in fact cause the very extinction of our species, dictates a revolution in our thinking — a new mythology that recognizes the necessity of a new armament. King wrote, "There may have been a time when war served as a negative good by preventing the spread and growth of an evil force,

but the destructive power of modern weapons eliminates even the possibility that war may serve as a negative good."

We need a mythology in which our weapons are laws and principles, not guns and bombs. The skills we need to develop in our children are those of negotiation and compromise, of unflinching adherence to principles of fairness and empathy. Mythology is born of and perpetuated through the stories we tell our children. The heroes of these stories will become our children's heroes. From the earliest nursery rhymes we need to infuse our children's imaginations with tales of gallant men and women who saved the day by clinging to principles of mutual respect and non-violence. We need to tell the stories of Thoreau and Ghandi, of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Sojourner Truth. In a world where our very survival depends upon eliminating the threat of weap-

ons of mass destruction, a radically new way of thinking is essential. King wrote, "In this world, Nonviolence is no longer an option for intellectual analysts, it is an imperative for action."

We need to tell new stories. Stories excite the imagination and stimulate creativity. With stories of principled heroes winning with alternate "weapons" we are trained to think in new ways, to find new solutions to old conflicts.

Violence will exist wherever people live in proximity. We cannot completely escape our biological tendency toward aggression. What we can do, however, is learn to cope with violence in a way that doesn't engender further violence.

With weapons of creativity, communication, and empathy, we can respond to violence with non-violence. We can foster a new mythology that honors creation rather than destruction.

Retirement Living

- Studio & 1-Bedroom Apartments with Full Kitchens
- Easy access to shopping and bus lines
- Dining Room, Beauty and Barber Shop
- Activities, Clubs, and Garden areas
- Safety, Security, and Companionship
- Federal Rent Subsidies for those that qualify

**Westmoreland's
Union Manor**
6404 SE 23rd Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97202
233-5671

**Marshall
Union Manor**
2020 NW Northrup Street
Portland, Oregon 97209
225-0677



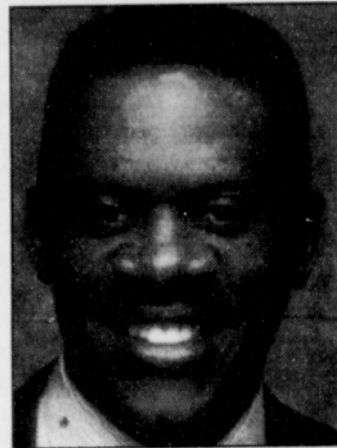
**Kirkland
Union Manors**
3530 SE 84th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97266
777-8101

Office (503) 287-5504

Fax (503) 287-8913

Dr. Billy R. Flowers

Chiropractor



**Honors Dr. Martin
Luther King, Jr.**

2124 N.E. Hancock Street
Portland, Oregon 97212

IN THE SPIRIT OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.,

PBS AND ITS MEMBER STATIONS CELEBRATE THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF



HENRY HAMPTON



(1940 - 1998)

THANKS FOR GIVING ORDINARY PEOPLE
AN EXTRAORDINARY PLACE IN HISTORY.

EYES ON THE PRIZE I AND II

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

MALCOLM X: MAKE IT PLAIN

AMERICA'S WAR ON POVERTY

BREAKTHROUGH:
THE CHANGING FACE OF SCIENCE IN AMERICA

I'LL MAKE ME A WORLD:
A CENTURY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN ARTS



It's Where You Belong • www.opb.org

PORTLAND ART MUSEUM

FREE
admission!
FREE
performances!
FREE
activities!
FREE
music!
FREE
FUN!

This event is sponsored by



Robert Colescott Recent Paintings is supported by Grand Patrons Gordon D. Sondland and Katherine J. Durant and sponsored by IKON Office Solutions and Canon

An Escher Celebration is Sponsored by Embassy Suites Portland Downtown

FREE
**Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Celebration**

Monday, January 18, 1999
11:00 am to 4:00 pm

The Portland Art Museum honors the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with a special day open to the public free of charge. Enjoy the special exhibitions *Robert Colescott: Recent Paintings* and *An Escher Celebration*. Join in the fun of a special Museum Family Day, with hands-on art-making activities and performances inspired by the exhibitions. **It's all free!**

Make Colescott-inspired collages

Use images and words to tell a story from your own life.

Put together a life-size Escher puzzle

Make Escher-like patterns and puzzles

Learn how to make Escher's fun tessalations



For More Information Call: 226-2811 ext. 227
Portland Art Museum 1219 SW Park Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97205

Educational programming at the Portland Art Museum is made possible through a generous grant from the PGE-Enron Foundation.