

The Impact of Transpersonal Psychology on Understanding Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela: The Role of Color and Music in Overcoming the Ego for Civil and Social Justice

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Abstract

This essay explores the transpersonal power behind the social justice and civil rights movements, focusing on three significant individuals: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela. The main focus of transpersonal psychology was examined in relation to how all three of these iconic figures transcended their egos and pursued their higher consciousnesses to shape society. It also illustrates how these individuals' shared perceptions of color and music gave them a platform for expression and liberation from a transpersonal perspective, fostering a sense of community, unity, and comfort. By providing significant examples of transpersonal parallels, the essay shows how these individuals' ways of expression and visions of freedom underscore the relevance of "shadow work," a transpersonal psychology skill that they most likely employed when they were resisting oppressive systems.

Keywords: Transpersonal Psychology, Ego, Social/Civil Rights, Color, Music

Introduction

This essay will discuss the transpersonal force of social justice, specifically focusing on the civil rights movement and three notable figures: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela.

According to a compilation of data from A&E Network (2024), Dr. King held numerous positions regarding human and civil rights, as well as how he developed as a person throughout his life, the movement, and how he is still regarded many years after his death. He was an American Christian preacher, activist, and political philosopher who lived from 1929 until his assassination in 1968. He used peaceful civil disobedience against Jim Crow laws to improve civil rights for people of color in the United States. He was the son of civil rights activist and preacher Martin Luther King Sr. Dr. King left behind a wife and four young children when he was assassinated, and his legacy endures today thanks, in part, to a national holiday, nationwide events, and establishments such as a museum in Atlanta, Georgia, that inspire and encourage future generations.

Gandhi was an Indian lawyer, political ethicist, and anti-colonialist who led the successful movement to free India from British control by peaceful resistance. Gandhi's work transcends the historical specificity of his time, and today he continues to serve as an inspiration

for global campaigns for independence and civil rights (Brown, 2004). Gandhi, who inspired Dr. King, took a strong stand against injustice while living in South Africa, which informed his anti-colonial struggle in India during the British Raj. Gandhi's nonviolent approach remained unwavering, but in the early 1940s a Muslim nationalism—which desired a separate state for Muslims within British India—posed a threat to his vision of an independent India based on religious plurality. Gandhi persisted in his pursuit of social justice until a Hindu nationalist assassinated him in 1948 (Brown, 2004).

Unlike Dr. King and Gandhi, there was an almost fable-like quality to the trajectory of Mandela's life, even though it was filled with much suffering. Mandela, who studied law like Gandhi and was born into tribal royalty, was unable to break free from the apartheid laws that oppressed his motherland of South Africa. He battled against injustice and was imprisoned for 27 years during that time (Mandela, 2008) After apartheid eventually came to an end, Mandela redefined leadership and took office as president of his nation, living to the ripe age of 95.

These individuals showed immense power via their own transpersonal experiences, advancing communal awareness through their unseen use of transpersonal psychology, which was carried out using colors and music as vehicles for expression and liberation. In the context of social justice and the civil rights struggle, the transpersonal perspective is overlooked. Transpersonal psychology has a multifaceted connection to social justice and civil rights movements. For instance, transpersonal psychology holds—through the viewpoint of Dr. Abraham Maslow—that human experience has the capacity to reach the transcendental, transcend the ego, and give our life purpose and love. A subfield of psychology called transpersonal psychology focuses on investigating the transcendent and spiritual dimensions of human experience. A transpersonal point of view states that it operates on a higher consciousness

that is outside of the ego. This approach investigates how self-actualization might come about because of our interaction with our higher awareness. Although transpersonal psychology views this as humanity's aim, Abraham Maslow described it as such because it transcends the ego and promotes growth, self-development, and—above all—connection and togetherness (Maslow, 1969).

The civil rights movement was the impetus for profound social change, and it drew on foundational ideas of transpersonal psychology. For one, many civil rights activists adopted guided practices that were informed by prayer and meditation, at times valuing them as much if not more than the opinions and facts of others.

The civil rights movement lacked the tools required to repeal some of the most onerous legislation of the time. For instance, many civil rights leaders, such as Dr. King did not seem ready to confront the structural forces shunting Black people in Birmingham, Alabama, given that the city had an overwhelming advantage in resources. However, the civil rights leaders demonstrated their transpersonal power by transcending the ego. It appears that the egos of those who resisted the civil rights movement drove their acts, giving rise to the transpersonal force that not only fostered collective action but also a worldwide collective consciousness. Anderson (2022) cited Dr. King in an article published in USA Today, stating, "The time is always right to do what is right" (p. 1). It encapsulated the essence of the collective consciousness. That statement, which emphasizes the eternal importance of doing what is right, conforms to the principles of transpersonal psychology by supporting the ego's surrender for the greater welfare of others.

Gandhi and Mandela were two more social justice and civil rights leaders who seemed to embody these transpersonal psychologies when it came to leading and serving the greater good.

Dr. King, who led the charge to alter laws and social norms in favor of equality, learned a great deal from Gandhi's teachings. Dr. King once visited India in remembrance of Gandhi and their shared values of opposing repressive laws and practices. During this visit, Dr. King claimed to have felt the "spirit" of Gandhi's teachings and presence. He even grew to believe that Gandhian philosophy offered oppressed people the only ethically and practically sound strategy for achieving their goals of liberation (King, 1959). Dr. King attempted to grasp the underlying significance and purpose behind Gandhi's experiences by placing both his own and his hero's actions within the framework of spiritual, mystical, and transcendent elements of human existence.

Contextual Background

Transpersonal psychology, as conceptualized by Maslow (1969), integrates psychological principles with spiritual and transcendent dimensions of human experience, emphasizing personal growth, self-actualization, and the exploration of higher states of consciousness. This perspective resonates with Carl Rogers' person-centered theory (1951), which posits that empathy, congruence, and unconditional positive regard are fundamental for fostering self-actualization and personal development. Rogers (1961) contended that a supportive environment that encourages personal growth and self-discovery is crucial for individuals to reach their full potential. By providing empathy, authenticity, and unconditional positive regard, individuals are empowered to achieve self-actualization. The lives and philosophies of prominent figures such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela exemplify the principles of transpersonal psychology, demonstrating how these leaders embodied and applied these ideals in their pursuit of social justice and collective transformation.

Mandela seemingly embodied the same transpersonal philosophies as Gandhi and Dr. King as he worked to overthrow the system of oppression so deeply ingrained in South Africa through embodiment. Embodiment is clearly demonstrated through Mandela's commitment to forgiveness and reconciliation after his release from prison exemplifies transpersonal psychology themes of overcoming personal grievances and achieving psychological healing through forgiveness (Mandela, 2008). Mandela's deep empathy and compassion, even towards his former oppressors, reflect transpersonal psychology's values of empathy and compassion as vital for personal and societal transformation (Rowe, 2014). Mandela's ability to transform his personal suffering into a source of strength and leadership demonstrates the transpersonal psychology principle that personal adversity can lead to profound personal and social change (Walsh & Vaughan, 1993).

Gandhi's idea of *swarājya* (self-rule) goes beyond political independence to include personal self-mastery and inner freedom, resonating with transpersonal psychology's focus on personal and spiritual growth (Gandhi, 1927). His principles of *ahimsa* (non-violence) and Satyāgraha (firmly holding onto truth) highlighted the transformative power of love and truth. These principles align with transpersonal psychology's emphasis on higher moral values and ethical development (Tolle, 2004). Gandhi regularly engaged in meditation, prayer, and fasting as means of spiritual discipline and inner purification. Crossovers are consistent with transpersonal psychology's use of meditation and mindfulness to achieve greater self-awareness and higher states of consciousness (Schlitz, et al., 2008).

Inspired by Gandhi, King's adherence to non-violence as a means of social change highlights the transformative power of love and compassion. This principle aligns with transpersonal psychology's focus on higher moral values and ethical development (King, 2011;

Tolle, 2004). Dr. King's vision of the "Beloved Community" reflects a deep commitment to social justice and equality, resonating with transpersonal psychology's emphasis on the interconnectedness of all people and the pursuit of a higher collective good (King, 1963). Similar to Mandela, Dr. King's commitment to forgiveness and reconciliation, even in the face of violent opposition, exemplifies transpersonal themes of overcoming personal grievances and achieving psychological healing through forgiveness (Rowe, 2014). Dr. King embodies the core principles of transpersonal psychology throughout his life and work. His focus on inner transformation, spiritual practices, forgiveness, empathy, and the integration of personal and collective well-being resonate deeply with the themes of transpersonal psychology. By examining his life through this lens, one can appreciate how personal spiritual growth can drive significant social change and enhance human experience.

These improvements in human experiences and societal transformations probably maintain the three leaders in many states of Self-actualization. Abraham Maslow identified one of life's most important goals as a "peak experience," which is characterized by self-actualization (Maslow, 1969). Dr. King, Gandhi, and Mandela all had a fresh perspective on the world and on themselves because of this peak experience. These three men faced numerous obstacles throughout their lives, from jail time to physical and emotional torture, and they persevered thanks to the transpersonal powers of prayer, meditation, and even color and music.

Color

Color is a universal language of utmost biological necessity that opens itself out to interpretation depending on culture, tradition, and individual experience. Dr. King gave several moving speeches that allude to the universal experience of color and how it can both empower and impede people. He refers to the assessment of the color of a person's skin in many of his

speeches. In one of Dr. King's speeches, which A&E (2024) featured extensively, he talked about how people will eventually evaluate his four young children more on the content of their hearts than the color of their skin. But in those remarks, he did also provide a clear picture of how we can accept color differences, affirm them, celebrate them. To him, harmony among people of different colors was a matter of enlightenment.

Gandhi usually wore a white shawl and a dhoti, or loin cloth, to further promote the enlightenment of colors. Gandhi made the decision to wear this muted color and attire as part of his efforts to bring people from all backgrounds together. As a leader, he felt that dressing in a certain manner made it easier for him to interact with those who were impoverished in his nation (Balakrishnan, n.d.).

Like Gandhi, Nelson Mandela dressed in a specific way to connect with people and encourage unity in his country. It seems that Mandela had a stronger affinity for colors than Gandhi and Dr. King. When Mandela was president of South Africa, he was frequently spotted in public wearing a garment known as a "Madiba." The Madiba shirt is well-known for its loose fit and vibrant, African-inspired designs that serve as a visual depiction of Mandela's family's culture and his love for South Africa. These shirts served as a sign of his identity, lineage, and connection to the South African people. Berkowitz (2013) questioned Nelson Mandela about if the reason behind his colorful shirts was to represent the biblical character Joseph, who was given a coat of many colors. Nelson Mandela responded to what appeared to be Berkowitz's opinions of the shirts in a different way. It was "No," his reply. "I wear these shirts to represent the beautiful diverse cultures and traditions of Africa, as well as to honor my people and their struggles" (p.1).

Like Gandhi, Mandela defied 21st-century norms of conservative dress by dressing in a way that was both informal and powerful, with a unique color scheme inspired by many aspects of African culture. A 2014 South African *GQ* article featured the “Rainbow Nation” Madiba shirt. Interestingly, this shirt’s usage of the phrase “rainbow” to denote symbolic unity and culture extends beyond Mandela’s fight for justice in South Africa (Buntu, 2014). For one, the rainbow flag is a symbol of LGBTQ pride. And the Rainbow Coalition was founded in 1969 with the goal of strengthening linkages between working-class communities of various racial and ethnic backgrounds and combating anti-racism (Wikiwand, n.d.).

Colors may symbolize unity in symbolism in a variety of ways. One example is the white shawl that was often associated with Gandhi and communicated the idea of people blending in with one another. They can also stand for cultural associations, as in the case of Mandela’s multicolored Madiba shirts, which identified his cultural heritage; identity and solidarity, as in the case of Dr. King’s many speeches emphasizing that we are all members of the human race and not separate from it based on skin color; and, finally, symbolism, or the visual representation of colors that acts as a catalyst for unification.

Because of their capacity to lead and espouse strength without ego, Dr. King, Gandhi, and Mandela united others through transpersonal force. This makes it crucial to comprehend that these iconic figures have transpersonal power because of their symbolic use of color to represent oneness. When it comes to transpersonal psychology, the concept of unity embodies interconnectedness or oneness with all of existence through the transcendence of the self. Mandela (2008) once talked about how important it is to lead from behind. He described having the ability to lead people from behind, much as when you wait behind the flock and let the more agile ones go ahead. Mandela claimed that other individuals would follow without recognizing

they are being led from behind. This removed Mandela's ego from his leadership and encouraged unity. As a result, he was able to unite his people with a transpersonal spirit. This is the reason that it is so crucial to acknowledge the existence of transpersonal force in the intellectual and spiritual activities that Dr. King also used. He used prayer and meditation as a means of helping individuals engage in the civil rights struggle, to clear their thoughts and hear clearer answers from the universe. He also used tactics like Gandhi's peaceful opposition against injustice, which made it easier for many of his ideas to be internalized by others, ultimately resulting in their deeper understanding of the meaning and purpose of life.

Music

Like color, music is a global language. Individuals may promote a greater knowledge of their experiences and emotional landscapes by asking others to express the emotional connections they have to songs. People have historically benefited from music's ability to forge a path toward unity and collective strength. Thus, spiritual practices that have developed over the course of several global movements can be seen in the context of the transpersonal force of music.

It is stated that music had a crucial role in the civil rights movement. In Ava DuVernay's 2014 film *Selma*, there is a memorable scene where Dr. King, feeling emotionally and spiritually depleted from all the hardships that he is enduring, asks American gospel singer Mahalia Jackson to sing to him over the phone. The song, "Take My Hand Precious Lord," describes the exhaustion of a spirit that has given up on life but believes that a greater force and its mission would give it strength.

The late Congressman Rep. John Lewis, a prominent figure in the civil rights movement, often said that without music, the movement would not have survived. He likened it to birds without wings (Dale, n.d.). John Lewis's testimony suggests that his views on music were probably like those of many civil rights marchers. Given that they had no idea what kind of abuse they would face—whether they would be shot at, have objects hurled at them, or be attacked despite their peaceful stance—the civil rights marchers were likely terrified of the intense strain. The songs seemed to give the activists motivation beyond their comprehension and changed their feelings of terror into ones of empowerment. According to Dale (n.d.), “We Shall Overcome” is among several songs that were frequently sung during civil rights marches, offering optimism that racial and socioeconomic concerns would improve for everyone in the future. These musical experiences throughout the civil rights struggle support the transpersonal psychology of consciousness. These types of interactions have the capacity to change our perspective on the world, as well as evoke the emotions that individuals involved in the marches felt at the time, from fear to empowerment.

Historians claim that Gandhi had an insatiable love of music and the arts, and that he channeled these feelings into his battle for freedom for the Indian Independence Movement, which had Gandhi as its main leader and spanned from 1857 until around 1930. His two favorite songs were “Vaishnava Janato Tene Kahiye Je” by Narsinh Mehta and “Raghupati Raghav Rajaram” by Tulsidas, both of which were performed during Gandhi’s daily prayer sessions (Subramanian, 2020). Gandhi combined his two favorite songs with music, just like the civil rights leaders did with prayer. This suggests that music enhanced the prayer experience to unprecedented levels of potential peak experiences in relation to transpersonal psychology and the pursuit of understanding that surpasses expectations.

Mandela utilized music to inspire, connect, and unite people, much like Dr. King and Gandhi did. Because he opposed the apartheid in South Africa, Mandela was imprisoned for a total of 27 years of his life, and 18, of those years were served on Robben Island (Mandela, 2008). The letter Mandela sneaked out of prison to his favorite musician seems to support his contention that music kept him cognitively alert during his imprisonment.

According to Greenwald (2015), Mandela once sent a letter wishing Hugh Masekela, his favorite musician, a happy birthday. Thanking Masekela for the joy and healing that he brought him testifies to the effect music had on Mandela's mental health and general well-being during his imprisonment. Mandela's birthday greeting to Masekela even served as inspiration for the song "Bring Him Back Home." Mandela's prison release was demanded in this song. With its enormous popularity, the song became an unofficial hymn of the anti-apartheid campaign (Haglund, 2013).

Other prominent figures in the repeal of South Africa's apartheid laws honored the role of music in bringing about individual and societal transformation. Singing is an integral aspect of South African culture, particularly for Black South Africans, according to Lionel Davis, who was imprisoned in 1964 for seven years after being charged with conspiracy while a member of the National Liberation Front. "Music celebrates every aspect of our lives," he said. "So, the customs carry on even after you are imprisoned. You feel better when you listen to music, it gives you hope. Africans cannot be stopped from singing; just as political prisoners cannot be stopped from speaking" (Cole, 2013, p.1).

Dr. King, Gandhi, and Mandela had comparable reasons for wanting to see change. However, the forces driving change must be stronger than personal comprehension. For this

reason, King, Gandhi, and Mandela harnessed music's transcendental ability to unite people and communicate their common hardships via a variety of musical expressions. This fits with the notion of transpersonal psychology, which emphasizes the collectiveness of a greater good in the interest of achieving world harmony.

When fear or sadness set in, music has the power to evoke power because it gives people the clarity to see things more clearly for the benefit of others. Mahalia Jackson's rendition of "Take My Hand Precious Lord," for example, demonstrates the vulnerability of the human spirit, but also the willingness to people to think less about their own needs and more about bettering the lives of others. Mandela, for one, inspired others even in the worst of circumstances, seeking consolation from music during his long imprisonment. He managed to smuggle a letter to his favorite musician while in prison, embodying the transpersonal power of resilience. Other examples of the transpersonal principles of interconnectedness, collective consciousness, and transformative experiences when it comes to how social movements weave together with music are the uses of music in Gandhi's prayers and Dr. King's marches.

Music: Ego and Shadow Work

In the modern world, where there are many issues and causes that affect us as human beings either directly or indirectly on a local, national, or international level, we can effect change through the transpersonal energies of color and song. But every one of us can bring about that transformation. American singer and song writer Bob Dylan famously sang a song called "The Times They Are a-Changin'" in which he essentially asserts that change can be made by everyone, especially marginalized groups (Alpert, 2012).

The thought that unification is for the better welfare of all humanity comes to mind when thinking about that song and the three brave individuals this essay highlights. Despite coming

from marginalized backgrounds in their own nations, Dr. King, Gandhi, and Mandela all enjoyed some degree of privilege within their own marginalized communities. Dr. King was born into a prominent African American family, his father being the leader of a well-known African American church in Atlanta, Georgia. Additionally, Dr. King was a graduate of Morehouse College, which is still held in high respect by the African American community and gave birth to some of the most well-known African American individuals in the country. Additionally, he belonged to Alpha Phi Alpha, the earliest and most prominent African American Greek society (A&E television Network, 2024; King, 1963). After studying law in England, Gandhi was admitted as a barrister. Barristers' primary areas of expertise are litigation and advocacy in courts. They must prepare legal pleadings, do legal research, present legal views, and argue matters in courts and tribunals (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2023). Gandhi's father was a Diwan in the British Indian state of Porbandar. Diwans held prominent positions in the administration and belonged to the aristocratic families in Mughal and post-Mughal India (Hardiman, 2003). Mandela, whose father was a prominent African chief, gave up his claim to the chieftainship to pursue a career in law. He studied law at the University of the Witwatersrand and attended South African Native College, which is now the University of Fort Hare. He later passed the bar exam to practice law (Mandela, 2008).

There is a strong similarity between these three men. For one, two of them studied law, all three of them had prominent father figures, and they were all well-educated and respected in their communities. Within their respective marginalized circles, they may have all been comfortable in the exclusive yet constrained parts of their privileged position. Like in the song "The Times They Are a-Changin'," at some point each of them looked philosophically in the mirror and realized that, rather than being a privilege, their positions may have been given to

them to execute change for others who suffered from worse conditions than they did themselves. This realization caused them to put aside their egos and take a risk by dismantling seemingly unbreakable systems.

This dismantling is critical when it comes to understanding ourselves and examining that metaphorical mirror to identify any areas where we might be able to effect change, no matter how big or small. And by carefully examining “shadow work,” according to Vaughan (1986), one may begin to explore transpersonal psychology and help arouse within yourself what needs to be cleared out to pave the way for ego-driven ideations. The unconscious parts of your mind may be explored and integrated through shadow work. To attain a sense of completeness and self-realization, one must face and accept the darker, suppressed elements of oneself. Embracing your shadow makes you more real and less likely to transfer your unspoken worries and anxieties onto others, thus promoting harmony in the world.

According to Jeffery (2024), there are six different exercises that may be used to explore shadow work. First, there is “watch your emotional reactions,” which hinges on focusing on how you feel about other people to make sure you’re not projecting pieces of yourself that you have disowned onto them. The second exercise is to “engage in an internal dialogue with yourself,” which involves talking to oneself. That may feel awkward, but it helps you hear yourself clearly and convey problems in a genuine, judgment-free manner. Third, there is “face your positive and negative traits.” This includes how you were seen as a child. For one, were you frequently told that you were good or bad? The fourth exercise is to become “acquainted with shadow archetypes” You may accomplish this by taking a personality test, either formally or informally, and assessing the results yourself. You can also ask a trusted friend or member of your family to provide you with feedback on the results. In the fifth exercise, “record your

stream of consciousness” by using journaling questions and suggestions for shadow work. Use the 3-2-1 shadow method for the sixth exercise. This technique has you see the person who caused you to feel strongly, first as an inanimate object, then conversing with them about how you are feeling, finally becoming that person, and seeing yourself in that person.

It is presumed that while tackling these diverse social and civil rights concerns, Dr. King, Gandhi, and Mandela engaged in covert forms of shadow work. According to historians, Dr. King struggled with depression and had suicidal ideations. As a result, he had to constantly fight the darker side of his consciousness to keep going, as shown in Ava DuVernay’s 2014 film *Selma*, especially the scene in which Dr. King asks gossip singer Mahalia Jackson to sing a song to him in order ease his pain. This is an illustration of how Dr. King used elements of shadow work to confront the darker parts of himself at a time when it seemed like the weight of the world rested on his shoulders. Because of this, he probably had to practice addressing both his positive and negative thoughts about himself. While some people thought highly of him, others had doubts about him.

Gandhi may have unintentionally used the 3-2-1 shadow work technique when he changed from a ceremonial state of dress to a state of austerity, wearing just a white shawl and a loin cloth. By thinking about their real way of existence and the limitations imposed on them by their British rulers, he seemed to have adopted the mindset of the less fortunate, which allowed him to imitate their manner of dressing and emotions. So that he could really know what it was like to walk in their shoes, he put himself in their position.

Mandela, who spent 27 years in prison, was probably forced to confront various aspects of his life during his incarceration, including the possibility that he might not ever be free. As a result, turning any doubt or anger he may have had into optimism despite his circumstances is

evidence that he was frequently forced to look within and examine those feelings for said optimism to prove possible. You can also see Mandela's writing as a means of giving expression to his consciousness as an extension of shadow work, as demonstrated by his success in smuggling a hand written letter to his favorite musician out of prison.

In recent news that has consumed social media, rappers J. Cole, Kendrick Lamar, and Drake have been caught up in a verbal feud. The conflict started after the release of the song "Like That" by Lamar, Future, and Metro Boomin that took aim at J. Cole and Drake. J. Cole responded by releasing his own "diss" track. Unexpectedly, though, J. Cole apologized to Lamar and withdrew the track, choosing instead to refrain from creating any further diss songs (Hot 97, 2024). He seemed to be encouraged to keep going by certain individuals in the media landscape, but he chose not to continue using his rhetorical sword to take jabs at a peer. It appears that J. Cole made the decision to pause, examine himself in the mirror, and step back from the issue.

This rap feud pales in comparison to the struggles endured by Dr. King, Gandhi, and Mandela, but it shows how letting go of one's ego is the first step toward enacting life-changing benefits. Because of their fathers' status and education, Dr. King, Gandhi, and Mandela all enjoyed some privilege in their marginalized communities. Despite this, they refused to let their status inflate their egos, because they could have easily given in to the comforts that their restricted worlds had to offer.

Conclusion

This essay encapsulated the transpersonal qualities of the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela. These great individuals went out of their way to put humanity's needs ahead of their egos. These leaders serve as role models on how

to rise above the ego and connect with a higher consciousness to inspire cooperation and foster harmony.

Through color and music, these men unconsciously executed the power of transpersonal psychology. Mandela, for example, was frequently seen in public as president wearing multicolored Madiba shirts, which identified his cultural heritage, as well as signaled his sense of identity and solidarity, ultimately inspiring a collection known as the “Rainbow Collection.”

Music, too, was used by all three of these men, as in the prayer and meditation that both Dr. King and Gandhi indulged in. The music that all three of these great men embraced included the Mahalia Jackson song that inspired Dr. King, the two songs that Gandhi is said to have listened to while in prayer, and the Hugh Masekela song “Bring Him Back Home,” which he wrote after being deeply moved by Mandela’s letter wishing him a happy birthday. That song became an unofficial anthem of the anti-apartheid campaign when it ignited a global outcry to free Mandela from prison.

In addition, this essay highlights the importance of “shadow work,” an application of transpersonal psychology. Specifically, the essay does so by recognizing Bob Dylan’s song “The Times They Are a-Changin’” as an illustration of how effective leadership and social reform hinge on facing one’s inner issues and leaning into humility, in addition to detailing six exercises that explore shadow work by tasking individuals to watch their emotional reactions.

Lastly, this essay looks at how these great leaders, by examining color and music in relations to their egos and shadow work, may teach us to use simplicity to develop a higher awareness that might promote healing of social inequalities and, consequently, establish peace.

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