

# DREAM THINGS TRUE

## NONVIOLENT MOVEMENTS AS APPLIED CONSCIOUSNESS

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**ABSTRACT:** Nonviolent movements have become a new form of human agency. Between 1900 and 2006, more than 100 such movements appeared, and more than half were successful in dissolving oppression or achieving people's rights. Movements self-organize to summon mass participation, develop cognitive unity in the midst of dissension, and build resilient force on the content of shared beliefs. Some movements may even be a new venue for consciousness that "grows to something of great constancy" as Shakespeare said about "minds transfigured so together."

**Keywords:** movement; nonviolent; consciousness; participation; self-organization; solidarity; mobilization; summoning; Hippolyta; A Minor Quartet; James Lawson; Fannie Lou Hamer; Adam Michnik; William Barrett; Matthew Mulberry; J.W.N. Sullivan; A.D. Nuttal; F. Elizabeth Hart; T.S. Eliot; Giordano Bruno; Hannah Arendt; Giorgio Agamben.

### PREFACE

In Act I, Scene 4 of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet," Mercutio and Romeo debate whether dreams are real. The love-struck Romeo believes that dreams can be a window into truth, while Mercutio insists that love is as insubstantial as dreams spun by a faery. But Shakespeare leaves room for us to decide: Do we succumb to Mercutio's harsh facts -- "Dreamers often lie" -- or embrace Romeo's reply: "In bed asleep, while they do dream things true."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> G. Jack Urso, "Mercutio's Dream – The Queen Mab Soliloquy: Romeo and Juliet, Act I, Scene IV," *Aeolus 13 Umbra*, January 18, 2012; <http://aeolus13umbra.blogspot.com/2012/01/mercutios-dream-queen-mab-soliloquy.html>.

## THESIS

In Shakespeare's time, the only analogue to the nation-changing, civilian-based movements that have swept the world in the past century were peasant revolts -- often spontaneous, always bloody, and rarely successful. But between 1900 and 2006, more than 100 nonviolent political movements appeared, and more than half were successful.<sup>2</sup>

Nonviolent movements have become a new form of human agency. Movements create or exploit "adjacent possible" civic space, summon mass participation, harvest antipathy toward oppressors, turn it into constructive action, and initiate or intensify democratic ecology in countries they change. Many social scientists argue that a movement can arise only when certain material or structural conditions are present, such as poverty, labor unrest, or social media usage. But these theorists are unable to "prestate [the] pathways to its successful emergence" as a robust form of self-organization, to use the terminology of Stuart A. Kauffman in another context.<sup>3</sup>

Effective movements, which are often explicitly "lawless", require tactical diversity and cognitive unity among participants, whose deepest beliefs are evoked to sustain and give vision to the cause. The certitude of mind in participants about the eventual success of their purpose is often absorbed into the spirit of a movement, strengthening its meaning and making it resilient. This can be critical in forging revolution, the first and perhaps decisive location of which may be in consciousness.

The sense of radical initiative coursing through today's movements calls to mind the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, who said in a lecture in Boston in 1842, "All that you call the world is the shadow of that substance which you are, the perpetual creation of the powers of thought...You think me the child of my circumstances: I make my circumstances. Let any thought or motive of mine be different from what they are, the difference will transform my condition and economy."<sup>4</sup>

In movements, Emerson's "difference" represented in a thought or motive has to be expressed outwardly in order to summon people to action, and that summoning is usually contained in language. But this is not instrumental rhetoric aimed at manipulating transitory emotions, it is existential language that elicits the content of individuals' beliefs about their identity and the meaning of their lives, which can be elevated by the movement's outcome. As that content becomes represented in what a movement stands for, it gains traction in the society.

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<sup>2</sup> Erica Chenoweth & Maria J. Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*, Columbia University Press, 2011, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Stuart A. Kauffman, *Reinventing the Sacred: A New View of Science, Reason, and Religion*, Basic Books, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, from "The Transcendentalist," in *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Houghton Mifflin, 1903.

Movements exist physically, but only after their strategic form of action – and information about their purpose – are developed by those who organize them. The quantum physicist Henry Stapp has said that he believes that “there will be near-unanimous agreement among quantum physicists that, to the extent that a rationally coherent conception of physical reality is possible, this reality will be informational in character, not material.”<sup>5</sup> So it may not be dreaming to discern that a movement’s candescence and drive to succeed will first emerge in people’s minds.

### PHENOMENA

The fundamental dynamic in effective civil resistance by nonviolent movements is not complex, although the understanding of it has not been widespread until the past few decades. It includes these phases: (1) When people withdraw consent from an unjust or oppressive regime or occupier, its legitimacy dissolves; (2) When enough people resist the system, its cost of maintaining control increases; (3) When legitimacy drops and costs rise, the system’s own supporters begin to doubt its future, and defections usually occur. This process begins when the victims of oppression stop being afraid and begin to create new space for maneuver throughout their society.

In modern history, notable achievements in nonviolent resistance have included:

- Gandhi’s successful campaign for the rights of Indians in South Africa in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and his astute action in India’s independence movement in the 1920s and 1930s.
- Strikes and obstruction of the German occupation of Denmark in World War II, denying the Nazis much of the value of having invaded their neighbor.
- The civil rights movement by African-Americans in the 1950s and 1960s, led by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., which ended legal segregation and won voting rights.
- The strikes and underground resistance of the Solidarity movement in Poland in the 1980s, leading to the founding of a new democratic order.
- The “People Power Revolution” in the Philippines in 1986, which besieged the dictator Ferdinand Marcos, protected defecting soldiers, and forced his exit.
- The Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia led by the playwright Václav Havel, culminating in millions occupying central Prague in 1989, chanting “the whole world is watching.”
- The fall of the apartheid system in South Africa, after several years of boycotts and strikes, coinciding with international sanctions and forcing negotiations that led to elections in which both blacks and whites freely participated.

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<sup>5</sup> Henry Stapp, *Mind, Matter and Quantum Mechanics*, Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg, 2009, p. 244.

- The ouster of the Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic, the “Butcher of the Balkans,” in 2000, triggered by civil resistance led by the youth group Otpor and finishing in motorcades and demonstrations by a half-million Serbs.
- The exit of Egyptian autocrat Hosni Mubarak in 2011, following weeks of continuous massive protests in the heart of Cairo, in which activists, human rights campaigners, and ordinary people foiled repression and induced the army to switch sides.

The success rate of nonviolent movements has been rising for over a half-century. In the 1950s, about 33% of all such movements succeeded in achieving their goals. That rose to 57% in the 1970s, and 68% in the period between 2000 and 2006.<sup>6</sup> Between 1970 and 2005, there were 67 transitions from authoritarian to democratic governments, and in 50 of those transitions, the key factor was nonviolent force.<sup>7</sup> In the late 1990s, when he was interviewed for the documentary film *A Force More Powerful*, which profiled six successful cases of nonviolent resistance and has been viewed in over 80 countries, Archbishop Desmond Tutu – a leader in South Africa’s anti-apartheid movement – reflected on the real source of power within movements against tyrants and oppressors: “When people decide they want to be free – once they have made up their minds to that – there is nothing that can stop them.”

In terms of political and material factors, we know how movements become effective, and we know why their opponents fail -- usually to the surprise of social scientists as well as the media. But Tutu focused on another dimension of these struggles, which is less well understood: the cognitive impetus of people within these movements and their determination to win.

## PROPOSITIONS

### *Mind as the Locus of Agency*

William Shakespeare wrote the play *Henry V* in 1599, portraying events involving the king’s invasion of France in 1415 to reclaim lost territory. The play culminates in the Battle of Agincourt, in which the English were outnumbered at least four to one. But the English won. Shakespeare had to imagine the words that Henry spoke before the battle, to summon a herculean effort. His lines prefigure two elements of the mobilizing language of 20th century nonviolent movements: creating a story before the conflict that depicts the future if the conflict is won, and foreseeing that good people in

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<sup>6</sup> Chenoweth & Stephan, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> “How Freedom Is Won: From Civic Resistance to Durable Democracy,” Freedom House, 2005.

that future will remember the victory and its meaning. In other words, the summoning offers to those who fight not material rewards but acclaim by posterity. And where would the conflict begin? Shakespeare gave to Henry these last words before the battle: “All things are ready, if our minds be so.”

The desire to be remembered reflects, on one level, the wish of the self not to vanish in death. Yet modern leaders of nonviolent movements have not predicated summoning language on avoiding failure – but rather on winning a cause that subsumes the fate of the individual. The Italian philosopher and political theorist Giorgio Agamben identifies “in Glory the central mystery of power,” and he sees it operating “at the center of the political apparatuses” of democracies. Yet the center, he says, is no longer the state – it is the media, which “manage and dispense Glory, the acclamative and doxological aspect of power” that has otherwise receded in modern politics.<sup>8</sup> Movements based on civil resistance are reviving popular *doxa*, by not losing sight of the relation between unified action and its redemptive meaning.

Hannah Arendt said that it was Socrates who first sought to evoke people’s opinions or *doxa*, based on “comprehension of the world ‘as it opens itself...to bring out this truth which everyone potentially possesses.” When this is done among friends, as Socrates conceived citizens, “one friend understands how and in what specific articulateness the common world appears to the other...” So the “faculty of speech and the fact of human plurality correspond to each other.”<sup>9</sup> Common purpose is harnessed from individual thought, or in a phrase: *E pluribus unum*, a famous rendition of a line from Heraclitus.

Understanding the practical requirements of agency through a nonviolent movement is a prerequisite to apply them successfully. The platform for developing knowledge is in mind, through the conscious process of self-interrogation and self-organization. It is where the inchoate proclivity to act is transferred into enduring commitment. Explaining to others the logic and imperative to act is based on reason, also a function of mind, and is reinforced by acceptance in the minds of others – which doubtless helps form the subjective experience in movements that people’s motives, intentions and action can appear orchestrated.

In 1979, the first Polish pope, John Paul II, visited his country. The communist government declined to help organize his events, so the Catholic Church did so through civil society, meaning ordinary people. This turned into the equivalent of a vast workshop in nonviolent action, paving the way for the Solidarity movement a year later. The immense crowds filling Polish cities were transformative. When one writer

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<sup>8</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, Stanford University Press, 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, Schocken Books, 2005, pp. 14-15, 17-20.

ventured into the streets, he found “a different way of walking, a change in style and rhythm...the crowd undulated slowly, people moved without bumping into each other.” The vast sea of people “had beheld itself and been strengthened by feeling its own presence.” Anna Walentynowicz, the Polish shipyard worker whose dismissal ignited the Solidarity strikes, said that Poles had changed: “We became braver.”<sup>10</sup>

“Bravery” means something more than courage. It entered English through the middle French word *braverie* and by the 1540s meant “defiance.” When a nonviolent trainer in Burma in 1989 explained civil resistance to a guerrilla leader who was fighting its dictatorship, he used the term “nonviolence,” but the leader just grunted and walked away. Later a guerrilla told him to use a term that sounded more courageous – so “political defiance” became the phrase for the Burmese resistance. Interest in movements in getting the language right is universal.<sup>11</sup>

Language serves a central, continuous, collaborative and highly dynamic function in organizing, mobilizing and sustaining nonviolent movements, which have to be coherent both in action and the content of people’s beliefs. In other words, language performs a cognitive service and may offer evidence of the degree to which a movement is a venue for what might be termed applied consciousness.

F. Elizabeth Hart, a specialist in cognitive approaches to literature and theatre, notes that the arrival of mass-distributed books in the 16th century spurred “an unprecedented increase in English literacy” as well as a “mass acquisition of cognitive skills.” In literature, representations appeared – for the first time – of “people pausing in the midst of action to wrestle with their inner conflicts, to speculate about others’ intentions, or to lose themselves in imaginary worlds.” In *The Faery Queene*, Edmund Spenser identified “the mind as the locus of moral meaning but also as a processing instrument...” Thus came “the creation of ‘community’ within a critical mass of people who hold certain cognitive skills in common,” aiding “a profound shift in human consciousness” in less than two centuries.<sup>12</sup>

Do nonviolent movements in the 20th and early 21st centuries represent an emerging new theatre for cognitive community, giving impulse to new forms of language and collaborative action? Using adjacent-possible space and media, participants in movements learn from each other and from strategies of previous

<sup>10</sup> Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall, *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2001, p. 133.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Popham, *The Lady and the Peacock: The Life of Aung San Suu Kyi*, Workman Publishing, 2013, p. 391-92.

<sup>12</sup> F. Elizabeth Hart, “Reading, Consciousness and Emotion in the Sixteenth Century,” in *The Emergence of Mind: Representations of Consciousness in Narrative Discourse in English*, David Herman, ed., University of Nebraska Press, 2011, pp. 104-115.

movements. If they are generating a form of collective thought, they are beginning to do it on a global scale.

This mode of thought may have “affective” states, which Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi describe in *The Phenomenological Mind*. Such states “are not simply qualities of subjective experience; rather, they are given in expressive phenomena...and they therefore become visible to others.” But it is “meaningless” to divide this “expressive unity” into behavior and an “attribution of psychological meaning.”<sup>13</sup> Participants in movements know what it means to have expressive unity. After they change something as consequential as a nation’s direction, the elevated sense of “achieving our country” – to use Richard Rorty’s phrase about the accrued satisfaction of lifelong activism -- can last in individuals’ minds for weeks and even, in moments, for the rest of their lives.

### *The Content of Meaning as Causal*

In his seminal field work on social resistance among peasants in Malaysia, the Yale University political scientist James C. Scott could have restricted his observations to the outward behavior of the villagers with whom he lived for two years. But he did not:

“...inasmuch as I seek to understand the resistance of thinking, social beings, I can hardly fail to ignore their consciousness – the meaning they give to their acts. The symbols, the norms, the ideological forms they create constitute the indispensable background to their behavior...they are gifted with intentions and values and purposefulness that condition their acts. This is so evident that it would hardly merit restating were it not for the lamentable tendency in behavioral science to read mass behavior directly from the statistical abstracts on income, caloric intake, newspaper circulation or radio ownership.”<sup>14</sup>

The causal trigger for solidarity in a movement is found in existential features of the substantive content of its meaning, as presented in language that enlists people. A comparable causal explanation for long-term participation is not found in political feedback from tactical action. One political scientist has proposed that “oppositional consciousness” is typically produced through “emotional organizing” that “can trigger the switch...to anger”, as if the evil of oppression required a proportionate antidote of fury.<sup>15</sup> But that fails to reach the deepest wellsprings of commitment in a protracted struggle. Rage depletes, it does not nourish.

<sup>13</sup> Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind*, Routledge, 2013, pp. 202-203.

<sup>14</sup> James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, Yale University Press, 1985, p. 38.

<sup>15</sup> Jane Mansbridge, ed., *Oppositional Consciousness: The Subjective Roots of Social Protest*, The University of Chicago Press, 2001, p. 4.

In his influential work *The Illusion of Technique*, the philosopher William Barrett saw the pursuit of meaning as critical to freedom. “We tend too often to think of motivation as a *vis a tergo*, a blind force pushing us from behind,” he warned, “but in fact motivation and meaning go hand in hand.”<sup>16</sup> The first protesters against the violent military junta that ruled Argentina in the 1970s were mothers of activists who had been “disappeared.” They went to the center of Buenos Aires and demanded to be told where their children were. Their stand was rooted in the meaning of their identity, legible to everyone. The regime decided it couldn’t crack down on mothers wearing diapers as bandanas on their heads. *Las Madres* grew from 14 women to thousands and ignited broad resistance that changed their country.<sup>17</sup>

By recruiting participants of all kinds, effective movements represent the diversity of the society undergoing change. Transferring attention from everyday necessities to the voluntary risks of fighting alongside others in a state of crisis can unlock surprising valiance from people only some of whom are politically fervent. But personal gratification is not why people join these struggles. Civil resistance is designed to surmount a barrier (a regime, a heinous denial of rights) in order to enter a new frame or mandate for life, which is sometimes felt as having been meant to emerge but will not unless the movement succeeds. It cannot rouse people by merely rejecting the old. This is a metamorphosis, of which both individuals and the movement as a whole become aware: a passage into a new world.

Such a world, as Jacob Needleman suggests in *The Heart of Philosophy*, “is not, surely, the realm of likes and dislikes, emotional reactions, preferences, egoistic attractions and repulsions; it is not the world of opinions and inclinations...It is a world of immense scale – but what is it?”<sup>18</sup> For those who derive a new and startling purpose from a nonviolent movement which they have helped propel, it is a world in which meaning is found by burying a broken form of order and rebuilding it anew as a framework for living freely. For some, it may be glimpsed as a restoration of values, but for many others, meaning comes from dreaming and then doing a future that has not yet existed. It is not utopia. It is the next reality.

The American writer Matthew Mulberry spent several days in Kyiv, Ukraine, in December 2013, during the three-month, mainly nonviolent movement that led to the fall of its notoriously corrupt president Victor Yanukovich. He described the scene on December 31: “We went down to the main square where the revolution was taking

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<sup>16</sup> William Barrett, *The Illusion of Technique: A Search for Meaning in a Technological Civilization*, Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1978, p. 267.

<sup>17</sup> Kristina E. Thalhammer et al, *Courageous Resistance: The Power of Ordinary People*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, pp. 101-118.

<sup>18</sup> Jacob Needleman, *The Heart of Philosophy*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1982, pp. 205-206.

place. It was stunning. The whole area is surrounded with makeshift barricades...It looks a bit intimidating but when you go inside, you become part of it, it becomes surreal. Hundreds of thousands of people, full of energy but at the same time civil, and organized. Kids, parents, and grandparents, all chanting, and steaming into the cold night air and the lights passing through it all, the steam rising up from giant pots of stew cooked over wood fires, and little Ukrainian firecrackers popping off in the distance. Then we climbed the hill, looking out over it all, watching the stage, the massive screens, and giant clock. It was an apocalypse but in reverse, a nation giving birth to itself, for a second, third, or perhaps, fourth time. You could tell they've done it before."<sup>19</sup>

### *Belief as the Means of Fulfillment*

Belief in the attainability of goals is a major source of a movement's resilience, if it is widely shared. In civilian-based resistance, this belief does not arise from merely having hope or by inviting the help of an external agent. It is rooted in the convergence between the individual's sense of purpose and the movement's identity as the channel to everyone's freedom and well-being. It is, in this way, a kind of self-abnegation. If individuals believe that it is right for the movement to succeed, and they know they are surrounded by likeminded partners, their conductive force will intensify.

A movement's power is of course manifested in acts of directing and controlling events. Because the strength of belief in their cause serves the character of performance by individuals, then the content of what is believed is surely integral to the result. Pierre Bourdieu suggested that this could be conjured by leaders, becoming the power "of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world, and, thereby, action on the world and thus the world itself, an almost magical power which enables one to obtain the equivalent of what is obtained through force (whether physical or economic) by virtue of the specific effect of mobilization..." But in a nonviolent and thus uncommanded movement based on voluntary action, every participant is, in a real sense, his or her own leader. So if, as Bourdieu maintains, power arises "in the very structure of the field in which *belief* is produced," then that field is rooted not in the mind of a leader, but in a thousand or a hundred thousand minds.<sup>20</sup>

In exploring William James's work, *The Will to Believe*, William Barrett found evidence that the act of believing "creates its own future facts, and thus confirms itself in action." He recounts James's example of a mountain climber who has to leap across

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<sup>19</sup> Matthew Mulberry, Central European University, in an email to Jack DuVall, January 1, 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, Harvard University Press, 1991, p. 170.

an abyss to save himself. The jump is broad enough that he might fail, but there is a chance he can do it. "If he believes he can do it, James argues, then his energies will be bolstered by that very faith, and he is much more likely to succeed in his leap. And afterward, when he stands safe on the other side, his belief will have yielded confirmation of his truth."<sup>21</sup>

Belief in an abstract or subjective truth, especially one that has not yet materialized in outward events or been accepted by conventional thought, requires imagination. Giordano Bruno, who was burned at the stake in Rome in 1600 for proposing that the universe had an infinite number of worlds, emphasized this when describing "the bondings arising from thought." He called imagination "the bond of bonds" and said it opens the door to "all of the powers which cross over from the soul to the body."<sup>22</sup>

The indomitable Polish dissident Adam Michnik seemed to be working in this frame when he conceived a set of ideas "to fight against the captivity of the spirit." These ideas became embedded in the Solidarity movement in the late 1970s; he described them as *podmiotowosc*—"the capacity of individuals or collective subjects to be the authors of their own lives, capable of reflecting on them," and capable of purposeful, autonomous action. In a word, he wanted Poles *to be*, which was denied them by the state. So being had to be re-imagined and re-enacted.<sup>23</sup>

The Rev. Dr. James Lawson, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s key strategist in the civil rights movement, once spoke of Fannie Lou Hamer, the legendary leader of voter registration campaigns in Mississippi and why she thought the movement would prevail. One night, driving home from a successful campaign, she was pulled over by the police and beaten savagely. She almost died, was hospitalized for 30 days, and, once released, started another campaign. "Why did she do that?" Rev. Lawson asked. "Because she believed that if she quit, the movement would fail -- but that if she kept working, the movement would succeed. All my colleagues in the movement felt that way."<sup>24</sup> In a movement, taking responsibility for everyone may only be a matter of taking responsibility for oneself.

### *Movements as a Venue for Applied Consciousness*

Are nonviolent movements that derive from unified strategy, voice and meaning a newly emergent sphere of human thought? Are the discrete minds at work in movements operating on parallel but separate tracks of conscious experience, or is

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<sup>21</sup> William Barrett, *The Illusion of Technique*, p. 266.

<sup>22</sup> Giordano Bruno, *Cause, Principle and Unity*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. pp. 141-142.

<sup>23</sup> Elzbeita Matynia, *Performative Democracy*, Paradigm Publishers, 2009, p. 57.

<sup>24</sup> Rev. Dr. James Lawson, in a discussion with Jack DuVall in Cambridge, Massachusetts, June 21, 2011.

there some form of belonging to a common trunk of lived passages in the movement's life, fusing such passages into a network of intention and action, so that it might be called a new venue for consciousness? If this seems consistent with direct accounts of lives within a movement, how can such accounts be evaluated in accordance with acceptable scientific criteria?

The sculptor Edward Robinson, writing in *The Language of Mystery*, said, "Things occur only to the receptive mind. 'Occur': a word with an interesting history. It is the Latin *occurro*, I run to meet. Do we take credit for things that occur to us? Or do we feel that there is somewhere some kind of initiative, running to meet us?"<sup>25</sup> Veterans of nonviolent movements sometimes suggest that the movement overtook and gave them a purpose, using them in ways they could not have anticipated. William Barrett reminds us that Aristotle said the mind "is a source of movement; consciousness can intervene in the world and change things."<sup>26</sup>

Most of the research and field investigation that have been focused on movements, both empirical-narrative and quantitative, has been done by sociologists, political scientists, and scholars in international relations, with less peer-reviewed work done by scholars in psychology and linguistics, and even less by cognitive scientists or other scientists interested in the dynamics of mind and consciousness. To explore fully these questions, we should also examine other venues of human thought and action outside politics, because they may give us more traction to assess what we are seeing. In particular, Hannah Arendt found a "paradigm for political action" in "the non-instrumentality of artistic making," according to the poet and literary critic Susan Stewart. Arendt "aligns Greek democracy's 'space of appearance' with performance – a 'kind of theater where freedom could appear.'" So the making of art, in Stewart's view, gives "the fullest account of human striving and dreaming..."<sup>27</sup>

Perhaps leaving us a metaphor for the subjective as well as embodied scaffolding of consciousness, T.S. Eliot writes in his *Four Quartets* of the space in which "the impossible union of spheres of existence is actual":

*Where action were otherwise movement  
Of that which is only moved  
And has in it no source of movement—*

This can be encountered, he said, when music is heard "so deeply that it is not heard at all, but you are the music while the music lasts." Eliot had told his fellow poet

<sup>25</sup> Edward Robinson, *The Language of Mystery*, SCM Press, 1987, p. 22.

<sup>26</sup> William Barrett, *The Illusion of Technique*, p. 306.

<sup>27</sup> Susan Stewart, *The Poet's Freedom: A Notebook of Making*, The University of Chicago Press, 2011.

Stephen Spender that he hoped to write verse that would reflect the same spirit Beethoven had achieved in his A minor quartet. That later became *Four Quartets*.<sup>28</sup>

Eliot knew the science journalist J.W.N. Sullivan, whose book, *Beethoven: His Spiritual Development*, contains this passage: “The colossal and mastered experience which seems to be reflected in the Heiligesang of the A minor quartet, for instance, is...indicative of more than the peculiarities of Beethoven’s neural organization. The perceptions which made that experience possible were in no sense illusory; they were perceptions of the nature of reality, even though they have no place in the scientific scheme.” In Beethoven’s case, that reality “was experienced by a consciousness which is aware of aspects of which we have but dim and transitory glimpses.”<sup>29</sup>

We began this paper with Shakespeare, debating with himself in *Romeo and Juliet* about the truth of dreams. He continued that debate in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, in which Hippolyta, who heard a tale of magic and transformation in the night, responds to Theseus’s dismissal of her imagination:

*But all the story of the night told over,  
And all their minds transfigur’d so together,  
More witnesseth than fancy’s images  
And grows to something of great constancy*

She is not mesmerized by the night’s mystery but notices that it had coherence. “She is seeking a reality of *content* in dream, poetry and love...”, A.D. Nuttal says in *Shakespeare the Thinker*. As for the playwright, he wasn’t looking for “formal eloquence”, he wanted “a more powerful, deeper lyricism.”<sup>30</sup>

That is what many nonviolent movements have partly achieved in the hearts of their followers and of those whose lives they have changed, by capturing the imagination and merging the thought and action of tens of millions of people. They have had dreams and made them true.

What happens in consciousness which may help explain it is for others to discover.

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<sup>28</sup> T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, Harcourt Books, 1947, p. 44.

<sup>29</sup> J.W.N. Sullivan, *Beethoven: His Spiritual Development*, Vintage Books, 1927, pp. 16-17.

<sup>30</sup> A.D. Nuttal, *Shakespeare the Thinker*, Yale University Press, 2007, pp. 121-126.