

Toward a New Conception of Socially-Just Peace

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Introduction

In this chapter, I approach the subject of peace by way of Andrew Fiala's pioneering, synthetic work on "practical pacifism." One of Fiala's articles on the subject of peace is entitled "Radical Forgiveness and Human Justice"—and if one were to replace "Radical Forgiveness" with "Peace," this would be a fair title for my chapter. In fact, Fiala himself explicitly makes a connection in the article between radical forgiveness and peace.¹ Also in support of my project, Fiala's article names four of the six historical figures who are central to my chapter, namely Marcus Aurelius, King, Arendt, and Nietzsche. Moreover, Fiala also insists ~~there~~ "forgiveness must be held in creative tension with justice," and it is this very tension that forms the basis of my new conception of socially-just peace. To wit, I propose that socially-just peace is lovingly generous reimagining (peace) through intuitively self-overcoming tension (social justice).

To elaborate, peace is the result of imagining things to be different from our usual ways of seeing them, which requires a kind of generosity, which in turn requires a loving comportment. And social justice is the result of tapping into an intuitive knowledge, in order to catalyze a process of self-overcoming on the part of the oppressed, which self-overcoming allows them to channel the tensions produced by oppression into the fight against that oppression. Put briefly, socially just peace is sustainable tranquility (peace) through organismic empowerment (social justice). As will be clearer in my discussion of Marcus Aurelius below, by "tranquility" here I mean the Stoic sense of a calm, peaceful contentment. And by "sustainable," I intend the sense in contemporary ecological ethics, one crucial feature of which is the ability to prolong a given way of life indefinitely into the future.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. First, I will briefly summarize my conception of socially-just peace. Second, to elaborate and support this new

¹ Andrew Fiala, "Radical Forgiveness and Human Justice," *Heythrop Journal: A Bimonthly Review of Philosophy and Theology* 53:3 (2012): 494–506, accessed August 31, 2016, doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2265.2010.00637.x.

conception, I will offer etymological analyses of “peace” and “social justice.” Third, I will sketch three historical conceptions germane to both terms (from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Marcus Aurelius, and Hannah Arendt, and from Benedict Spinoza, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Frantz Fanon). And finally, I will conclude with an application of this new conception to contemporary debates regarding feminism.

In recognition of the aforementioned tension that Fiala notes between peace and forgiveness (and that I am claiming applies also to peace and social justice), each of these four phases of my analysis will reframe this tension as a dialectical challenge—namely, by attempting to resolve the dialectical challenge of the preceding stage.² Regarding the first phase of my analysis, which involves a conceptual analysis, I describe peace as “sustainable tranquility” and social justice as “organismic empowerment.” The dialectical challenge here becomes how to empower all organisms (social justice) without permanently disturbing the tranquility of the environment (peace). Put simply, how can we increase individuals’ ability to overcome social injustice without making them more dangerous both to themselves and (nonthreatening) others?

Regarding the second phase of my analysis, its etymological analysis resolves this first dialectical tension (from the conceptual analysis), only to introduce a new dialectical tension, by revealing peace to be an imaginative fabrication of those armed for violence. Put as a question, how can we motivate individuals with an *actual* capacity for violence to engage in the collective production of a *potential* imaginative artwork of peace? Or, more simply, if violence is immediate and real, while peace is futural and imaginary, how can people be persuaded to abandon present certainty for future possibility?

Regarding the third phase, its historical analysis resolves this second (etymological) dialectical tension by revealing that (a) love can be polemical, (b) generosity flows from viewing oneself as divine, and (c) reimagining violent others requires *imaging* them as themselves insufficiently imaginative/thoughtless. And yet this too introduces a new dialectical tension. To wit, how can we tap into these hidden dimensions of love, generosity, and *reimagining*, and render these complex conceptions of them accessible to an audience large enough to actually bring about peace?

² By “dialectical” here, I mean the philosophical method introduced by Plato and most fully developed in Hegel and his successors. For the reader unfamiliar with it, in a dialectical method, one interlocutor posits a position, which a second interlocutor attempts to challenge and undermine, in response to which challenge the first interlocutor (or a third) modifies the initial position (typically in the direction of greater subtlety and sophistication).

And regarding the final phase, I will suggest that the resolution of this last dialectical tension is a concrete example of how a controversial public debate might be reframed by my new conception of peace. More specifically, on the subject of contemporary feminism, I will follow Alison Jaggar in calling for a lovingly generous reimagining of the battlefield over gendered justice, specifically by construing that field as containing—not only feminists and anti-feminists—but also what Jaggar terms “non-feminists.”³ It is the individuals constituting the latter group, who (per her definition) have not explicitly rejected feminism but who have not yet endorsed it either, whom we could most beneficially reimagine—as insufficiently imaginative or thoughtful to have understood the discrimination women continue to face in our global society. Insofar as this reimagining is valid, we would perhaps do well to direct a larger percentage of our pedagogical and socializing energies on this non-feminist group. As a result, we might be able to persuade them to join the feminist cause, thereby tipping the scales of social justice further to the good.

Conceptual Analyses of Peace and Social Justice

My new conceptions of peace and social justice draw on the discourses of biology and ecology. Beginning with peace, as “sustainable tranquility,” it involves an understanding of peace as restfulness—in the etymological sense of being “filled with rest.” Here, one could link peace to John Dewey’s concept of “undergoing.”⁴ Central to this concept is the idea that animals are constantly active, even when they appear motionless, and that even something as apparently passive as sense-perception involves organismic activity. Translated into the human realm in general, we must actively choose to engage in activities that appear passive, including listening, waiting, sleeping, etc. Applied to the arena of peace in particular, this means that we must allow ourselves to undergo peace, which includes allowing other things and people to provoke us, and to stimulate the expansion of our imaginations.

By contrast, social justice as “organismic empowerment” could be linked to Dewey’s complementary (to “undergoing”) concept of “doing.” In this way, social justice becomes something that we have to go out and actively pursue, instead of merely hoping that it will arrive one day on its own, or assuming

3 See, for example, Allison Jaggar, “Feminist Ethics: Projects, Problems, Prospects,” in *Feminist Ethics*, ed. Claudi Card (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1991), 78–106.

4 See, for example, John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 23.

thoughtlessly that we already have enough of it (or as much of it as one can hope for in a “fallen” world, etc.). As “organismic empowerment,” social justice involves a sense of flourishing, in the etymological sense of an outward-spreading display, such as the feathers of a peacock, the panels of a Spanish fan, or the limbs of a trained dancer. (This inclusion of nonhuman examples is meant to recall that a flourishing world includes diversity, plurality, and heterogeneity, including of species). Put differently, social justice is a bottom-up, grassroots activity in which each organism is enabled to be its best self. This conception is not, therefore, a top-down, centralized imposition of justice relations from above. Nor is social justice, on this account, a reductive affair in which one merely subtracts (as it were) “units” of injustice, as identified perhaps by some governing body or institution.

Seen in this comparative light, and continuing to draw on Dewey’s thought, peace becomes a matter of the environment (or community), whereas social justice is more concerned with the organism (or individual) in that environment. In other words, peace is like a web, which requires multiple lines of connection in order to exist at all (since just one or two strands are insufficient to make a web). Social justice, however, amounts to nothing if it is merely connections and abstractions, and must instead be grounded in acts of social justice performed for each individual in a population.

This position is counterintuitive, in the Western tradition at least, where peace is often understood (in part due to the influence of Jewish and Christian theology) as first and foremost a state of mind or soul in the individual, whereas justice (at least since Plato’s *Republic*) is often considered the paradigmatic sociopolitical virtue. It is precisely these more traditional conceptions of peace and justice, however, that have produced the thus-far irresolvable tensions between peace and social justice. That is, we Westerners tend to try to create peace individually and internally, and then become frustrated at our inability to expand internal peace into peaceful relationships with others. Complementarily, we devise schemes of abstract justice which have certain beauties qua images but which remain insubstantial when we attempt to tether them to the individuals who are actually suffering injustice.

The dialectical challenge of my new conceptions, though, involves how to facilitate and support organisms’ constant creative exertion toward social justice, without those organisms’ environments completely succumbing to exhaustion and/or frenzy. Put dramatically, if everyone starts seeking justice individually, and tries to coordinate peace among all the other justice-seekers, then it looks a bit like a typical superhero story line, in which a large number of exceptionally powerful individuals rip the world apart while trying to save it from one another.

Etymological Analyses of Peace and Social Justice

To resolve the aforementioned tension, it is necessary to explore the etymologies of the two central phrases being deployed in this discourse. For both etymologies, I draw on the discourses of myth and ~~religion in that it is found~~ in Jesus of Nazareth's conception of peace.⁵ "Peacemaking" is based on a compound Ancient Greek word—*eirene*- + *poiesis*—which betrays a connection to the analyses of poetry as theatrical creation in Plato (through which connection the disciplined activity of peace could be understood as a kind of theatrical artwork).⁶ In other words, peace is not only social (as the conceptual analysis already revealed) but artificial and fabricated as well. In contrast to this, social justice takes the form of Dike, the sword-bearing Greek goddess of human justice (or Dike's Roman counterpart, Iustus, with her famous blindfold, scales, and sword). In other words, social justice is not only individual (as the conceptual analysis already revealed) but also natural and real.

What follows from these new etymological understandings is that (a) peace will no more exist on its own than a novel or symphony that has never been imaginatively composed; and (b) social justice is so natural and actual that its denial will ultimately lead to violence, which entails that it requires something like self-restraint in regard to one's capacity for force (rather than as direct assertion of that capacity). These etymologies thus resolve the dialectical tension I identified in my conceptual analyses, namely by identifying the sources of that tension as (a) the artificiality/fabricated-ness of peace, and (b) the necessity of the discipline of self-restraint within effective fighters for social justice. Put differently, we must stop waiting for a peace that will never arrive by nature, and we must attempt to keep sheathed the swords with which social justice empowers us. This, however, begs the question as to how this fabrication and self-discipline can be attained, which constitutes the next dialectical challenge, and which requires a reinvestigation of alternative conceptions from the history of philosophy germane to peace and social justice.

Historical Analyses Germane to Peace and Social Justice

To resolve the aforementioned tension—as to how we can imaginatively compose peace (as sustainable tranquility) among the just (as empowered

⁵ See Matthew 5:9.

⁶ See for example, *Ion*, in *Plato: Statesman, Philebus, Ion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925).

organisms), who necessarily have the capacity for divisive harm—it is necessary to explore our history, to which the majority of the present chapter will be devoted. More specifically, I will consider three marginalized historical conceptions germane to peace, and three such conceptions germane to social justice. To foreshadow my analyses below, everything turns on the role of illusion, imagination, and even deception, and the common thread in the six thinkers is an emphasis on metaphors drawn from dance and poetry (as script and performance) in the theatrical arts.

To clarify, what follows below are not all, or at least not necessarily, conceptions of peace and social justice, but rather conceptions that are useful for and/or illuminating of peace and social justice. Thus, I am not claiming that the first three theorists are “peace theorists” (or peace advocates) per se, nor that the latter three theorists are “social justice theorists.” But that does not mean that the six thinkers do not offer insights potentially invaluable for those who do endorse these two causes. By implication, moreover, both clusters of theorists do not necessarily have much in common, because it is not necessary for two theorists who illuminate the same concept (like King and Aurelius regarding peace) to share a similar worldview. The synthesis of the six occurs, instead, in my own hybrid concepts of peace and social justice.

For peace, I will draw on the anthology of King’s writings entitled *A Testament of Hope*, on Marcus Aurelius’s *Meditations*, and on Hannah Arendt’s *Eichmann in Jerusalem*.⁷ Their respective conceptions of peace are as follows: (a) agape love torsioned away from god and toward the community (from King), in order to fund (b) divinely tolerant generosity toward others (from Aurelius), in the form of (c) imagining evil as merely banal and thus the others as forgivable (from Arendt). Put in terms of peace as “lovingly generous reimagining,” King offers *love*, Aurelius *generosity*, and Arendt *reimagining*.

As for social justice, I will draw on Spinoza’s *Ethics*, Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth*.⁸ Their respective conceptions of social justice are as follows: (d) an intuitive maximization of one’s being as a mode (or stylization) of the cosmos (Spinoza), (e) which maximization

7 Martin Luther King Jr., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King Jr.*, ed. James M. Washington (New York: HarperOne, 2003); Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, trans. Martin Hammond (New York: Penguin, 2006); and Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin, 2006a).

8 Baruch Spinoza, *Spinoza’s Ethics*, ed. and trans. G.H.R. Parkinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, ed. Adrian Del Caro and Robert Pippen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove, 2005).

erupts in a self-transformation (Nietzsche), that (f) converts the literal muscular tension of oppressed communities into liberating art (Fanon). In one word each, Spinoza offers *perseverance*, Nietzsche offers *self-overcoming*, and Fanon *tension*, to form my hybrid conception of social justice as “intuitively self-overcoming tension.” I will now offer more detailed analyses of all six texts.

King on “Lovingly”

I begin with King, whose conception of *agape* constitutes the “lovingly” adverb in “lovingly generous reimagining.” Here I will utilize King’s article, entitled “An Experiment in Love,” (excerpted from King’s *Stride toward Freedom: The Montgomery Circle*, originally appearing in the September 1958 edition of the magazine *Jubilee*). Despite significant overlap with many other texts by King, this article is distinguished by a more extended reflection on love, and contains three primary insights relevant to my *presentation*. The first insight is that King describes the concept of love, which he traces to Jesus of Nazareth, in the following surprising terms: ~~namely, as~~ “the creative weapon of love.”⁹ Two things here are worthy of note. To begin with, love is traditionally understood as the opposite of violence (like the opposing principles of *eros* versus *polemos* [strife] in Empedocles’s metaphysics), and thus contrary to weapons per se. Also, weapons are traditionally understood as destructive, rather than creative. Perhaps this is a subtle allusion ~~in King (among many others)~~ to Nietzsche, in this case to the *Gay Science*’s famous claim that “only as creators can we destroy.”¹⁰ Thus, love for King means reimagining (like Arendt) certain things to be their apparent opposites. This connection to reimagining, moreover, helps clarify the precise nature of love’s creation for King. To wit, it is theatrical creation, which is also true of Aurelius’s concept of generosity, and Arendt’s concept of reimagining. Finally, on this point, the stated purpose of King’s theatrical creation (as he repeats in other writings, including the article “Nonviolence: The Only Road to Freedom”) is to dramatize real-world injustices, specifically for audiences who were (a) committing violence against the nonviolent protestors, or (b) reading and viewing media coverage of said injustices and violence.¹¹

The second insight relevant to my investigation in “An Experiment in Love” concerns a quote that King takes from Gandhi, regarding the fighter for civil rights entering jail “as a bridegroom enters the bride’s chamber.” Here again

9 King, *Hope*, 16.

10 King, *Hope*, 58.

11 King, *Hope*, 58.

(as with his weapon metaphor) King invokes the metaphor of love (specifically the *eros* of marital consummation) to describe another phenomenon generally regarded as antithetical to love (in the present case, prison). More precisely, this antithetical relationship between prison and love (like that between weapons and love) also involves violence.

In both of these metaphors (weaponry and imprisonment) then, King provokes us to reconceive love itself as a kind of active, forceful, even aggressive power vis-à-vis some object. I use the word “object” here deliberately—as opposed to the more obvious choice of “opponent” or “enemy”—because King repeatedly insists (here and elsewhere in his writings) that “the attack” in his nonviolent method of civil disobedience “is directed against forces of evil rather than against persons who happen to be doing the evil.”¹² This means, finally from King, that his concept of love is also generous (including in the etymological sense in which generosity “generates” the next generation, consequent upon the bridegroom’s entry into the bride’s chamber). In short, love is not a passive feeling, but rather an active giving. On this note, I turn to Aurelius’s peace-facilitating emphasis on generosity.

Aurelius on “Generous”

Aurelius, to repeat, contributes the “generous” adjective to “lovingly generous reimagining.” As I explore in detail elsewhere, Aurelius’s treatment of the theatrical art of dance in his *Meditations* reveals a political ethics constituted by (a) an ethics of patient tolerance, and (b) the generosity flowing from the micro-political power created by cultivating one’s inner divinity.¹³ In brief, beginning with the ethical partner in this “dance” of political ethics, the word “tolerance” (according to the *OED*) comes from the Latin *tolerare*, meaning “to bear, endure,” and the word “patience” derives from the Latin *patior*, meaning “to suffer.” As for the dance’s political partner, “generosity” derives from the Latin *generosus*, meaning “of noble birth, noble-spirited, of good stock or breeding (of animals or plants), superior.” It is on the latter that I will focus here, with a brief consideration of Aurelius’s references to “generosity” in the *Meditations*.

To begin, in the first section of the text, which amounts to a catalogue of thanksgiving to his teachers and other loved ones, Aurelius praises the following three different people for their generosity: (a) his mother, for her “generosity”

¹² King, *Hope*, 18.

¹³ See Joshua M. Hall, “A Divinely Tolerant Political Ethics: Dancing with Aurelius,” *Epoché: A Journal of the History of Philosophy* 20 (2): 2016, 327–348.

per se; (b) a fellow philosopher-politician, for his “unstinting generosity”; and (c) the Stoic senator Claudius Maximus, for his “generosity in good works.”¹⁴ To connect these remarks to my previous subsection, the reference to Aurelius’s mother reinforces the connection between generosity and love as noted by King (given the traditional association between maternity and love).

In Aurelius’s second reference in the text to generosity, he writes that there is something “agreeable” in “generosity” itself. One could perhaps interpolate here the synonym for agreeable, “lovable.”¹⁵ Third, Aurelius argues that his possession of reason entails that he should treat “dumb animals and generally all things and objects with generosity.”¹⁶ This expanded notion of generosity clearly involves both a loving attitude (as in King), and also a significant reimagining (as in Arendt) of every single thing in the cosmos as an appropriate object of said generosity. Fourth, Aurelius describes his own “character” as “generous.”¹⁷ Finally, Aurelius advises himself to be “generous with” himself, parsed as the following imperative: “leave all the past behind, entrust the future to providence, and direct the present solely to reverence and justice.”¹⁸ I will now attempt to condense these points, and Aurelius’s political ethics of patient tolerance and divine generosity, into a scenario involving Aurelius’s privileged metaphor of humans as puppets.

Imagine, if you will, finding yourself on a theatrical stage, as a life-size puppet, from which long strings rise up into the rafters above you. Then imagine that, on this same stage, there are a number of other life-size puppets, whose sole important difference from you is that their strings are all being controlled by one indifferent puppeteer. Your strings, by contrast, are wrapped around a beam above the stage and dropped back down and attached to the top of your head, such that, by moving your head in complex ways, you control the movements of the rest of your body. Finally, imagine that the puppeteer of the other puppets always keeps some music playing, and continuously makes the other puppets dance to it.

There you are, suspended from the artificial heavens, bound by strings to a stage that is your only possible home, and all the other puppets are dancing. What, then, should you do? Before you answer, keep in mind that you are armed with the following two vital truths: (1) you are in the minority of puppets

14 Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book I: paragraphs 3, 14, and 15.

15 Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book V: paragraph 10.

16 Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book VI: paragraph 5.

17 Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book X: paragraph 36.

18 Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book XII: paragraph 1.

with the godlike power to move yourself, and (2) the non-self-moving puppets are essentially the same as you, except that they are powerless to resist the movements of the puppeteer. According to Aurelius, the only rational and politically virtuous course of action is to channel your divinely based thoughtful power into the generosity necessary to dance with the other puppets—who, after all, share your spark of rational divinity—as beautifully as you can. For some helpful stage directions regarding this challenging task, I now turn to my third and final historical thinker in connection to peace.

Arendt on “Reimagining”

Hannah Arendt, to repeat, contributes the “reimagining” noun to my conception of peace as “lovingly generous reimagining.” I will approach this concept of reimagining primarily indirectly, through Arendt’s reflections on thoughtlessness, as thoughtlessness is arguably the phenomenon that results from a lack of reimagining. The primary example of such thoughtlessness in her oeuvre is Adolf Eichmann, whom she treats—with a surprising degree of humor—as a comical figure. Arendt describes the “horrible” phenomenon of Eichmann’s thoughtlessness as “outright funny.”¹⁹ For example, she writes that “officialese,” as she terms it, “became his language because he was genuinely incapable of uttering a single sentence that was not a cliché.”²⁰ As such, Eichmann’s role as an actor in the theater of his trial, according to Arendt, is “not a ‘monster,’” but rather “a clown.”²¹

As for the reason for this clownishness, Arendt concludes that Eichmann was—shockingly—too completely “normal,” specifically in a horrific Nazi context in which “only ‘exceptions’ could be expected to act ‘normally.’”²² Zeroing in further on the problem, Arendt observes that Eichmann showed an “inability to ever look at things from the other fellow’s point of view.”²³ In short, Eichmann dramatizes for Arendt the horrendous potential of the clownish thoughtlessness of the average modern person. As the aforementioned reference to “comedy” already hints (and as I noted above in my discussions of King’s theatrical art of civil disobedience, and of Aurelius’s dance of tolerant generosity), the theatrical is equally central for Arendt. In fact, she even goes so far (in her essay, “What Is Freedom?”) to compare political speech to a dance

19 Arendt, *Eichmann*, 48.

20 Arendt, *Eichmann*, 48.

21 Arendt, *Eichmann*, 54.

22 Arendt, *Eichmann*, 27.

23 Arendt, *Eichmann*, 48.

performance, while *Eichmann in Jerusalem* describes his trial as a theatrical performance in its opening pages.²⁴

The opposite of such thoughtlessness, as Arendt writes in her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, is a maximally “enlarged mentality.”²⁵ Such a mentality, Arendt explains, “by the force of the imagination makes the others present.”²⁶ By this, Arendt means that reimagining incorporates, when forming a political judgment, indefinitely many other peoples’ perspectives. Her analogy for this incorporation is the ideal theatrical spectator, who incorporates various figurative angles on a given performance in order to judge its merits.²⁷ To return to *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Arendt there offers, as a contrast case to Eichmann, the thoughtless clown, the equally theatrical heroism of the people of Denmark.

Facilitated by their thoughtful imagination of their Jewish “others” as fully human, and (Arendt notes) “unique among the countries of Europe,” the Danish people openly defied the Nazis’ attempts to forcibly evacuate the Jewish people from Denmark.²⁸ The story of how they did so, Arendt claims, should be “required reading in political science for all students who wish to learn something about the power inherent in nonviolent action and in resistance to an opponent possessing vastly superior means of violence.”²⁹ The outline of this story is as follows. First, Arendt notes that “only the Danes dared speak out on the subject [of “the Jewish question”] to their German masters,” whereas all the other European nations held their tongues, and resisted (if at all) in secret.³⁰ Second, when the Nazis proposed the infamous yellow badge be used to identify Jewish people, the Nazis “were simply told that the King would be the first to wear it.”³¹ Third, the Danes argued that, “because the stateless refugees [non-Danish Jewish people] were no longer German citizens, the Nazis could not claim them without Danish consent.”³² Fourth, as a consequence—and one that Arendt describes as “truly amazing”—“everything went topsy-turvy.”³³

24 Hannah Arendt, “What Is Freedom?” *Between Past and Future* (New York: Penguin, 2006b), 152; and Arendt, *Eichmann*, 4.

25 Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 44.

26 Arendt, *Kant*, 55.

27 Arendt, *Kant*, 55.

28 Arendt, *Eichmann*, 171.

29 Arendt, *Eichmann*, 171.

30 Arendt, *Eichmann*, 171.

31 Arendt, *Eichmann*, 171.

32 Arendt, *Eichmann*, 172.

33 Arendt, *Eichmann*, 172.

For example, “riots broke out in Danish shipyards, where the dock workers refused to repair German ships and then went on strike.”³⁴ Fifth, when the Nazis came to kidnap the Jewish people and begin their deportation from Denmark (ultimately intended for the concentration camps), the Danish police allowed the Nazis to take only those Jewish people who were “at home and willing to let them in”—which figure ended up being merely 477 of the 7,800 Jewish people there.³⁵ Sixth, the Jewish authorities in Denmark publicized the impending kidnappings openly in the synagogues, giving the people “just enough time to leave their apartments and go into hiding” among a Danish community in which every citizen welcomed them.³⁶ Finally, in regard to the last phase of Denmark’s response, the secret evacuation of the hidden Jewish people to safety in Sweden, the extensive cost of this evacuation, Arendt notes, “was paid largely by wealthy Danish citizens.”³⁷

Even more surprising to Arendt than the actions of the Danish is the fact that their imaginative thoughtfulness proved contagious, in that “the German officials who had been living in [Denmark] for years were no longer the same” as they had been back in Germany.³⁸ In fact, Arendt elaborates, even “the special s.s. units employed in Denmark frequently objected to ‘the measures they were ordered to carry out by the central agencies.’”³⁹ In conclusion, Denmark was “the only case we know of in which the Nazis met with open native resistance,” and “the result seems to have been that those exposed to it changed their minds.”⁴⁰ In other words, the Danish citizens imagined themselves in the Jewish people’s place, and then acted politically on the basis of this reimagining, which managed to inspire even some of the Nazis, also, to reimagine the Jewish people as fully human.

Having thus considered all three thinkers on the dancingly theatrical artwork of peace, I now turn to my final three thinkers in order to explore the poetic discipline of social justice.

Spinoza on “Intuitively”

My first thinker germane to social justice, Spinoza, contributes the “intuitively” adverb to my conception of social justice as “intuitively self-overcoming

34 Arendt, *Eichmann*, 172.

35 Arendt, *Eichmann*, 173.

36 Arendt, *Eichmann*, 173, 174.

37 Arendt, *Eichmann*, 174.

38 Arendt, *Eichmann*, 172.

39 Arendt, *Eichmann*, 173.

40 Arendt, *Eichmann*, 175.

tension.” It is imperative, at the outset, to note that Spinoza introduces a unique, technical definition of “intuition.” To clarify that definition, I will preface my discussion of it with a brief overview of Spinoza’s thought regarding knowledge in general. As I explore in detail elsewhere, for Spinoza, the first kind of knowledge, which he calls “imagination,” is a kind of sense-experience of particulars.⁴¹ The second kind of knowledge, which he calls “understanding,” involves the rational grasp of universals. And the third kind of knowledge, in Spinoza’s words, “proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of some of the attributes of god to an adequate knowledge of the essence of things.”⁴² I will now unpack this difficult quote word by word, and then argue that the medium of poetry constitutes a privileged locus for Spinoza’s intuition. More specifically, I will focus on the subgenre of poetry that is theatrical dramatic poetry, drawing on Hasana Sharp’s feminist analysis of Spinoza on embodiment.⁴³

To begin, an “idea” for Spinoza denotes, not a mental representation or the content of such a representation, but rather “an action of the mind ... involving judgment.”⁴⁴ By an “adequate idea,” in turn, Spinoza means “an idea which, insofar as it is considered in itself without relation to its object, has all the properties, or the extrinsic denominations, of a true idea.”⁴⁵ Adequacy, then, could be paraphrased as truth minus correspondence, or truth that remains at the level of generality, ~~and~~ without any relation to a concrete object. Regarding the second concept in Spinoza’s definition of intuition, namely essence, he describes a being’s essence as that which is distinctive of that type of being, which essence thereby defines said type of being. Spinoza defines the “actual essence”

41 Joshua M. Hall, “Poetic Intuition: Spinoza and Gerard Manley Hopkins,” *Philosophy Today* 57:4 (2013): 401–407.

42 Spinoza, *Ethics*, 149. I will follow the system of citation used by Parkinson in his edition:

“A = Axiom

C = Corollary

D = Definition

DE = Definition of the Emotions (Part 3)

L = Lemma

P = Proposition

s = Scholium

(So, for example, ‘e2p4os2’ refers to *Ethics*, Part 2, Proposition 40, Scholium 2).

43 Hasana Sharp, *Spinoza and the Politics of Renaturalization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 2011.

44 Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Lights, 1988), 52.

45 Spinoza, *Ethics*, e2d4.

of a thing (i.e., a thing's essence as we conceive it) as "the endeavor to persevere in its own being," condensed in the word *conatus*.⁴⁶ And the "formal" of "formal essence" in Spinoza's above definition equates, in contemporary terms, to "reality." Finally from the first half of the above quote, the third concept in Spinoza's definition of intuition, "attribute," he defines elsewhere in the *Ethics* as "that which intellect perceives of substance as constituting its essence."⁴⁷ Since (a) "substance" and "God" are synonymous terms for Spinoza, and (b) human beings can perceive only two of substance/god's infinite attributes (namely, thought and extension), the referent in the above quote of "some of the attributes of God" can only be "thought" and "extension." To paraphrase the first half of Spinoza's definition of intuition, substituting my elaborations for the original terms: intuition is a faculty of knowing that makes an inference or judgment on the basis of an internally consistent, general, and real truth about thought per se or extension per se.

Onward, then, to the second half of Spinoza's definition of intuition. To recall, it proceeds *from* "an adequate idea of the formal essence of some of the attributes of God ..." and *to* "an adequate knowledge of the essence of things." I have observed that adequate knowledge means the same thing as true knowledge, but without reference to the existing entity that is known. And I have noted that the essence of a thing for Spinoza is its *conatus*, its endeavor to persist in its being. As for the last phrase, "things" for Spinoza are what he terms "finite modes."⁴⁸ "Modes" in general for Spinoza are what he terms "affections of substance, or, that which is in something else, through which it is also conceived."⁴⁹ These modes are modifications of substance by way of being modifications of the attributes of substance (which for human knowledge are limited to thought and extension). And "finite modes"—that is, particular things—he describes as "nothing other than the affections, i.e., the modes, of the attributes of God, by which the attributes of God are expressed in a certain and determinate way."⁵⁰ For example, the attribute of extension is one way in which the intellect perceives the essence of substance, and a particular human body is simply one (finite) mode of extension. To paraphrase the second half of Spinoza's definition of intuition, substituting my elaborations for the original

46 Spinoza, *Ethics*, e3p7.

47 Spinoza, *Ethics*, e1d4.

48 G.H.R. Parkinson, "Editor's Introduction," in *Spinoza's Ethics*, ed. and trans. G.H.R. Parkinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 21.

49 Spinoza, *Ethics*, e1d5.

50 Spinoza, *Ethics*, e1p25c.

terms: intuition is a faculty of knowing that infers an internally consistent and general truth about the *conatus* of things.

Condensing the above analyses of both halves of Spinoza's definition, in intuition one arrives at a rationally correct conception of the *conatus* of a thing (i.e., a finite mode) by means of a rationally correct conception of thought or extension. Put differently, if one really understands thought and/or extension in principle, one can thereby infer the essence of a particular thing. Thus, if one understands that thought and extension are the intellect's perception of the essence of god/substance, then one can understand that particular things are conceived by human beings *in terms of* or *by means of* thought and extension. One must know what extension is in order to understand a particular extended thing, and one must know what thought is to understand a particular mental thing.

I will now attempt to flesh out the broader context in which Spinoza deploys this concept of intuition. Spinoza claims that intuition, like understanding, "is necessarily true" and "teaches us to distinguish between the true and the false."⁵¹ He compares intuition to the intuitive grasp of a mathematical formula, which is achieved by considering the relationship among specific numbers plugged into the formula (as opposed to an understanding achieved by calculating the problem using variables). Spinoza also provides a few other scattered clues for understanding his concept of intuition. He describes it as being especially powerful in overcoming the negative effects of the emotions, and as inspiring the intellectual love of God as eternal and infinite.⁵² Further, he claims that to "understand things by the third kind of knowledge" is the "highest endeavor of the mind, and its highest virtue," because "the more we understand things in this way [in their essence, i.e., reality] the more ... we understand God."⁵³ Spinoza describes this understanding as the mind's "power" and "virtue" and "nature" (all of which, for him, are synonymous). Additionally, the more things the mind grasps in this way, the more it wants to grasp things in this way. In such pursuits, Spinoza claims, the mind finds its greatest peace.⁵⁴ Finally in terms of these clues, it is also worth noting that Spinoza regards the mind itself (rather than, say, external things, or god), as the cause of the third kind of knowledge.⁵⁵

51 Spinoza, *Ethics*, e2p41.

52 Spinoza, *Ethics*, e5p20s.

53 Spinoza, *Ethics*, e5p25, e5p25d.

54 Spinoza, *Ethics*, e5p26–27.

55 Spinoza, *Ethics*, e5p31d.

In light of these observations, one possible understanding of intuition is that it consists in a combination of the specificity and concreteness of the first kind of knowledge (“imagination”) with the accuracy and generality of the second kind of knowledge (“understanding”). In other words, through intuition, the universal and the particular are understood through each other. Either thought or extension is grasped through the action of a specific idea. Conversely, a specific idea is enacted by grasping the nature of thought or extension in itself. Above all, it seems central for intuition that the relationship between generality and specificity is affirmed. And nothing, arguably, is more effective at affirming the generality-specificity relationship than language.

On the one hand, via its connection to thinking, language is a property or dimension of thought. On the other hand, via its connection to speech, language is also a property or dimension of extension. Language is thus distinctly capable of affirming, at an intuitive level, Spinoza’s central claim that thought and extension are merely two different ways of representing the same substance. Furthermore, whenever language is used to denote particulars, it brings its nature as a universal medium to bear on those particulars, and thus affirms the resonance between generality (that is, rationality) and specificity (that is, phenomena in the world).

Moreover, this inherent power of language in general as a vehicle for intuition is even greater in poetry in particular. The reason for this is that poetry both utilizes language to describe particular situations, thoughts, feelings, observations, etc., and also manifests language as language. Especially in the subgenre of dramatic poetry, and even more especially when that poetry is performed, poetry foregrounds language’s capacities for affirming the general-specific relationship at the same time as it refers to the phenomena in the world named by the language of the poem.

More precisely, in thinking about poetry, whether reading silently or hearing the actors speaking their poetic lines during a play, one is made aware not only of what the poem is describing about the world but also of the activity of the attribute of thought, or of thought taking place. Similarly, in scanning poetry with one’s eyes, one is aware not only of how the words match up with things in the world but also of how language itself is an extended thing made of ink, a physical spread of words on a page. Finally on this note, when one hears poetry performed, one is made aware not only of the things in the world that the sounds evoke but also of language as itself a physically extended phenomenon, namely sound waves spun from vibrating vocal cords and inhabiting the surrounding air.

To bring this discussion of poetry and intuition back to social justice, intuition is the power that enables us to know each being, including ourselves,

in those beings' relationship to every other being, and to the cosmic whole. Intuition thus shows us that we are all equal insofar as we are all modalities of the cosmos, as thinking and extended things. And dramatically performed poetry in particular has an enormous power to increase and reinforce this knowledge, by making vivid our metaphysical solidarity with all fellow beings (as for example with the Founding Fathers' favorite play, *Cato*).⁵⁶ In this way, poetry can inspire those engaged in the struggle for social justice, by uniting protestors, in voice and mind, in the common cause.

Nietzsche on "Self-Overcoming"

My second thinker illuminative of social justice, Nietzsche, offers the "self-overcoming" adjective to my conception of social justice as "intuitively self-overcoming tension." To repeat, I am not claiming that Nietzsche was an advocate of social justice. Although one could conceivably make the case that he is an advocate for a kind of hierarchized social justice—an unequal treatment appropriate to unequal beings—I will save this analysis for a separate inquiry. My discussion of this concept of self-overcoming will be briefer than those for the other five thinkers, on the assumption that most readers will already be familiar with the concept (given its central importance in Nietzsche's oeuvre).

The fullest exposition of self-overcoming is found in the section bearing that title in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. In addition to the obvious connection between this text and poetry—namely, the fact that *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* belongs in the genre of prose poetry—there is also a significant connection between its section "On Self-Overcoming" and dance, insofar as the latter section appears just pages after another section entitled "The Dance Song." In this dancing section, Nietzsche depicts Zarathustra as briefly joyful and reconciled to life as a result of watching the dance of a group of beautiful young women. Then, in the subsequent section, entitled "The Grave Song" (which immediately precedes the "On Self-Overcoming" section), Zarathustra expresses the melancholy that ensues when the dance ends. "Only in dance," Nietzsche writes, "do I know how to speak the parables of the highest things—and now my highest parable remained unspoken in my limbs!"⁵⁷ What survives this melancholy, however, is Zarathustra's "will," which "wants to walk its course on my feet," because

⁵⁶ Joseph Addison, *Cato: A Tragedy, and Selected Essays*, ed. Christine Dunn Henderson and Mark E. Yellin (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2004).

⁵⁷ Nietzsche, *Spoke Zarathustra*, 87.

“Invulnerable am I only in the heel.”⁵⁸ On this note, Nietzsche transitions to the section titled “On Self-Overcoming.”

“On Self-Overcoming” begins by claiming that the will to truth is actually the will to power in disguise, and then Nietzsche suddenly swerves (or executes a dancing spin) to a discussion of Zarathustra’s own truth-search into the nature of life itself. From this search, Zarathustra claims to have learned the following three things: (1) “All living is an obeying”; (2) “the one who cannot obey himself is commanded”; and (3) “commanding is harder than obeying.” Zarathustra’s inference from these three things, finally, is that all commanding involves “an experiment and a risk.”⁵⁹ For example, Nietzsche writes, “the living” being “must become the judge and avenger and victim of its own law,” and in so doing, this living being “risks—life itself.”⁶⁰

As an apparent reward for having thus boldly experimented with the truth of life, a personification of life grants to Zarathustra the privilege of hearing life’s secret: “I am,” Life says to Zarathustra, “that *which must always overcome itself*.”⁶¹ In order to perform this self-overcoming—and here Nietzsche returns to the metaphor of dance/walking—life must walk on “*crooked paths*.”⁶² Put more concretely, the life within one’s self must oppose even that self’s own creations, along with the love the self feels for its creations. The reason for this necessary opposition, according to Nietzsche, is that life values other things more highly than life. In particular, life values power. In the service of power, Nietzsche concludes the “On Self-Overcoming” section as follows: “And may everything break that can possibly be broken by our truths! Many a house has yet to be built!”⁶³

To translate these insights into the discourse of social justice, those of us who desire it must also desire the increased empowerment of social justice even more than we desire the well-being of our own bodies and lives. From this perspective, these bodies will soon die, and our lives derive a majority of their value from the living force within them (rather than the span of time that we are alive as individuals). Our best, in other words, lies in becoming more than we are. As a result, we can in good conscience encourage ourselves to risk everything that belongs to us as individuals, in a grand experiment for the further empowerment of social justice.

58 Nietzsche, *Spoke Zarathustra*, 87.

59 Nietzsche, *Spoke Zarathustra*, 89.

60 Nietzsche, *Spoke Zarathustra*, 89.

61 Nietzsche, *Spoke Zarathustra*, 89.

62 Nietzsche, *Spoke Zarathustra*, 89.

63 Nietzsche, *Spoke Zarathustra*, 90.

Fanon on "Tension"

The final historical thinker in this chapter, Frantz Fanon, supplies the "tension" noun to my conception of social justice as "intuitively self-overcoming tension." In *Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon describes the embodied oppression of black peoples living under antiblack racism, specifically that of the era of European colonialism. Although his analyses therefore originate with a specific set of historical circumstances, those circumstances were sustained by ideological structures of racism that have survived, albeit in mutated forms, to the present day. From my detailed exploration, elsewhere, of Fanon's analysis, the most relevant portion thereof for the present chapter is his conception of "perpetual muscular tension."⁶⁴

The first indication of this concept appears early in *Wretched of the Earth*, in Fanon's claim that "the dreams of the colonized subject are muscular dreams."⁶⁵ Repressing their rage toward their oppressors, he explains, the oppressed experience a buildup of stress in their very bodies, as a result of which the "muscles of the colonized are always tensed."⁶⁶ Much later, Fanon returns to the issue of muscular tension in his description of the colonized intellectual who "feels he must escape this white culture" by withdrawing from Westernization. The connection to muscular tension is that this movement, according to Fanon, "above all calls to mind a muscular reflex, a muscular contraction." For this reason, the colonized intellectual's style is an "energetic style, alive with rhythms, bursting with life," in preparation for a "swift, painful combat where inevitably the muscle had to replace the concept."⁶⁷

To connect Fanon's insights back to the theatrical art of dance, to be a dancer is to be in constant muscular ready awareness, storing energy in tension to be released in a display of powerful grace or desperate aggression. Such a muscular, physiological awareness is important in the struggle of black persons and communities for genuine equality, as a significant marker or litmus test for the success of that struggle. In this way, dance could be used to foreground the importance of the physical/bodily dimension of being a raced being, as well as the importance of ensuring that theoretical insights can also be applied at the level of concrete human embodiment.⁶⁸

64 Joshua M. Hall, "Revalorized Black Embodiment: Dancing with Fanon," *Journal of Black Studies* 43(3): 2012, 274–288.

65 Fanon, *Wretched*, 15.

66 Fanon, *Wretched*, 16.

67 Fanon, *Wretched*, 80, 84.

68 Given the easy applicability of Fanon's analyses of black embodiment in antiblack racist cultures to the experience of dancers, it is interesting that in the contemporary white

Admittedly, Fanon rarely discusses dance explicitly, including two brief references in *Black Skin, White Masks* and two in *Wretched of the Earth*, and in three of these four references the connotations are intensely pejorative. However, the fourth and final such reference (and the second and final reference in *Wretched of the Earth*) is unequivocally positive, appearing after Fanon's extensive discussion of what he calls "combat literature." To wit, he suggests that dance can be transformed into a kind of combat dance, much like ordinary literature can become combat literature, which prepares the colonized people for political liberation, and contributes to "the new national rhythm" that "drives the nation."⁶⁹ This transformation of cultural and religious dance into combat dance consists, essentially, of integrating contemporary political consciousness into dance artworks, creating dances whose rhythms inspire proud revolt.

In addition to Fanon's brief moment of explicit affirmation of dance, one can also find dance-resonance in Fanon's earlier analyses of "perpetual muscular tension." That is, the phenomenological similarities between dancing embodiment and Fanon's accounts of black embodiment in racist and colonized societies buttress his hopes for combat dance. More specifically, one might be able to channel the constructive and affirmative energy often directed toward dance qua art form into strategies for affirming and improving the lives of disempowered persons of color seeking social justice. Put more concretely, the beauty of tension as embodied by dancers (qua artistic performers) could be imaginatively extended to people of color (qua survivors of racism), for example by encouraging a recognition of tension's potential benefits for the ongoing struggle for social justice.

Recapitulation

Having thus considered these six texts, figures, and aspects—the historical dimension of my conceptions of peace and social justice—one is left with yet

United States, there is a stereotype that black persons are essentially better dancers than white persons. It is also interesting that dancing is generally understood to be the privileged province of other oppressed or disadvantaged groups as well, including women and gay men. Women more than men, alternatively oriented more than exclusively heterosexual, non-Westerners more than Westerners, rural folk more than urbanites, the conventional more than the unconventional, are perceived as being both interested and proficient in dance.

69 Fanon, *Wretched*, 157.

another challenge, namely how to love the agents and vehicles of oppression qua the not-yet-just. To resolve this final tension requires nothing less than real-time political action. Thus, I will close this chapter with a specific suggestion, and an invitation to further public discourse, regarding the fight for gendered social justice today. But first, I will briefly rehearse the insights of this chapter ~~thus far~~.

Overall, I have attempted in this chapter to sketch a new conception of socially-just peace. At a first, conceptual level, I defined social justice as sustainable tranquility through organismic empowerment. The counterintuitive implication of these conceptual analyses is that peace is predominantly external and social, whereas social justice is predominantly internal and individual.

At a second, etymological level, I claimed that peace's sustainable tranquility is based on its being an artificial, artful construction (as in the peace "made" by Jesus of Nazareth's "peacemakers"), while social justice's organismic empowerment is based on its being the disciplined self-restraint of those armed for force (as in the Roman goddess Iustus, who stills her sword until her scales have rendered their verdict). The counterintuitive implication of these etymological analyses is that peace is unnatural and must be continuously created, while social justice requires that the oppressed restrain their own impulses to use violent force (unless this capacity for force has already been denied by their society, as is often the case).

And at a third, historical level, I claimed that (a) peace's sustainable tranquility through artful construction consists of polemical love, to facilitate divine-like generosity, deployed in a thoughtful reimagining of the other; while (b) social justice's organismic empowerment through disciplined self-restraint consists of an intuitively based knowledge of the universal via the particular, utilized to overcome the self in favor of empowerment per se, achieved by turning oppression's tensions against its own forces and institutions. The counterintuitive implication of these historical analyses is that (1) love can be an agonistic struggle, (2) humans can express transcendent generosity by imagining themselves gods, (3) even the worst evils can be reimagined as mere thoughtlessness, (4) universality shines fully through each particular being, (5) life and living beings naturally seek empowerment rather than a mere continuance of living, and (6) the most trivial and complicit movements of artistic expression involve tensions that can nevertheless be repurposed for liberation.

Conclusion: A Contemporary, Feminist Application

One frequently hears various forms of feminism criticized on the grounds that they allegedly constitute a kind of "disturber of the peace"—the sword, if you

will, in the hands of women in our communities. Put differently, many folks on the conservative side of the culture wars claim that men and women are naturally unequal (*qua* different), and thus that feminists' efforts at gendered justice are fundamentally misguided, and ultimately create unnecessary conflicts and tensions within heterosexual relationships, traditional families, etc. What one does not tend to hear, however, are the thoughts of those who occupy a space between the two warring camps, temporarily undecided, and avoiding the question or issue altogether while nevertheless pursuing goals that align with many feminists' goals. The latter include, notably, some race theorists, Marxian theorists, continental philosophers, and others who are independently invested in their work in the exploration of power differentials, but who do not necessarily identify as feminist.

Following Alison Jaggar, I will group the latter individuals under her umbrella term, "non-feminists," to differentiate those individuals from the outright opponents of various forms of feminism (whom Jaggar calls "anti-feminists"). Furthermore, I would argue that my conception of socially-just peace (to repeat, lovingly generous reimagining through *intuitive* self-overcoming tension) could be helpful in advancing Jaggar's strategy. To wit, my conception seems to suggest that, in public discourses regarding feminism and women's rights, it might be strategically beneficial to lovingly generously reimagine the linguistic productions of non-feminists, through intuitively self-overcoming tension, in order to resist cultural violence and promote sustainable tranquility.

Beginning with the above conceptual insights, peace as sustainable tranquility requires a move beyond a kind of civil war between roughly equal numbers of feminists and anti-feminists, which might be accomplished by offering non-feminists a more comfortable pathway to the feminist camp. And the organismic empowerment here involves empowering non-feminists to both express their current, controversial views openly, and also benefit from the information and education that we, as feminists, can provide them in the course of such conversations.

From the above etymological insights, if peace is an artificial construction, then we cannot simply wait for nature to take its course and establish peace between feminists and anti-feminists. Instead, we must use our creativity and imagination to see non-feminists differently, so they can learn to see themselves in a different way that is more consonant with our struggles for gendered justice. And if social justice is the self-restraint of our capacities for force, then we must resist the urge to merely condemn or "shout down" anyone who is not already an avowed feminist, and instead give those who occupy more complex—and potentially coalition-friendly—positions to participate in a substantive conversation, with less fear on the non-feminists' part of being silenced and demonized.

Finally, from the above historical insights, peace appears to require a striving, combative love for non-feminists, in order to fuel a seemingly divine degree of generosity (in the form of patience and the benefit of the doubt), and all in the service of reimagining non-feminists as potential allies rather than enemies. Social justice, complementarily, appears to require seeing feminists' spirit of gendered justice hidden within non-feminists. This could help us bracket our defensive self-labeling, and facilitate intensified life within our potential allies (and between us and them). And this, in turn, could channel the tensions of our potential allies' distrust, confusion, and skepticism into a more dynamic readiness to help fight for gendered justice.

In closing, I ask that the reader please join me in lovingly (with King), and generously (Aurelius), reimagining (Arendt), by channeling our intuitively (Spinoza) self-overcoming (Nietzsche) tension (Fanon), our non-feminist others. In so doing, we can cocreate the artwork that is socially just peace.

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