# Leibniz on War and Peace and the Common Good

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## Abstract

Leibniz’s theodicy recognised no difference between natural evils and the ‘crimes and misfortunes,’ as Bayle termed them, of mankind. All evils are seen as either indirect consequences of the benevolent order of nature or as tending to the greater good in the long run. Setting them against the background of ancient and Enlightenment theories of just war, this essay explores Leibniz’s complex attitude towards war and peace and the relationship between his metaphysical image of order, harmony, and inviolable individuality, and a political reality of conflict and aggression.

There is extant a book about the destruction of men, by Dicaearchus, a distinguished and eloquent Peripatetic, who, after enumerating other causes, such as floods, pestilence, perils of the desert, attacks by wild beasts […] then shows by comparison how many more men have been exterminated by the violence of men, that is, by wars or seditions, than by all other forms of calamity.[[1]](#footnote-2)

## I. Human Destruction and the Common Good

The concept of the ‘common good’ that is the theme of this Congress resonates widely with us in a period in which hostilities between nations, civil war, and terrorism once again dominate in the news.

Leibniz presents us with some challenges in this regard. Metaphysically, the Leibniz-world consists of living, sensing, appetitive individuals that perceive and respond to everything that happens to create a condition of universal harmony. Their characteristics and efforts are thought to realise – to bring into phenomenal reality – the world that is the best possible. Everything that happens in the phenomenal world flows from this metaphysical perfection, as time takes us towards greater and greater improvement in the transformation of chaos and disorder into order and beauty.

“Who does not see that these disorders have served to bring things to the point where they now are, that we owe to them our riches and our comforts, and that through their agency, this globe became fit for cultivation by us […].”[[2]](#footnote-3)

Leibniz regarded the metaphysical image as a bulwark against moral and political pessimism, as furnishing an incentive to make things better than they were, and his vision has long been regarded as a kind of guiding model or template for a pacific and generous world, in which individual are unimpeded by pressures from other individuals, in which all forms of life are valued, and plenitude and diversity are welcomed.[[3]](#footnote-4) At the same time, every student of Leibniz is aware of the mixed reaction to his optimism, which appeared to other philosophers an absurd and even pernicious delusion. Natural disasters such as earthquakes and failed harvests might be regarded as inevitable given the laws of nature, so friendly to humanity in other respects, but even the wider cultivation of the globe and the spread of commerce did not establish that our species was on an upward trajectory. Pierre Bayle famously described history as “no other than a collection of the crimes and misfortunes of mankind,” suggesting that good and evil will alternate forever as the Manichaeans taught.[[4]](#footnote-5) The evils occurring on a regular basis in Voltaire’s satire *Candide* (1759) are not hail, frost, and the misbegotten, but human slaughter, which Voltaire described graphically.[[5]](#footnote-6)

Leibniz rejected the view that human-made evils should be regarded differently than natural evils.

“M. Bayle will say that there is a difference between … disorder in inanimate things, which is purely metaphysics, and a disorder in rational creatures, which is composed of crime and suffering. He is right in making a distinction between them, and I am right in combining them.”[[6]](#footnote-7)

It seems to follow that for any horror or sadness of human making you consider, whether it involves genocide, or exploitation, or any form of immiseration, the implication is, had all this not happened, the world would be less perfect than it is, and this thought is not acceptable to the contemporary observer any more than it was to Bayle.

But are we really being fair to Leibniz, you will rightly protest, in bringing forward such old accusations against his *Theodicy*? What about Leibniz’s passionate wish to reunify the churches, to put an end forever to the religious divisions that spawned or at least fuelled and sustained such horrific conflicts as the Thirty Year’s War? What about his passionate desire to bring peace and stability to Europe by promoting a theology Protestants and Catholics could agree on, and by arresting the depredations of Louis XIV? We cannot imagine Leibniz approving of such goings on as Voltaire invents in his fable. His bitter and emotional essay, *Mars Christianissimus,* refers to

“the thousands immolated by iron, by hunger and by miseries, only so that they have some cause to write on the gates of Paris the name of Louis the Great in letters of gold.” What greater crime, Leibniz asks in this connection, “can one conceive than to be responsible for all the evils of Christendom, for so much innocent blood spilled, for outrageous actions, for the curses of the miserable, for the moans of the dying, and lastly for the tears of widows and of orphans which rise to pierce heaven, and which will move God sooner or later to vengeance.”[[7]](#footnote-8)

Recent scholarship has, moreover, revealed to us the benevolent aspects of Leibniz’s applied philosophy. We have been made increasingly aware of his utilitarian projects, his desire for natural and social scientific investigation to be applied to inventions and discoveries for the good of all. Following his recent biographer, we could mention Leibniz’s hopes and plans for the reform of the imperial constitution, the reorganization of the legal system, state supported schools, vocational training, poverty-reduction, health improvement, pensions, and life insurance.[[8]](#footnote-9) The universal language, the reform of jurisprudence, and the advancement of pure and applied science and mathematics, were to have as their beneficiaries specifically those deprived of resources, opportunities, and justice.[[9]](#footnote-10)

“One must”, Leibniz said, “furnish the poor with the means of earning their livelihood, not only by using charity and charitable foundations to this end, but also by taking an interest in agriculture, buy furnishing to artisans materials and a market, by educating them to make their productions better, and finally by putting an end to idleness and abusive practice in manufactures and in commerce.”[[10]](#footnote-11)

In metaethics, Leibniz argues that justice requires not only that one forebear from harming others or giving them cause for complaint; justice requires helping them by seeking their good and preventing evil when doing so is not too difficult.[[11]](#footnote-12) This is the principle that Schopenhauer describes as “the fundamental proposition concerning whose purport all teachers of ethics are *really* in agreement: *neminem laede, imo omnes, quantum potes, juva*.” [Injure no one; on the contrary, help everyone as much as you can.] Leibniz may be said to have anticipated the universalist insights of Kant, Pareto, and Rawls in replacing the injunction to do unto others as you would have them do unto you with the injunction to “Put yourself in the place of another, and you will have the true point of view for judging what is just or not.” By this Leibniz meant: Imagine that all who would be affected by your proposal are “well-informed and enlightened,” and ask yourself, will they approve it or not? Although it is “impossible to act so that the whole world is content,’ the affected ones can be made as content as possible.”[[12]](#footnote-13) Leibniz’s statement in the letter to Peter the Great of Russia,

“I am not one of those impassioned patriots of one country alone, but I work for the well-being of the whole of mankind, for I consider heaven as my country and cultivated men as my compatriots”[[13]](#footnote-14)

seems to capture the impartiality and generosity that lie at the heart of true morality.

In his concrete, applied thinking, however, Leibniz was not a believer in the fundamental equality of human beings, in the sense of valuing all human ways of life, or taking servitude to be an unnatural and fundamentally wrong arrangement. Nor was he averse to harming people by killing them if the common good could be thereby advanced. We should not be too surprised by this because the fundamental ethical principle *neminem laede*, even if we take *neminem* literally, as applying only to individual members of the species *homo sapiens*, not to animals, landscapes, languages, and so on, has almost always been regard as subject to three main categories of exceptions. First, the extension of the terms ‘people’ or ‘persons’ is determined by the cultural context and the beliefs of those who use the term. Outsiders, ‘barbarians,’ and slaves are human beings who, in many contexts, are not considered people, and it was long considered permissible to hurt them, along with children and wives thought to require discipline. Second, punitive actions such as the persecution of heretics, or in our time, imprisonment under harsh conditions, have been permitted or demanded on the grounds that they are for the victim’s own good. Third, it is generally accepted that we may harm one person or some people in order to bring about a better overall situation for others.

Arguments in favour of so-called just or legal warfare have traditionally appeal ed, tacitly or explicitly to each of these categories of exceptions. The people we are allowed to hurt or kill may be seen as having never had or as having lost their entitlement to be called human; it is thought that they or their village and cities may be destroyed allegedly in order to prevent them carrying out further damnable acts; and their sacrifice may be said to be entailed by some argument proceeding from the notion of the greater good – making the world safe, halting atrocities, or just facilitating commerce or profit making or ideological control. In all such cases it is said either that what looks like harm is not really harm or that it is justified.

Leibniz employed versions of all these exceptions to the *neminem laede* principle, And although we can all agree that there must be some such exceptions, his understanding of the well-being of the whole of mankind was different to the range of views we would consider presentable – even if contentious – today. In what follows I regret to have to summarize for you a number of his less sympathetic views. This will be painful for his most devoted admirers, but I must ask them to bear with me until the end, for there are important conclusions to be drawn from this cheerless exercise. We cannot change what we do not understand, and the present state of conflict calls for understanding and change. My paper is accordingly directed, on one hand, to understanding a positive vision we can no longer share with Leibniz, and, on the other to exploring a positive vision we can share with him and that we also need to understand better. The vision we cannot share with him is that of a fully Christianised world, improved by being cleansed of ‘barbarians’ and pacified by military means. The vision we can share with him is one in which educational resources, above and beyond economic help, are furnished to those who lack them, and in which scientific knowledge is applied principally to the reduction of harm and deprivation, only secondarily to create, stimulate and satisfy desires; and where the motive of charity rather than the motive of profit furnishes the principal incentive. The world we live in today is not a Leibniz-world.

## II. Ancient Greek and Judaeo-Christian War Theory

Before going on to discuss Leibniz’s views on war and peace, subordination and equality, I want to provide some background on the philosophical and religious traditions of Western philosophy with its mixed Judaeo-Christian and Greek heritage.

The ambivalence with which human beings have always regarded kingship and warfare is evident in certain biblical passages. In 1 Samuel 8, God is reluctant to let Samuel cede to the demand of the Israelites for a king, predicting that they will not like it. God tells him to communicate to them that their sons will be pressed into running before the king’s chariots, their daughters into producing luxuries, and they themselves into slavery, and that a king will choose favorites and despoil others to reward them. But the Israelites insist that they want to ‘be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles,’ and they get their wish. The same skeptical God who warns against the military state commands slaughter and predation, such as the massacre of the adult Midianites, men and women, for their impiety, preserving only the virgin girls for sex slavery. “[T]hey burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles, with fire.” [[14]](#footnote-15)

The ‘cult of frightfulness’ was widespread in ancient civilisations, and it did occasion protest.[[15]](#footnote-16) The fifth century BCE Greek historian Herodotus described the atrocities he supposed to have been perpetrated by the Persian king Cambyses with evident horror, and Thucydides lamented warfare and the destruction of the Athenian civil order. The connection between war and luxury was noted.[[16]](#footnote-17) The ancients recognized that wars are often irrational or proceed from small provocations, a recognition expressed in archaic literature by making the personal rivalries of the Gods, anthropomorphically conceived, triggers of war, which they bring about by manipulating human emotions. The fact that victory is determined ‘by luck, or superiority of numbers, or strength or resources, or by advantage of position, or excellence of allies, or skill on the part of a general’ – by everything but the moral superiority of the cause – is suavely noted by Aristotle,[[17]](#footnote-18) but nothing is made of this glaring *reductio ad absurdum* of the moral usefulness of warfare in determining whose cause is just. The preeminent Greek philosophical position is based on a number of premises that seem to us moderns remarkably complacent.

The two ancient philosophers most esteemed and studied in later periods – Plato and Aristotle – took war for granted as an inevitable fact of human social existence. In their texts, there is a remarkable discrepancy between strife as it is conceptualized for the private domain and as it is conceptualised in relation to territory. Plato mentions the word or words translated as ‘love’ 753 times in his *Complete Works,* but ‘hate’ and ‘strife’ only 86 times. Aristotle mentions ‘love’ 178 times, and ‘hate’ and ‘strife’ 50. On the territorial scale, however, the proportions are dramatically reversed. There are 454 references to ‘war’ in Plato vs. 174 to ‘peace’; 137 references to ‘war’ in Aristotle vs. 31 to ‘peace.’ In personal relations, human affection is the more salient phenomenon to the philosophers; in relations with strangers, enmity dominates. This observation is in accord with what ethnologists tell us. In the absence of special ethical teaching, human beings are mostly kind and accommodating to friends and relatives, but fearful of and hostile towards strangers and foreigners.[[18]](#footnote-19) Or at least, they can be trained to hate the outside more easily than they can be trained to love him.

For Plato, in the ideal Republic, young children are to be “led into war on horseback as observers and […] wherever it is safe to do so, they should be brought close and taste blood, like puppies.” Those who enjoy war and do well at it, he continues, “are to be subscribed on a list” for future training.[[19]](#footnote-20) The conventions of war do not prescribe mercy to captives any more than the Old Testament requires for its human prey. “Shouldn’t anyone who is captured alive be left to his captors as a gift to do with as they wish?” “Absolutely.”[[20]](#footnote-21) For ancient authors, soldiering is a just one more occupation. A city needs shoemakers, confectioners, and also soldiers.

“Of the common people,” says Aristotle, who also recognizes piracy and brigandage as occupations, “one class are farmers, another artisans; another traders, who are employed in buying and selling; another are the sea-faring class, whether engaged in war or in trade, as ferrymen or as fishermen.”[[21]](#footnote-22)

A community must have soldiers “if the country is not to be the slave of every invader.”[[22]](#footnote-23) The scientific and the social are linked, in that warfare is the necessary conditions of the contemplative, scientific life, which is the opposite of slavery.

In the *History of Animals* Book IX, Aristotle describes the wars between various species of animals, such as snakes and roosters, establishing the omnipresence of such hostilities in nature. Where humans are concerned, because nature makes nothing in vain,

“[T]he art of war is a natural art of acquisition, for the art of acquisition includes hunting, an art which we ought to practise against wild beasts, and against men who, though intended by nature to be governed, will not submit; for war of such a kind is naturally just.”[[23]](#footnote-24)

The purpose of small scale war is the capture of those who deserve to be slaves, and the acquisition of empire is “for the good of the governed.”[[24]](#footnote-25) In his *Rhetoric to Alexander*, Aristotle addresses the important topic of persuasion, in a way that makes disturbingly clear the problem of the relationship between rhetoric and reasoned argument. He lists a set of standard arguments for rousing emotions and persuading a group either to go to war or not to go to war, depending on the outcome the speaker desires.

“If […] you collect from amongst all these and similar arguments those which are most applicable to the circumstances”, he says, “you will have no lack of material for speaking about peace and war.”[[25]](#footnote-26)

Yet, Aristotle confesses to some philosophical bemusement. In the *Politics*, he condemns the Spartans for being able to do no more than fight and for mismanaging the revenues of their state and impoverishing it.[[26]](#footnote-27) The *Nicomachean* *Ethics* describes the function of war as the promotion of peace, apparently denying that anybody enjoys it.

“We are busy that we may have leisure, and make war that we may live in peace. The activity of the practical excellences is exhibited in political or military affairs, but the actions concerned with these seem to be unleisurely. Warlike actions are completely so (for no one chooses to be at war, or provokes war, for the sake of being at war; any one would seem absolutely murderous if he were to make enemies of his friends in order to bring about battle and slaughter).”[[27]](#footnote-28) “Facts, as well as arguments, prove that the legislator should direct all his military and other measures to the provision of leisure and the establishment of peace.”[[28]](#footnote-29)

Western philosophy beginning with the Greeks has accordingly taken the following positions on warfare. First, preparation for and participation in war is a normal and needful human occupation. Second, it is glorious and virtuous, affording opportunities for the display of manliness, strength, courage, and self-sacrifice. As Aristotle says, “political and military actions are distinguished by nobility and greatness.”[[29]](#footnote-30) Third, it can enrich the wealth and prestige of the nation and can be good for the conquered. Fourth, even if you were to dispute the truth or moral relevance of those propositions, war is absolutely inevitable since, as Thucydides ruefully pointed out

“the nature of man is wont even against law to do evil’ and the horrors of war ‘have been before and shall be as long as human nature is the same.”[[30]](#footnote-31)

Fifth, nevertheless, there is much that seems wrong about war.

How could Christianity have absorbed the pagan ideology? Passivity and endurance in the face of aggression, the reinvention of monotheism as irrelevant to geopolitical concerns, and the absolute rejection of Old Testament militarism are, one might point out, the chief moral lessons the New Testament sought to inculcate. It has been argued that it was only with the rise of the Byzantine empire headed by the convert Constantine that

“the essentially subversive quality of Christian pacifism became an embarrassment […] From St Augustine of Hippo to the present, Christian thinkers have sought a way to balance the dictates of their faith with the realities of a coercive and violent world, distilled surprisingly early in just-war theology.”[[31]](#footnote-32)

There is scant evidence for pacifism, as opposed to a distaste for heathen military glory and its trappings, amongst the Fathers of the Early Church.[[32]](#footnote-33) In any case, according to the great historian of warfare, Michael Howard,

“the medieval order, as it developed in Europe between the eighth and the eighteenth centuries, was largely a matter of a successful symbiosis between the ruling warrior class that provided order and the clerisy that legitimized it.”[[33]](#footnote-34)

Despite his equation of empire with brigandage,[[34]](#footnote-35) Augustine was compelled to fit war into a providential framework:

“Godʼs providence”, he states, “constantly uses war to correct and chasten the corrupt morals of mankind, as it also uses such afflictions to train men in a righteous and laudable way of life, removing to a better state those whose life is approved, or else keeping them in this world for further service.”[[35]](#footnote-36)

From a secular point of view, the proposition that Christians could serve in war and make war seemed to follow from the notion of goodness and justice itself, as some of Aristotle’s remarks indicated. As the natural lawyer Francisco de Vitoria argued, one of many proofs of the legality of warfare

“[…] comes from the end and aim and good of the whole world. For there would be no condition of happiness for the world, nay, its condition would be one of utter misery, if oppressors and robbers and plunderers could with impunity commit their crimes and oppress the good and innocent, and these latter could not in turn retaliate on them.”[[36]](#footnote-37)

Hugo Grotius’s answer to the question “Whether it is ever lawful to wage war”, posed in Chapter II, Section I of his *Laws of War and Peace,* presents arguments for the positive case from nature, history, the *consensus omnium*, and scripture. He is momentarily held up by Christ’s command to forget the *lex talionis* and to ‘Resist not him that is evil.’

“From this some infer”, Grotius observes, “that no injury ought to be warded off, or made the subject of a demand for requital, whether as a public or a private matter. And yet”, he continues, “that is not the meaning of the words [...]. Christ [...] is not treating of injuries in general but of a specific sort of injury, such as a slap on the cheek.”[[37]](#footnote-38)

His aim, like that of all just war theorists, is not to abolish warfare, but to control its excesses.

“I have seen a wantonness in warfare among Christians which would be shameful even among barbarians; I have seen men run to arms for frivolous or nonexistent reasons, and having taken them up, who have no reverence for divine or human law, as if at a world their fury had been unleashed and they were capable of any crime.”[[38]](#footnote-39)

## III. Leibniz and the Early Moderns on Slaves, ‘Barbarians,’ and Conquest

There appears to be no direct expression in Leibniz’s writings of the view that peace is enervating, or warfare sublime, or that warfare is an aspect of the drive towards perfection, sentiments that can be found in later writers such as Johann Valentin Embser,[[39]](#footnote-40) Immanuel Kant,[[40]](#footnote-41) and G. F. Hegel,[[41]](#footnote-42) who promulgated a secularised version of the concept of redemptive warfare. Nevertheless, as courtier, lawyer, and theist, Leibniz had no doctrinal or personal basis of resistance to the understanding of warfare as inevitable and, when directed against the infidel or ‘barbarian,’ as ‘just.’

Leibniz rejected Grotius’s dictum that the laws of war and peace

“would be relevant even if we were to suppose what we cannot suppose without the greatest wickedness) that there is no God, or that human affairs are of no concern to him.”[[42]](#footnote-43)

Nor did he accept Pufendorf’s claim that, despite the yearning of the human heart for immortality, and despite the widespread conviction, supported by revelation alone, that life is eternal and that punishment and reward follow in the afterlife,

“the scope of the discipline of natural law is confined within the orbit of this life, and […] forms man on the assumption that he is to lead this life in society with others.”[[43]](#footnote-44)

The secularisation of legal theory, Leibniz says, would mean “cutting off the best part of the science [of law], and suppressing many duties as well.”[[44]](#footnote-45) Like John Locke, he doubted that any internal motivation such as the love of virtue for its own sake could reliably produce good conduct. External motivators like the Hobbesian sovereign were insupportable alternatives, usurping the function of God, who alone deserves our absolute obedience, and destroying the balance of powers that Leibniz considered the real source of political stability.

For Leibniz, the good and the right are acknowledged and commanded by God and cannot be extrapolated from empirical observation of human society and reflection thereupon. By contrast, on the approach of Grotius and Pufendorf, we are impelled into society by our shared needs and our common natural sociability, and the law recruits this sentiment and makes co-existence easier.[[45]](#footnote-46) “Human nature itself is the mother of natural law.”[[46]](#footnote-47) For Hobbes, who stands the sociability argument on its head, it is still human nature that makes the law; we are impelled by the fearsome natural right of appropriation amongst equals in the state of nature; the law recruits our fear and protects us.

Hierarchy and domination, rather than contracts between equals, are built in to Leibniz’s metaphysics, with the superiority and inferiority of individuals determined along a number of parameters. Clarity of perception, associated with the possession of sensory organs, differentiates sentient beings from slumbering monads, and there are infinite gradations between human perception, cognition, and agency and that of God, at least in other possible worlds, if not actually. The soul is described as a ‘dominant monad,’ responsible for the co-operation of the bodily organs to sustain life.[[47]](#footnote-48) It has been vigorously argued that the metaphysical concepts of hierarchy and domination are compatible with a commitment to human equality in Leibniz, insofar as he recognises that all people are descended from a common stock and are rational and to some extent educable.[[48]](#footnote-49) However, the positive assertion of fundamental equality to be found in Hobbes and Pufendorf[[49]](#footnote-50) is conspicuously lacking in Leibniz, and there are numerous positive assertions to the contrary.[[50]](#footnote-51) As Carl Friedrich rightly remarks, Leibniz was a “believer in a natural aristocracy of the talented,”[[51]](#footnote-52) though his dislike for the common man “is really a dislike for the common in man.”[[52]](#footnote-53)

It is important not to caricature and to give moral credit where it is due. While Pufendorf appears to treat the relationship of wife to husband as comparable to that of slave and master, child and parent, relationships that in his view imply mutual if tacit consent for mutual benefit, Leibniz more appealingly describes the society of man and wife as one of ‘unlimited equality,’ like that between ‘true friends’ or between parents and grown children.[[53]](#footnote-54) But on the question of slavery he rejects the contractualist re-analysis of Pufendorf in favour of the traditional Aristotelian account. For Pufendorf, legal slavery must imply a contract in which mutual needs are satisfied; the slave, recognising his poverty or lack of intelligence, commits his labour to the master, who in turn promises him lifelong sustenance – this presumably even when the slave is too old to work. The slave cannot be sold against his will to anyone else or abused in any way.[[54]](#footnote-55)

Leibniz, for his part, expresses some reserve over theory of natural slavery. He insists that it cannot be right to say that there are natural slaves, who exist solely for the sake of the master. It is only cattle who can be thought to fall into this category, beings existing solely for our use. And, unlike Philo and St. Paul who asserted that slavery was permissible because only the body of the slave was subordinated, while the mind remained free (and enslaved only by its own vices and passions),[[55]](#footnote-56) Leibniz insisted that both souls and bodies belong to God, not to the temporal master. This puts limits on what one can do to a slave; perfect servitude, as in late Roman law, in which the master possessed all rights over the slave’s body, including sexual usage and any form of punishment and torture,[[56]](#footnote-57) is impossible, and slavery “in all its sharpness” is wrong. One may not make a slave “bad or unhappy.” Further, all humans, even those who appear to lack understanding and initiative, are capable of acquiring understanding and happiness – and perhaps, the suggestion is, they will, “especially because” souls are immortal.[[57]](#footnote-58) Slavery is contingent and temporary, but only because life is eternal. And even if the servitude of the dumb, uneducable animals does not apply to humans, “there is still something which is similar and comes close to it, which is sometimes conformable to nature.”[[58]](#footnote-59)

The common good was accordingly widely agreed in the 17th century to be compatible with natural or contractual slavery. In addition, it justified the brutal handling of the ‘barbarian’ world outside of Christian Europe. The Chinese were excepted because they were in Leibniz’s view civilised and ethical, and they did not pose a threat to Europe.[[59]](#footnote-60) Although as Ian Almond has shown, Leibniz’s attitude to the Muslim world incorporated moments of real scientific and philological curiosity and became less panicked after the end of the war between the Ottomans and the Holy League of Austria, Poland and Venice in 1699, in his prime he maintained a crusading and conquistadorial outlook. [[60]](#footnote-61) Not only did the threat of an Ottoman takeover of Europe have to be met, but the infidel had to be converted and the barbarian civilised, and this meant invasion, not conciliation. If Leibniz had hoped that his metaphysics could bring peace by bridging the divisions between Protestants and Catholics, there was no such hope in the case of Christianity and Islam, or Europeans and native people, whose barbarism made this impossible. They could however be used. In an alarming note, “A Method for Instituting a New, Invincible Militia That Can Subjugate the Entire Earth, Easily Seize Control over Egypt, or Establish American Colonies,” the youthful Leibniz of 1671 proposed ejecting the population from “certain island of Africa, such as Madagascar.”

“To this island slaves captured from all over the barbarian world will be brought, and from all of the wild coastal regions of Africa, Arabia, New Guinea, etc. To this end Ethiopians, Nigritians, Angolans, Caribbeans, Canadians, and Hurons fit the bill, without discrimination. What a lovely bunch of semi-beasts! But so that this mass of men may be shaped in any way desired, it is useful only to take boys up to around the age of twelve, as this is better than [attempting to] transform girls and adults.”[[61]](#footnote-62)

In this scenario, they are put through rigourous physical training enabling them to topple even European fortifications and then set loose on the world.

The theme of the *Mars Christianissimus* of 1683 is that the slaughter of Christians by Christians is unacceptable and that French aggression would be better directed towards the ‘Turk.’ The ‘Egyptian Plan’ of a decade earlier, to which Leibniz hoped to persuade Louis XIV had a similar aim. Thus the first principle of exception to *neminem laede*: the others are not altogether human, is invoked along with the third principle of the general good. Wars, Leibniz says, “should not be waged on men but on beasts (that is, barbarians)” to tame them […]. “If the most rigid censor of inner conscience should pass judgement he would not only approve but even order [a holy] war.”[[62]](#footnote-63) For Bacon has shown that “a war (having the greatest efficacy) for promoting culture and religion among barbarians is just.” Its aim should not be extermination or servitude but “wisdom and happiness and the emendation of human kind.” The success of the Egyptian Plan would be the first step towards “expansion without limit, towards expansion on the scale of Alexander the great; thus the Gospel would be carried to the most distant region with happiness filling the whole earth.” Austria would then dominate the East, France the West.[[63]](#footnote-64) The ‘holy war’ undertaken by a unified Christian Europe would not only put an end to barbarism and save souls. It would effectively strike at Dutch commercial dominance and achieve control of the Mediterranean for France.[[64]](#footnote-65)

Leibniz’s *Caesarinus Fuerstenerius* of 1677 invokes a scheme combining theocracy, directed inwards to European conciliation and outwards towards barbarian elimination, with autonomy for individual princes, whose hands, he thinks, must not be tied in administering domestic affairs. According to this scheme, there is a supreme commander, a Caesar,

“the born leader of the Christians against the infidels: it is mainly for him to destroy schisms […] to maintain good order, in short to act through the authority of his position to that the Church and the Republic and Christendom suffer no harm.”[[65]](#footnote-66)

Over and over, then, we encounter in Leibniz’s early writings the view that the unification of the Christian churches is an enabling condition of waging war effectively against the threat of Islam.

To summarise, Leibniz’s value system in the realm of real politics is elitist, nationalistic,[[66]](#footnote-67) and decentralised, and, at the same time, charitable and aspirational. His views on distributive justice correspond in many respects to Grotius’s: we should reward the “more intelligent” over than the “less intelligent,” value our neighbours over strangers, and assist the poor and needy.[[67]](#footnote-68)

## IV. The ‘System of War’ and its Critics

Opposition to warfare in general, as a survey of ancient political philosophy indicates, and to holy war in particular, is scarce and sporadic in Western philosophical and theological writings. Erasmus is one of the very rare pre-modern critics of warfare, seeing it as an institution detrimental to the common good as disruptive, expensive, and encouraging of the worst human tendencies.[[68]](#footnote-69) His *Querela Pacis* is an indictment of the irrationality, expense, and futility of warfare; he regards kings as ordinary humans, petty, vindictive, and spoiling for a fight, rather than as God’s chosen agents. [[69]](#footnote-70) The Turk, Erasmus says, is

“our brother,” and better allured by “gentle, kind, and friendly treatment […] than by attacking him with the drawn sword, as if he were a savage brute, without a heart to feel, or a reasoning faculty to be persuaded,’ and only peace can open ‘universal intercourse among mankind.”[[70]](#footnote-71)

However, Erasmus, like Leibniz, was most dismayed by the warfare of Christians with Christians.

“If we must of necessity go to war […]. It is certainly a lesser evil to contend with an infidel, than that Christians should mutually harass and destroy their own fraternity.”[[71]](#footnote-72)

Erasmus’s works landed on the Index of prohibited books, and new moral-theological justifications for military conquest outside of Europe were added in the era and the Spanish conquest of the New World. These drew on philosophical-theological sources, including the Old Testament story of the invitees who refused the King’s invitation to his son’s wedding and murdered his emissaries, and who were justly destroyed along with their city in retaliation;[[72]](#footnote-73) Christ’s declaration that he came not to bring peace but a sword and division;[[73]](#footnote-74) and Aristotle’s theories of war and slavery. Yet, within the just war philosophical tradition, ‘holy war’ was a contested concept. In the argument between Bartolemeo de las Casas and Bishop Sepulveda in 1550–51, the latter invoked the notion of natural superiority and the “for their own good” argument, describing the inhabitants of the New World as barbaric, illiterate, ignorant, unreasoning, vicious, cruel and impious, while las Casas defended their intelligence, culture, and rationality. The latter did however refer to “Turks and Moors” as the “truly barbaric scum of the nations.”[[74]](#footnote-75)

Scholars are divided over whether the natural lawyers of the early modern period were more concerned to consolidate European identity and to legitimate warfare and empire or to hold the actions of princes to standards of religious and moral accountability.[[75]](#footnote-76) The emphasis varies from one author to another, but the lawyers are concerned to enunciate the exceptions they believe appropriate to the tacitly accepted principle of *neminem laede*, discouraging excesses, and emphasising the priority of the universal natural law over the limited religious authority of the Pope and the temporal authority of rulers. So Francisco de Vitoria argued in lectures published as *De Indis De Jure Bellis* of 1557, and known to Leibniz, that Christians had no right to invade, dispossess and enslave non Christians in the Americas on the grounds that they were heretics, atheists or idolaters, or on account of their sexual practices. He defended only the right of foreigners to travel in their lands without being molested, to trade, and to carry off gold and silver. They were allowed to preach the Gospel and to make everyone listen, though not to force its acceptance.[[76]](#footnote-77) The natives could be justly killed if they refused to offer hospitality in this regard.

The purpose of civil society, said Leibniz’s most famous follower, Christian Wolff, nearly two centuries later in his *Jus gentium* (1749) is “to give mutual assistance in perfecting itself and its condition, consequently the promotion of the common good by its combined powers.”[[77]](#footnote-78) Although Leibniz would surely have subscribed to this formula, Wolff’s departures from Leibnizian political theory were significant. Wolff regarded nations as “free individual persons living in a state of nature,”[[78]](#footnote-79) and so as morally required by the law of nature to assist one another in promoting the good universally. He insisted that Christ’s injunction to love your enemies was to be taken seriously as the “best interpreter of law of nature” and as corrective of the earlier “absurd belief” that, he says, “has obsessed so many that we should love our friends and pursue our enemies with hatred.”[[79]](#footnote-80) War must be waged without hatred; otherwise war would not be allowable, for love and affection to others is an “absolutely unchangeable” natural obligation. Love of enemies may be rare, he concedes, – it is not a doctrine for the crowd – but it should be taught insofar as “some may at least perform their duties if they know them.”[[80]](#footnote-81) Thus,

“every nation ought to love and cherish every other nation as itself, even though it be an enemy. […] Every nation ought to have the fixed and lasting desire to promote the happiness of other nations and to do all it can to make them happy and avoid making them unhappy.”[[81]](#footnote-82)

Holy war was incompatible with that duty.

Foreign nations, Wolff thought, may not be punished for wickedness, violations of the laws of nature, or offences against God.[[82]](#footnote-83) Evil is not punishable by itself, and atheism, deism and idolatry are not just causes for war; certain things, he says, must just be endured.[[83]](#footnote-84) For Wolff, a learned and cultivated people have an obligation to improve the others – but not by coercion: “barbarism and uncultivated manners give you no right against [another] nation.”[[84]](#footnote-85) He denies that utility is a legal justification for war, excluding as just causes or rationales “increase in power, desire for fame, passion of vengeance, and display of strength.”[[85]](#footnote-86) Fear of a neighbour is not a just cause, nor is their building of fortifications or their preparing for war.[[86]](#footnote-87) Only injury, occurrent or predicted on the basis of strong evidence, by another nation, is a justifying reason.[[87]](#footnote-88)

The condition of waging war with your beloved enemy puts considerable strain on Wolff’s purportedly mathematically rigorous treatment of the law of peoples, insofar as love does not preclude assassinating the enemy’s leaders, burning their crops, fields, houses and orchards, poisoning them (though not their springs), or pillaging their cities and villages to recoup damages, though not raping their women.[[88]](#footnote-89) Throughout the text, we witness Wolff’s well-meaning attempts to balance his belief in the superiority of Christian nations with a tolerance for ‘barbarism’ and to balance his ideals of universal sociability and mutual aid with the need to react with effective force against aggressors.

Although Hobbes is not usually seen as Erasmus’s pacifist successor, this issue deserves to be rethought, for he strongly promoted the advantages of the peace dividend, the possibility of living “securely, happily, elegantly.”[[89]](#footnote-90) He seems to have derived his notion of the “war of all against all,” not primarily from his observation of individual behaviour, but from his knowledge of group vs. group belligerence: the reported conduct of the “savages” in North America, of the Athenians according to Thucydides; of early humans as imagined by Lucretius; and from the civil wars in Britain and the distubances of the continent. Hobbes notes that there is constant readiness for international warfare, producing some degree of hostility and anxiety, but he observes that as long as it does not interfere with and may even encourage “the Industry of their Subjects,” it does not necessarily render life nasty, brutish, and short or drive people everywhere to unite for their own preservation under a transnational sovereign.[[90]](#footnote-91)

Sixty years later, however, the notion that a transfer of power from fractious nation-states to an overarching authority was the key to peaceful economic and cultural development was taken up by the Abbé de St. Pierre in his *Projet pour rendre la Paix Perpetuelle en Europe* first published in 1713, a remarkable and little studied document for whose central proposal Kant seems to receive most of the credit. The Abbé begins from a starting position of concern for the “conflagrations, atrocities, and cruelties” suffered on the frontiers and “all the evils caused to the sovereigns of Europe and their people” by European warfare.

“[S]ensibly moved by all the evils which War causes the sovereigns of Europe and their subjects, I resolved to penetrate to the original sources of the evil and to seek through my own reflections whether this evil was so attached to the nature of sovereignty and sovereigns that it was absolutely without remedy [...] The nature of man himself seemed an obstacle [...].”[[91]](#footnote-92)

The sovereigns of Europe, he thinks, resemble those of the barbarians of Africa and America. Their rivalries and strivings produce a “perpetual restlessness,” and up to now no method of resolving differences except war has ever been tried. The balance of power between France and Austria, he reflects, does not prevent foreign wars or civil disturbances.[[92]](#footnote-93) Equilibria of power are by nature fragile and readily disturbed by any sovereign who is ambitious and impatient.[[93]](#footnote-94) The remedy is to appoint arbiters more powerful than the arbitrated and motivated to arbitrate.[[94]](#footnote-95) The Abbé does not envision an imperium headed by a Hobbesian autocrat but a consort of nations, a union of the existing eighteen sovereignties of Europe. A tribunal is to be established in Utrecht, and deputies will be assigned from each country to resolve disputes amongst them. Demobbed officers of national armies and others negatively affected by pacification are to receive compensation. There will be a standing army for defence of the Union against non-Union aggressors, but the Abbé foresees, in the short run the incorporation of the Turks and the Moscovites, and eventually all of Africa and Asia into the Union.[[95]](#footnote-96)

To defend his proposal, the Abbé compares what he calls the “system of war” with “system of peace” on a number of counts. The system of war implies revolutions and upsets, seizure of territory and aggradisement, whereas the system of peace preserves individual nations and their boundaries intact.[[96]](#footnote-97) In the system of war, chance largely determines who wins or loses and who is killed. In the system of peace, everyone is less vulnerable to chance and so freer and more independent because others cannot aggress with impunity. Peace allows for progress in education, law and other institutions; the Abbé favours even the education of women in village schools.[[97]](#footnote-98) War promotes barbarism; for the arts and sciences flourish and progress when the talented are not drawn off into the military.[[98]](#footnote-99) Peace preserves the enduring monuments of civilization: academies, colleges, libraries canals, aqueducts, hospitals palaces, temples, ports, bridges, sculpture, architecture, records. Commerce, “universal, free, open and equal,” can flourish uninterrupted; the rural population can devote itself to agricultural production, enhancing tax revenues; and there are vast savings in the expenses for navies and footsoldiers.

There are other moral advantages to peace, the Abbé finds. The honour of sovereigns and their glorious ambitions, would be praiseworthy if they didn’t cause such misery to so many millions, but the sovereign cannot reasonably wish his reputation to be based on the burning of villages, the massacre of inhabitants, and the ruin of families. With peace, he can choose his own occupations. Rather than making his aim the acquisition of territory; the sovereign required to respect national boundaries will concentrate instead on internal affairs.[[99]](#footnote-100) Further, because foreign powers are typically involved in civil insurrections, which occur when people lose confidence in their own sovereign, peace should eliminate civil conflict and the assassinations and poisonings undertaken for policy ends. A pacified union need not be secretive, fearing and plotting against its neighbours. Finally, the Belgian, Swiss, German, and Netherlandish unions of provinces show that it is not impossible to form them.[[100]](#footnote-101) The renunciation of conquest by Henry IV, the most powerful monarch in Europe of his time, shows that great princes can undergo conversion by reason.[[101]](#footnote-102) After laying out the advantages of peace, the bulk of the *Projet* was taken up with citing and responding to objections, practical, theoretical and theological, including the objection that his book was too long and that “princes do not read.”

Leibniz was initially unpersuaded. To Hobbes’s argument that lethal conflict and fear of death made peace the chief political and moral imperative, Leibniz replied that Hobbes’s “fallacy” was that “he thinks things which can entail inconvenience should not be borne at all.”[[102]](#footnote-103) Certain geographical and historical situations entail that a prince must fight continuously, he remarks in the *Codex Juris Gentium* of 1693, and peace can only offer a “breathing space” between wars.[[103]](#footnote-104) Both Hobbes’s scheme and the Abbé’s ran up against Leibniz’s longstanding preferences for regional autonomy, distributed authority and balance of power in wordly matters involving Europe and for submission to a centralised authority only as members of the virtual kingdom of God and – perhaps – under a single spiritual-military leader of the Christian world.

In June 1712, Leibniz wrote to the historian and savant Jean-Léonor Le Gallois de Grimarest that he had seen “something” of the project of M. de St. Pierre for maintaining a perpetual peace in Europe.

“I am reminded,” he said “of a device in a cemetery, with the words: *Pax perpetua;* for the dead do not fight any longer; but the living are of another humor; and the most powerful do not respect tribunals at all.”[[104]](#footnote-105)

The *Projet* is, he says, a ‘romance’ – though Leibniz goes on to suggest, fancifully, that the Pope might be called upon to serve as the president of a peace-enforcing tribunal in which case

“it would be necessary at the same time that the ecclesiastics resume their old authority, and that an interdiction and excommunication make kings and kingdoms tremble.”[[105]](#footnote-106)

The *Project*, with its careful treatment of contingencies and objections, had not yet been published, so Leibniz’s reaction was not well considered. His last remarks, dated 1715, the year before his death, indicate that the book had only just reached him, sent by the Abbé himself. Leibniz was no longer dismissive. In writing up his “Observations,” on the book, he says that he is persuaded that the project of perpetual peace is “on the whole, feasible, and that its execution would be one of the most useful things in the world.”[[106]](#footnote-107) And he wrote to the Abbé that “It is always good to tell the public about [such schemes] [...] someone may be moved by them when one least expects it.” Although no minister would risk offending a prince by recommending them during his tenure, he thinks the project might be worth proposing “at the point of death, particularly if family interests did not oblige him to continue his policies in the tomb and beyond.”[[107]](#footnote-108) And in a letter of the same year to Remond de Montmord, he describes war, plague, and hunger as the three greatest evils besetting the human race and voices the opinion that human beings could free themselves from all of them, but that the first two are within the power of individuals; the latter requires the co-operation of sovereigns which is difficult to obtain.[[108]](#footnote-109)

## V. Leibniz’s ‘Memoir’ and the ‘System of Peace’

There are several possible apologetic responses to the identification of reprehensible views in a philosopher valued and admired on other grounds. One response is to try to show why the field of intellectually available positions was far narrower in the philosopher’s own time then than it is today and why the social context and the philosopher’s own livelihood favoured some positions over others. Another strategy is to search for qualifications to seemingly straightforward assertions, and to locate misgivings, ambivalences, and changes of opinion with age and experience. I have employed each of these strategies in the preceding sections. Anti-militarism was and remains an eccentric doctrine outside of mainstream political philosophy; Leibniz was a jurist employed by princes; and, just at the end of his life when it was no longer necessary to please his masters, he may have undergone a significant change of heart.

A fourth response takes the position that we contemporary readers must and may choose from the writings of the past what we think is valuable and what we prefer to ignore. We are interested, after all, in what was *innovative* in our philosophers, not in the ‘prejudices of their times’ or the positions to which their temperaments and circumstances disposed them. We may attend to the letter, not the spirit, developing it to suit our own times and indeed our own temperaments and circumstances. And so I turn to the positive aspect of Leibniz’s conception of the common good.

As noted at the start, Leibniz was a ‘projector’ – a very great projector. He argued as a member of the political and scientific elite with the ear, if not the full attention of princes, and he argued for an important goal. The goal was the redirection of national revenues and the redirection of human effort and ingenuity to scientific projects that were neither conquistadorial, nor aimed at gratifying the vanity and curiosity of patrons in intervals of peace, but at erasing the deprivations and increasing the happiness and security of the badly off. In this connection, Leibniz asserts that human health and happiness will be furthered by our inquiring into “the nature of bodies in the universe […] to notice the respects in which they can be useful to our preservation and even to our greater perfection.” And he says that it is “important to know human history, and the arts and sciences which depend on it,” including literary history, which teaches us about the progress of knowledge, also history of laws and of conflicts and revolutions, and the history of religion.[[109]](#footnote-110) What he calls “the torrent of general corruption” can only be staunched, by addressing “the want of attention or of application, and the want of intelligence or of information.”[[110]](#footnote-111)

To a large extent, the redirection of national revenues towards the acquisition of useful knowledge has happened. Resources unthinkable in the 17th and 18th century are devoted to research in the natural and social sciences, and it can be assumed that virtually all appeals to financing bodies cite humanitarian applications for the discoveries the applicants hope to make: life shall be longer, healthier, more fun, more secure, more productive through the harvesting of the fruits of the natural and social sciences. On the domestic side we have evidence that this system of knowledge production and transfer, directed and funded by governments and other patrons, works for some aspects of the public good, with regard to medicine and technology, and to some extent for transportation and energy. The flow of resources has been less successful with respect to the problems of poverty and deprivation, and, with regard to the problems of international conflict, warfare and readiness for warfare, its results are tragically mixed.

We are still here, but we live in what St. Pierre called the “system of war.” The commitment to military preparedness and the struggle for military superiority underwrites jobs, including academic jobs, manual labour, and employment and research funding in the technology sectors. Scientists, manufacturers and vendors and their taxing regimes profit from military inventions and from arms sales, the effects of which in fomenting conflict are well established.[[111]](#footnote-112) Allegedly, militarism keeps us “safe,” though we are beginning to feel, and to be very unsafe in places we used to feel safe. The outgoings on the system of war are massive – in the USA amounting reportedly to 54% of discretionary spending of tax revenues – while governments plead their inability to finance health care, or to support and incentivise protection of the environment and repair of infrastructure. All this is not conducive to the common good. So why, with all the intelligence and organisational power of humanity, do we remain, in international politics in the Hobbesian state of nature? Must just war theory in the hands of philosophers forever remain focussed on the question: What are the exceptions to *neminem laede*? Which ones may I hurt, and how may I hurt them? With drones but not with germs?

One answer to this question is that the world presents us with an insoluble prisoner’s dilemma. No one can downscale or disarm unless all do. But how could such a general agreement ever come into force, especially when so many nations are ruled by bullies, tyrants, and madmen? So, it seems, we will interminably run up against the problems of incentives, motivations, risks, strategies and payoffs, and contemporary discussions of the problem of perpetual peace will continue to circulate around the problem of how to achieve co-operation and how much co-operation vs. autonomy is desirable or possible.[[112]](#footnote-113)

Although for Leibniz improvements in the arts of war were amongst the foreseen benefits of the increase of knowledge, so too were improvements in the arts of peace.[[113]](#footnote-114) There are actions a nation can undertake unilaterally without having solved the problems of co-operation and sovereignty. But the knowledge regarding the art of peace that we need not take the form of theories about the justified exceptions to *neminem laede*; rather, we need to know how to make ourselves so that others do not want to hurt us and how to dissuade them from hurting us or other people. We need knowledge of how to react so as to prevent escalation when they do hurt us or hurt others.

We have a head start on the problem, insofar as we know far more about the causes of warfare than about the causes of cancer, which as involving an array of molecular phenomena embedded in complex biological systems is still relatively poorly understood. By contrast, since the first days of historiography, our political theorists have revealed the causes of warfare to us. International politics is the realm of blackmail, hostage-holding, psychopathic charisma and pathological obedience, and these are well-studied phenomena. The causes of war include: the need of expanding populations for natural resources; the desire for personal and national glory; the satisfaction taken in the exhibition of valour and self-sacrifice, retaliation for old injuries; the moralistic aggression aroused by disgust at other people’s practices; and susceptibility to the charisma of leaders. Add to them the love of technology and technological innovation, appreciation for beautiful and powerful – or at least nowadays powerful – weaponry, the excitement of mass mobilisations, and the satisfaction to be taken in the teamwork and co-ordination involved in recruitment, mobilisation, and logistics, and you have a formula for conflict without end, or at least until someone impulsively presses a button.

The claim that warfare is rooted in ‘human nature’ means that these motives and incentives weigh heavily with human beings and survive in a range of economic and social systems, not that they cannot be redirected or moderated. If we cannot, or in some cases should not suppress them, we must divert them, and to less harmful ends, which need not be a version of the Egyptian Plan. The humanistic and social science disciplines cited by Leibniz have an important role to play because their object of study is ‘human nature.’ They are in the best position to understand why people want to hurt one another, how their delusions get a grip on them, and how they deceive themselves in formulating their nefarious plans. Our sociologists and anthropologists of religion,[[114]](#footnote-115) and our historians and philosophers who have long studied the dark and the bright moments of intellectual and political history, can contribute meaningfully. We will need to develop models for successful international policing that are based on the important concept of ‘non-offensive defense.’[[115]](#footnote-116)

For Leibniz, not only inadequate attention, application, and financing, but also despair of succeeding in the pursuit of useful knowledge was a major obstacle to progress. In his ‘Memoir,’ he presented his metaphysical vision of the virtual commonwealth of souls as “true unities,” unassailable by external forces and harmoniously co-existing, thereby assigning the visible world with its bloody strife and sometimes fragmented people and objects to the realm of well-founded phenomena, at the same time remaining alert to signs of concrete social progress. Even if, for most of us, the metaphysical image of the monad-world will not provide a motive for political effort, and critics who see metaphysics as a distraction from and as offering excuses for what Bayle called the “crimes and misfortunes of mankind” have a point. But a solid Leibnizian moral that might be drawn is that, for “enlightenened persons of good intention,” a commitment to the growth of knowledge in the service of the common good will require imagination and moral concern of a fundamentally different quality from that that guides our everyday *Realpolitk*.

1. Cicero: *On Duties*, II:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: *Theodicee* §247, GP VI, 263f.,. in: *Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man, and the Origins of Evil*, ed. by August Farrer, transl. by E. M. Huggard, La Salle 1985. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. See representatively: Gaston Grua: *La Justice Humaine selon Leibniz*, Paris 1956; Peter Hanns Reill: *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism*, Berkeley/Los Angeles 1975, esp. pp. 6f., pp. 33–55; Hans Heinz Holz: “Leibniz und das commune bonum”, in: *Sitzungsbericht der Leibniz-Sozietaet* 13 (1996) pp. 5–25; Jean Seidengart: “Cassirer: Reader, Publisher, and Interpreter of Leibniz’s Philosophy”, in: *New Essays on Leibniz Reception*, ed. by Ralph Kroemer/Yannick Chin-Drian, Basel 2012, pp. 129–142; more recently, Franklin Perkins: “Virtue, Reason, and Cultural Exchange: Leibniz’s Praise of Chinese Morality”, in: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 63 (2002), pp. 447–464; Justin Smith: *Nature, Human Nature and Human Difference: Race in Early Modern Philosophy*, Princeton 2015, esp. pp. 160–182; Pauline Phemister: *Leibniz and the Environment*, Abingdon 2016, esp. pp. 130–154; Christoph Sebastian Widdau: *Cassirer’s Leibniz und die Begründung der Menschenrechte*, Basel 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Pierre Bayle: Art. “Manichaeans”, in: *General* *Dictionary, Historical and Critical*, vol. VII., London 1734–41, p. 400, footnote (D). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. While the rival kings are giving their thanks to God, Candide wanders over the scorched earth of their battlefield, where all has been conducted “agreeably to the laws of war.” Here lay a number of old men covered with wounds, who beheld their wives dying with their throats cut, and hugging their children to their breasts, all stained with blood. There several young virgins, whose bodies had been ripped open, after they had satisfied the natural necessities of the Bulgarian heroes, breathed their last; while others, half-burned in the flames, begged to be dispatched out of the world. The ground about them was covered with the brains, arms, and legs of dead men.” François-Marie Arouet (Voltaire): *Candide* in: *The Works of Voltaire. A Contemporary Version,* vols. I, transl. by T. Smollett, rev. William F. Fleming, New York 1901, pp. 68f.; cf. The *Philosophical Dictionary* (1764) article ‘War,’ It is ‘doubtless a very fine art […] which desolates countries, destroys habitations, and in a common year causes the death of from forty to a hundred thousand men. […] Each marches gaily to crimes, under the banner of his saint.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Leibniz: *Theodicée*, §247. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: *Mars Christianissimus*, in: *Leibniz: Political Writings*, trans. and ed. by Patrick Riley, Cambridge 21988, p. 141. *Politische Schriften*, ed. Dt. Ak. der Wissenschaften, Berlin 1984, IV 2: 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Maria Rosa Antognazza: *Leibniz: An Intellectual Biography*, Cambridge 2011, p. 196. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Ibid., p. 210. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Ibid., p. 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: “Meditations sur la notion commune de la justice”, in: G. Mollat: *Mitteilingen aus Leibnizens ungedruckten Schriften*, Leipzig 1893, pp. 53–56; Riley (ed.): *Leibniz: Political Writings*, pp. 53–55. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Ibid., 58f; Riley (ed.): *Leibniz:* *Political Writings*, p. 56f. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: “Letter to Peter the Great”, in: Id: *Selections*, ed. and transl. by Philip P. Wiener, New York 1951, pp. 596f. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Numbers 31:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. “No one ever speaks of ‘terrible wealth’ or ‘terrible peace’, or ‘terrible well being’, but we do hear of ‘terrible disease’, ‘a terrible war’, ‘terrible poverty’. Plato: *Protagoras* 341a-b; in: *Complete Works*, p. 773. The dialogue, on the standards of good and evil, nevertheless praises war as ‘honourable.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Thus Plato: “Then the city must be further enlarged, and not just by a small number, wither, but by a whole army, which will do battle with the invaders in defense of the city’s substantial wealth and all the other things we mentioned.” Plato: *Republic* 373e-374a; in: Id.: *Complete Works*, ed. by John Cooper/D. S. Hutchinson, Indianapolis 1997, p. 1012. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. Aristotle: *Rhetoric to Alexander* 1424b, 21–25, in: *Complete Works*, ed. by Jonathan Barnes, Princeton 1984, II: 2278. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. For evolutionary explanations of this disposition, see Johan M. G. van der Dennen: “Ethnocentrism and In-group/Out-group Differentiation. A Review and Interpretation of the Literature”, in: *The Sociobiology of Ethnocentrism: Evolutionary Dimensions of Xenophobia, Discrimination, Racism and Nationalism*, ed. by Vernon Reynolds/Vincent Falger/Ian Vine, North Holland 1986, pp. 1–47. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Plato: *Republic* 537a; *Complete Works*, p. 1152. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Plato: *Republic* 468a-b; *Complete Works*, p. 1095. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Aristotle: *Politics* 1291b 19–21. II:2050. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. Ibid., 1291a 7–9; II:2049. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. Ibid., 1256b 21–5; II: 1994. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Ibid., 1333b 392–1334b5; II: 2116. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. Id.: *Rhetoric to Alexander* 1425b 16–9; II:2278. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. Id.: *Politics* 1271b 1–19. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. Id.: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk X, Ch 7,1177b5–12; , relationships that in his view imply mutual if tacit consent an societyysical Philosophy in Early Modern Germany, Cambrige, ca, relationships that in his view imply mutual if tacit consent an societyysical Philosophy in Early Modern Germany, Cambrige, ca. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. Aristotle: *Politics* 1333b 392–1334b5; II: 2116. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. Id.: *Nichomachaen Ethics*, Bk X, Ch 7, 1177b, in: *Basic Works*, transl. by W. D. Ross and ed. by Richard McKeon, New York 1941, p.1105. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. Thucydides: *The Peloponnesian War*, in: Book III, § 82, transl. by Hobbes and ed. by David. Grene, Chicago 1989, pp. 204f. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. Article: “Pacifism”, in: *The Oxford Companion to Military History*, Oxford 2003, p. 689. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. Tertullian is frequently cited in this connection an antis e raging, Cambridge, cad hisit is difficult to see good universally. aede principle whilst discouraging , Cambridge, can antibut it is difficult to read his *De corona militis*an antis e raging, Cambridge, cad hisit is difficult to see good universally. aede principle whilst discouraging , Cambridge, ca as a serious attack on militarism. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. Michael Howard: *The Invention of Peace: Reflections on War and the International Order*, New Haven 2000, p. 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. Augustine: *City of God*, IV:4 in: Augustine: *Political Writings*, ed. and trans. by M. W. Tkacz/D.Kries, Indianapolis 1994. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. Ibid., I,1, p.6, p. 9. “Eventually”, says Howard, “critics emerged from within that clerisy who denied the essential legitimacy of their rulers on the grounds that war was not a necessary part of the natural or divine order, but a derogation of it. It was then that peace, the visualization of a social order from which war had been abolished, could be said to have been invented; an order, that is, resulting not from some millennial divine intervention […] but from the forethought of rational human beings who had taken matters into their own hands.” Howard: *Invention of Peace*, p. 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. Francisco de Vitoria: *De Indis De Jure Belli*, Pt. III, § 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. Hugo Grotius: *The Laws of War and Peace* (*De Jure Belli ac Pacis Libri Tres* (1625)), transl. by Francis W. Kelsey, London/New York/Oceana 1964, Book I, Ch. II, § I, p. 71f. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
38. Grotius: *Laws*, Prolegomena, III: 1753. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
39. Johann Valentin Embser: *Widerlegung des ewigen Friedens*,Mannheim 1797; id.: *Die Abgoetterei unseres philosophischen Jahrhunderts*, Mannheim 1779, repr. München 1990–1994. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
40. Immanuel Kant: *Critique of Judgement*, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. V., ed. by Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin 1902, p. 262f. and p. 432f. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
41. Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel: “Introduction”, in: *Reason in History*, transl. by Robert S. Hartman, New York 1953, pp. 18–13; see Yves-Jean Harder: “La philosophie de l’histoire est elle la veritable theodicée?”; in: *Studia Leibnitiana Supplementa* 36 (2009) pp. 207–219. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
42. Hugo Grotius: *The Rights of War and Peace,* vol. III, ed. by Richard Tuck, Indianapolis 2005, 1748. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
43. Samuel Pufendorf: “Preface”, in: *On the Duty of Man and Citizen*, ed. by James Tully, Cambridge 1991, pp. 8f. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
44. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: “Opinion on the Principles of Pufendorf”, in: Riley (ed.): *Leibniz. Political Writings*, p. 67. See the discussion of Ian Hunter of Leibniz’s rebellion against the desacralisation of politics in his *Rival Enlightenments*: *Civil and Metaphysical Philosophy in Early Modern Germany*, Cambridge 2001, pp. 95–147. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
45. ‘Amongst the Things peculiar to Man is his Desire of Society, that is, a certain Inclination to live together with those of his own Kind, not in any Manner but peaceably […].’ Hugo Grotius: Preliminary Discourse, *Rights*, ed. Tully, I: 79–81. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
46. Grotius: *Rights*, ed. Tully, III: 1749. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
47. For explication, see Brandon Look: “On Monadic Domination in Leibniz’s Metaphysics”, *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 10/3 (2002), pp. 379–399. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
48. Justin Smith: *Nature, Human Nature, and Human Difference*, Princeton 2015, pp. 160–182. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
49. Samuel Pufendorf: *On the* *Duty of Man and Citizen*, trans. by Michael Silverthrone and ed. by James Tully, Cambridge 1991, p. 61. Pufendorf is however thinking of human beings as ‘adult men’. Like Hobbes, he begins from the observation that where their physical strength is not equal, the weak can overpower the strong though arms or cunning. On Hobbes’s socio-political egalitarianism see Baruch Baumrin: “Hobbes’s Egalitarianism: The Laws of Natural Equality”, in: M. Malherbe (ed.): *Actes Du Colloque de Nantes*, Paris 1989, pp. 119–127. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
50. “If therefore one were to ask me what really is the common man, I do not know how to describe him except by saying that he comprises those whose mind is preoccupied with questions about their sustenance, who never rise to the point of imagining what might be the passion to know or spiritual pleasure (Gemuetslust) any more than a deaf-born man can judge a marvelous concert. These people are without enthusiasm or excitement; it seems they are made of Adamʼs earth, but the spirit of life was not blown into them. They live day by day and move on like cattle”, quoted in: Carl J. Friedrich: “Philosophical Reflections of Leibniz on Law, Politics and the State”, in: *Natural Law* Forum 1 (1966), p. 79–91, here p. 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
51. Ibid., 90. Friedrich indicates contractualist sentiments in Leibniz, but gives little textual support; the observations on Pufendorf emphasize rather the need for a transcendental guarantor of justice and agreements. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
52. Ibid., p. 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
53. Leibniz: “On Natural Law” in: Riley (ed.): *Leibniz. Political Writings*, p.79. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
54. Pufendorf: *On* *the Duty of Man and Citizen*, pp. 129–131. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
55. Catherine Hezer: *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity*, Oxford 2006, pp. 59f. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
56. Kyle Harper: *Slavery in the Late Roman World*, Cambridge 2016, pp. 275–425. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
57. Leibniz: “On Natural Law”, p. 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
58. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
59. On Leibniz’s respect and admiration for Chinese culture, Franklin Perkins: “Virtue, Reason, and Cultural Exchange”: Leibniz’s Praise of Chinese Morality” in: Journal of the History of Ideas 63 (2002), pp. 447–64 and id.: *Leibniz and China: A Commerce of Light*, Cambridge 2004. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
60. Ian Almond: “Leibniz, Historicism, and the ‘Plague of Islam’”, in: *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 39/4 (2006), pp. 463–483. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
61. A IV, 1, 408–10, transl. by Justin Smith. http://www.jehsmith.com/philosophy/2009/01/a-method-for-instituting-a-new-invinvible-militia.html#more. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
62. Tr. Perkins: *Leibniz and China*, p. 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
63. A IV, 1, 386, tr. Almond: “Plague of Islam”, p. 472. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
64. Ivo Budil: “Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and the Idea of Conquest of Egypt in the Context of the Emergence of the World Economy”, in: *Prague papers on History of International Relations* (2009), pp. 65–86. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
65. Leibniz: “Caesarinus Fuerstenerius”, in: Riley (ed.): *Leibniz.* *Political Writings*, p. 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
66. See Almond’s discussion of the “Ermahnung an den Deutschen” and “Plague of Islam”, p. 11f. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
67. “As a result, it behooves us when distributing resources responsibly to individuals or groups to ensure that we give more weight to the intelligent than to the less intelligent, more to a neighbour than to a stranger. And more to the poor than to the rich, as their conduct and the nature of the case requires.” Grotius: *Laws of War and Peace*, vol. III: 1748. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
68. “You have exhausted your treasury,” he declares to royalty, “You have fleeced your people, you have loaded peaceable good subjects with unnecessary burdens, and you have encouraged the wicked unprincipled adventurers in acts of rapine and violence […]. The taste for science, arts, and letters, languishes a long while. Trade and commerce continue shackled and impeded.” Erasmus: *Querela Pacis,* p. 35 [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
69. “[… ][If] war is so unhallowed that it becomes the deadliest bane of piety and religion; if there is nothing more calamitous to mortals, and more detestable to heaven, I ask, how in the name of God, can I believe those beings to be rational creatures; how can I believe them to be otherwise than stark mad; who, with such a waste of treasure, with so ardent a zeal, with so great an effort, with so many arts, so much anxiety, and so much danger, endeavour to drive me away from them, and purchase endless misery and mischief at a price so high? God made man unarmed.” Erasmus: *The Complaint of Peace. Translated from the* *Querela Pacis* (A.D. 1521) transl. by Thomas Paynell, Chicago 1917, repr. Indianapolis 2001. (Online Library of Philosophy), p. 6; José A. Fernández: “Erasmus on the Just War”, in: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 34/2 (1973) pp. 209–226; Fred R. Dallmayr: “A War Against the Turks? Erasmus on War and Peace”, in: *Asian Journal of Social Science* 34/1 (2006) pp. 67–85. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
70. Erasmus: *Complaint*, p. 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
71. Ibid., pp. 20f. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
72. Matthew 42, 1–10. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
73. Luke 12, 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
74. Bartolemeo de las Casas: *In Defense of the Indians,* ed. and trans. by Stafford Poole, DeKalb IL 1992, p. 47. See Nina Berman: “Imperial Violence and the Limits of Tolerance: Reading Luther with las Casas”, in: Florian Kläger/Gerd Bayer (eds.): *Early Modern Constructions of Europe: Literature, Culture, History*, Routledge 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
75. On the former interpretation, see Richard Waswo: “The Formation of Natural Law to Justify Colonialism, 1539–1689”, in: *New Literary History* 27/4 (1996) pp. 743–759; Robert Williams: *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought*, Oxford 1992. For a more balanced view, Georg Cavallar: *Imperfect Cosmopolis: Studies in the History of International Legal Theory and Cosmopolitan Ideas*, Cardiff 2011; Sankar Muthu: *Enlightenment against Empire*, Princeton 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
76. Vitoria *De Indis*, Part II, §III. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
77. Christian Wolff: *The Law of Nations Treated According to a A Scientific Method* (*Jus gentium methodo scientifica pertractatum*), transl. by Joseph H. Drake, Oxford 1934, Prolegomena § 8, p. 11; Jean Seidengart: “Cassirer: p. 6. rty Fund , pp. David , alled the ‘d deprivation and o march 31 2017 re what they are. y are [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
78. Ibid., §2, p. 5 and p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
79. Ibid., §156, p. 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
80. Ibid., §177, pp. 92f. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
81. Ibid., §161–162., pp. 86f. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
82. Ibid., § 637, p. 326. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
83. Ibid., § 638, p. 327. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
84. Ibid., §168–169, p. 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
85. Ibid., § 645, p. 331. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
86. Ibid., § 641, p. 329 [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
87. Ibid., § 617, p. 314. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
88. Ibid., §876–882, pp. 449–452. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
89. Thomas Hobbes: *De Homine* §3, in: *Man and Citizen*, ed.by Bernard Gert and transl. by T. S. K. Scott-Craig, Indianapolis 1991, p. 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
90. “Though there had never been any time, wherein particular men were in a condition of warre one against another; yet in all times, Kings and Persons of Soveraigne authority, because of their Independency, are in continuall jealousies, and in the state and posture of Gladiators; having their weapons pointing and their eyes fixed on one another. […] But because they uphold thereby, the Industry of their Subjects; there does not follow from it, that misery, which accompanies the Liberty of particular men.” Thomas Hobbes: *Leviathan*, ed. by Richard Tuck, Cambridge 1996, p. 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
91. Charles-Irénée Castel/Abbé de St. Pierre: *Projet pour rendre la Paix Perpetuelle en Europe*, Paris 1986, pp. 9f. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
92. Ibid., p. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
93. Ibid., p. 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
94. Ibid., p. 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
95. Tomaz Mastnak in an otherwise valuable essay cites D’Alembert’s report that the the Abbé sought “l’anéantissement futur du mahométisme”, as evidence of his participation in the syndrome of Christian unification for the destruction of Islam. But the context of the phrase makes clear that the anéantissement was meant to occur through enlightenment, not conquest. Abbé de Saint-Pierre: “European Union and the Turk”, in: *History of Political Thought* 19/4 (1998), p. 575. Cf. Jean Le Rond dʼ Alembert: *Eloges*, vol. III., Paris/Berlin 1821, p. 278. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
96. Castel/St. Pierre: *Projet*, p. 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
97. Ibid., p. 127. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
98. Ibid., p. 128. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
99. Ibid., p. 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
100. Ibid., p. 52. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
101. Ibid., p. 264. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
102. Leibniz: “Caesarinus Fürstenerius”, in: Riley (ed.): *Leibniz. Political Writings*, p. 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
103. Leibniz: *Codex Juris Gentium*, Preface, in Riley (ed.): *Leibniz. Political Writings*, p. 166. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
104. Leibniz: Letter no 11 to Grimarest, in: Riley (ed.): *Leibniz. Political Writings*, p. 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
105. Ibid., p. 184. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
106. Leibniz: “Observations on the Abbé de St. Pierre’s” and “Project for Perpetual Peace”, in Riley (ed.): *Leibniz. Political Writings*, p. 178. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
107. Ibid., p. 177. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
108. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: *Opera Omnia*, vol. V., ed. by L. Dutens 1768, p. 20f. Quoted in Antonio Tryuyol Serra: “Die Lehre vom gerechten Krieg bei Grotius und Leibniz und ihre Bedeutung für die Gegenwart”, in: *Studia Leibnitiana* 16 (1984) pp. 60–72, p. 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
109. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: “Memoir for Enlightened Persons of Good Intention”, in: Riley (ed.): *Leibniz. Political Writings*, pp. 106f. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
110. Ibid., pp. 103f. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
111. Arms transfer, whether in the form of ‘foreign aid’ or direct weapons sales, appears to predict and so to be likely a cause of warfare to a far greater extent than such factors as repression and colonial legacy. See Cassady Craft/Joseph P. Smaldone: “The Arms Trade and the Incidence of Political Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1967–97”, in: *Journal of Peace Research* 39/6 (2002), pp. 693–710. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
112. See the essays in James Bohman/Matthias Lutz-Bachmann (eds.): *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant’s Cosmopolitanism*, Cambridge MA 1997. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
113. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: “Memoir”, in: Riley (ed.): *Leibniz. Political Writings*, p. 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
114. Scott Atran: Talking to the Enemy: Faith, Brotherhood, and the (un) Making of Terrorists, New York 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
115. Najib Mahmood: ‘Non-Offensive Defense and Nonviolence Response to Terrorism,’ U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 2008. Approved for public release. www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA479791*Perpetual P start in sofar as we a nation can do uniltion is deskirablehr minem laede? When are we allowed to hurt people? en* [↑](#footnote-ref-116)