

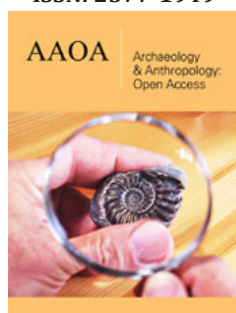
Is Man Capable of Peace?

An Anthropological Approach to Ethics of Peace

Markus Vogt*

LMU Munich, Germany

ISSN: 2577-1949



Abstract

The present text deals with the chances and the preconditions for the ability of humans to act peaceful (understood as non-violent and fair mechanisms of conflict resolution). The causes for disputes, violence and war are discussed in relation to biological preconditions and sociocultural contexts. A methodological reflection on the ethical relevance of anthropology is the starting point of the discussion, followed by a debate on the ethical dimension of behavioral science approaches to aggression and the egoistic paradigm in evolutionary ethics which is then contrasted with the two major approaches in European conflict theories: struggle for survival (Hobbes) and the struggle for recognition (Hegel). The text concludes by illustrating that humans rely on legal codifications to foster peace due to anthropological reasons.

Keywords: Social cultural; Moral postulates; Morality; Aggression; Freud's concept

Introduction

"In a better world" nonviolence would be possible. In the real world, one must show strength and resist the many forms of overt or covert aggression. People who do not recognize this human condition are humiliated, marginalized or even victims of violence themselves. This is how one could summarize the film "In a Better World" by Danish director Susanne Bier who won the award for best foreign film at the Berlinale 2011. The film sensitively reflects the doubts, hopes and human images of our time in relation to aggression and violence. The question remains unanswered whether the attempt to live according to the standards of a better world today is an illusionary dream dance or true strength which changes the world. The answer remains in the balance. In view of the brutal war in Ukraine, this question is urgently topical and challenges Christian peace ethics to a revision or at least a further development [1,2]. This is the starting point from which I would like to approach the question "Is man capable of peace?": A direct answer cannot be expected, if only because man's nature is "plastic", i.e., malleable and not fixed [3]. He can and must take his life in hand and "lead" it [4], thereby also suppressing, controlling, cultivating, sublimating or transforming given inclinations. If one does not want to deny man the moral ability, one must of course also attest him the ability for peace. But this remains abstract at first. A scientifically meaningful investigation does not result from asking about the supposed (collective) essence of "man" in abstract, but only from taking a closer look at the anthropological and sociocultural conditions for the peaceability of concrete people. I understand the topic posed to me as a question about the chances and conditions for human ability for peace in the sense of non-violent and fair conflict solutions.

In essence, the question is whether the causes of strife, violence and war are to be found more in the nature of man or rather in social cultural contexts. Is man by nature a wolf to man, as Thomas Hobbes thinks, or is he by nature "good" and only becomes aggressive, violent and "evil" through civilizing influences? As the anthropological question is rather relevant in

***Corresponding author:** Markus Vogt, LMU Munich, Germany

Submission:  September 21, 2022

Published:  October 19, 2022

Volume 4 - Issue 4

How to cite this article: Markus Vogt. Is Man Capable of Peace? An Anthropological Approach to Ethics of Peace. Arch & Anthropol Open Acc. 4(4). AAOA. 000606. 2022.

DOI: [10.31031/AAOA.2022.04.000606](https://doi.org/10.31031/AAOA.2022.04.000606)

Copyright@ Markus Vogt, This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits unrestricted use and redistribution provided that the original author and source are credited.

fundamental contexts, I do not limit the topic to peace in the narrow sense of the absence of armed violence but relate it to the question of models for an ethically appropriate handling of aggression potentials. The importance of a strong, positive concept of peace, as suggested by Galtung, will be addressed separately later. At the center of my paper is the question of how to avoid violent conflict. I would like to unfold this in five steps: (1) On the ethical relevance of anthropology; (2) Aggression research in a peace-ethical perspective; (3) The egoism paradigm of evolutionary ethics; (4) Self-preservation or struggle for recognition? (5) Cultural tools for peacemaking.

On the ethical relevance of anthropology

The natural arbitrariness of norms

Relationships between people do not take place in a space of indeterminate possibilities and expectations, but in a network of naturally prestructured behavioral drives, standardized forms of interaction, and socially shaped roles. The anthropologically pre and abandoned structures of the human predispose the conditions and the possible goals of morality. For it is only from the “inner logic of demands of that structurally non arbitrary multiplicity of natural laws in which human ability to be is articulated and shaped” [5] that norms gain their human form and legitimation. These natural and social laws can be empirically investigated and made fruitful for ethics in an interdisciplinary dialogue with the human sciences. Within the framework of such a dialogue, behavioral research makes an important and indispensable contribution to the ethical search for ways to a successful life. Ethics can neither remain in an empirical-free space nor leave itself uncritically to experiential evidence. It must therefore “refer to scientific empiricism without becoming its mere application knowledge” [6]. What is required of ethics here are above all methodological and hermeneutic considerations of the practical relevance of the results of empirical research as well as their assignment to a conception of man [7,8]. In all of this, it should be noted that anthropological aspects always interact with the social contexts of effects [9]. In relation to war, it follows that its causes are neither exhausted in the social reasons nor in the anthropologically inherent tendency to aggression and violence. Only by combining biological-anthropological and socio-cultural approaches aggression research can meaningfully point out the conditions, chances and dangers of a humanly appropriate conception of peace.

Limitations for the ethical relevance of anthropology

For normative conclusions from behavioral research, three basic limitations have to be considered:

a. With regard to the reasoning logic of the moral: What is to be done, i.e., the good, cannot be deduced from nature. Such a conclusion from the actual to the ought has been called a “naturalistic fallacy” since G. E. Moore, who here follows D. Hume [10].

b. With regard to today’s living conditions: The “morality of genes,” which was essentially shaped in the Pleistocene, when

humans lived in small groups, cannot be a reliable guide of behavior under the conditions of technological civilization [11,12].

c. Regarding the cultural imprint of man: Man is by nature a cultural being, designed for rational and socio-culturally shaped self-determination. In these contexts, there is a great variability and overlapping of different motive complexes.

The ethical relevance of anthropology for peace research is thus not primarily to be related to the justification and substantiation of norms, but to the fact that it seeks to explain scientifically the genesis and function of norms [8,12,13]. It examines the evolutionary origin of moral rules and their function for the survival of the individual and the group, population, or species. The natural behavioral dispositions have an “imperative status” in that they set parameters that comprehensively condition and support human existence in their willing and thinking [14]. The bridge between being and ought to consist in the fact that ought claims are values “that arise in response to the needs which occur objectively in human nature” [14]. Behavioral re-search can clarify essential limits and structures of human scope of action and thus also of the conditions of a humanly appropriate shaping of moral prescriptions. The knowledge of such structures, limits and boundary conditions is a constitutive element of ethical reasoning. This is also true for peace research: The nature of human beings sets parameters that help to determine how conflicts arise, escalate or are managed and in what way we desire and seek to achieve peace. However, it is important to keep in mind that there are very different models for interpreting this nature, e.g., drive theoretical or frustration theoretical. Even if one rather prefers drive theoretical explanatory models [15,16] learning theoretical approaches cannot be completely ignored. For human beings can and must always behave in relation to their biological dispositions and learn and practice, individually and collectively, how to deal with them in a humane way.

Livable morality

In so far as morality is always to be related to the actions of concrete human beings with their inherent possibilities and limits, it does not stand outside nature, but is a dimension of its development. The possible goals of loveable morality are biologically limited. The qualities that enable morality are products of natural and cultural evolution which are to be seen as an inseparable unity. Moral postulates for peace, justice and responsibility must prove to be appropriate in relation to the biological predispositions in that they affirm and promote the possibilities for action inherent in them, help to cope with the limits, dangers and conflicts inherent in them by means of clear rules of conduct, and finally by integrating the diversity of different aspirations into a creative design of meaningful life. The stability of peace depends on whether the diversity of different human inclinations is limited, reinforced or transformed in culture in such a way that the forces of reasonable reconciliation are reinforced, and destructive escalations of violence are avoided. The freedom of moral self-determination of man does not move in the empty space of arbitrary possibilities, but it is the result of a constructive handling of the dispositions, limits and chances

given by nature. The question whether man is capable of peace thus appears more closely as a question whether and how such an integration, limitation and redirection of aggressive behavior can succeed culturally.

Aggression research in a peace-ethical perspective

Man's ability to live in peace is endangered by his tendency to aggression. Violence and war are specific expressions of aggression. Before looking at their anthropological and ethical interpretation, a clarification of terms is necessary.

Definition

"Aggression" means behavior directed at killing, injuring, or overcoming people or animals. Emotional affects that motivate it are anger, rage, hatred or the will to assert oneself. There is overt and covert, direct and indirect aggression, playful and serious, self and other aggression. Aggression can be expressive (accompanied by affect), hostile (aimed at harming the victim), or instrumental (harming a victim as an accepted side effect) [15]. A similar variety can be distinguished in terms of violence [17]. Violence in the sense of the exercise of power (lat. potestas) is not necessary and ideally not at all connected with aggression. Aggressive violence can be aimed at physical or psychological damage to the victim. In a broad sense, one also speaks of structural violence [18], which is a plausible extension of the term in view of the analysis of phenomena of coercion as well as developmental injustice. For the ethical analysis the first look at the variety of conceptual aspects already shows that not every form of aggression, violence, dispute or conflict is to be evaluated negatively. Certain forms of their individual exercise and social legitimation can also be conducive to peace. Relevant to the question of the human capacity for peace is above all the dispute between drive theories on the one hand and learning psychology approaches on the other.

Drive theory

Drive theories assume that a specific aggressive energy is formed spontaneously and always anew. The more of it has accumulated, the greater the pressure to discharge it. According to this theory, escalations and control problems of aggression occur mainly when aggression has been inhibited for a long time and then flows into a single action [16]. Freud's concept is of central importance for drive-dynamic theories of aggression development. In 1920, the latter developed a dualistic model in which "Todestrieb(e)" (Thanatos) and "Lebenstrieb(e)" (Eros) oppose each other [19]. If the death drive is directed at other people, it expresses itself in the aggressive desire for injury, destruction and destructiveness. These impulses are usually controlled by the "superego" and turn inward when strongly inhibited. Repressed aggression often operates unconsciously. An alternative to this is the reduction of aggression through sublimation into socially accepted forms of self-assertion and struggle. Freud interprets the Christian doctrine of peace as a moral suppression of aggression, which leads to its breaking out in other, unconscious and thus uncontrolled places (for example, in aggression against people of other faiths). Strong pressure of

harmony within groups leads to the fact that aggression appears all the more strongly in demarcations to the outside [20]. This skeptical view together with its radically religion-critical positioning is, of course, not new: Already before Freud, Nietzsche interpreted the Christian ideal of peace as an anthropological error. It leads to a slave morality by suppressing aggression, idealizing the weakness of the losers, and thus an ethic full of life-hostile resentments comes to rule [21]. Nietzsche is still today the strongest source of ideas for ethical theories that evaluate aggression and egoism positively. The theory of the death drive, which Freud himself calls speculation, is controversial in psychoanalysis. On the one hand, "the anatomy of human destructiveness" (Fromm 1973) is a perfectly plausible starting point for the pathological destructiveness of warmongers like Hitler; on the other hand, the theory can also easily lead to losing sight of social causes of destructiveness, violence, and war.

Learning psychological approaches

Learning theory models assume that aggression is not innate, but acquired through example, success, or conditioning [16,22,23]. Children in particular learn very strongly by imitating exemplary models (e.g., parents, educators). How strong the effect of model learning is in the consumption of media violence is controversial. In stable personalities, the ability to differentiate should not be underestimated [24]; if the neglect of social relationships and conversations in which these media influences can be processed, as well as the experience of domestic violence, are added to this, there is definitely a considerable risk of learned aggression or of blunting against mechanisms of violence control. The frustration theory approach [25] is of particular importance within the research on aggression in the psychology of learning. Aggression is often a consequence of frustration. Wilhelm Reich applied this to the interpretation of the aggressive behavior of National Socialist fellow travelers in his descriptive model of the bicyclist who humps up and kicks down [22]. The experiment of antiauthoritarian education, however, clearly demonstrated the limitations of this theoretical approach: Avoiding coercion in education by no means leads to aggression-free people. Often the opposite is the case, because self-control is not adequately learned. Since even an anti-authoritarian education can only ever take place in the context of today's civilization, hardly anything can be concluded from it for the supposed "natural state" of man. Nevertheless, the arguments Rutger Bregmann collects to shake the widespread "dogma" that humans are fundamentally evil and aggressive [23] cannot be refused. There is strong empirical evidence that humans by nature have a predisposition to cooperative and peaceful behaviour [23]. It is precisely this predisposition that was one of the crucial prerequisites for the evolutionary success of homo sapiens [26]. However, according to Bregmann, the striving for recognition makes humans susceptible to offending and thus easily susceptible to collective hostility [23].

The so-called evil

The foundations of aggression research, as they are still controversially discussed today in the dialogue between ethnology

and ethics, were laid by Konrad Lorenz with his book "Das so genannte Böse" [27]. According to this, aggression behavior is innate (endogenous) and a necessary component for evolution as well as for the household of the vital energies of man. Therefore, he speaks of the so-called "evil", whose moral negative evaluation is ultimately based on a misunderstanding. In nature, aggression behavior is largely integrated into species-preserving, meaningful mechanisms of action and limited by ritual rules. Thus, the "intraspecific" (intra-species) aggression [27] in the struggle for sex partners, territory, rank and other privileges is limited in such a way that it can usually have a positive effect in evolutionary biology. Lorenz shifts the actual problem of uncontrollable aggression to the realm of civilization, for example in his widely read book "Die acht Todsünden der zivilisierten Menschheit" (The eight deadly sins of civilized mankind) [28,29]. Lorenz coined the much-discussed term "moral analogous behavior" [27]. By this he means the restriction of aggression by rules (e.g., in ritualized rivalry). By demonstrating numerous elements of behavior that are evaluated as "moral" in humans, he relativizes the opinion that moral ability is an unambiguous distinguishing criterion between humans and animals. However, he does not attribute morality in the full sense of the word, i.e., the ability to make conscious moral decisions and to lead a life, to animals. As a criticism against Lorenz, it is objected today that preservation of species is not a factor directly affecting evolution, but can be traced back e.g., by game-theoretical analyses of sociobiology to co-operation strategies for individual fitness maximization [30,31]. Furthermore, Lorenz links aggression and war in a direct way: "The factor driving the selections was war" [27], with reference to the Stone Age). This still evokes justified criticism today: "He imagined Stone Age man, without being able to prove this empirically in the slightest, in a permanent state of war." [32] The assertion of the Freiberg genetic researcher Bauer that Lorenz's theory of aggression is refuted [32] is, however, also too sweeping. Refuted is only the sociobiological absolutization of the egoism paradigm. The thesis that the degree of human aggression, destructiveness, and self-endangerment in the context of civilization exceeds the degree found in nature seems quite plausible. "Man is the only one among the primates who carries on the killing of his conspecifics in a planned way, on a larger scale, and enthusiastically. War is among his most important inventions." [33] If one tries to take stock of the extremely multi-layered discussion of Konrad Lorenz, which continues to this day, the following insights for ethics in the context of anthropology and peace research can be noted [34]: (1) As a natural driving force, aggression belongs to the basic endowment of man and requires control, but at the same time it is indispensable for his human development [5]. (2) A learning theory view that sees aggression solely as the result of external influences is not plausible; peace research must reckon with a human tendency to aggressive and violent forms of conflict management that cannot be overcome in principle. (3) This does not exclude the possibility that aggressiveness always has acquired components that can be culturally delegitimized [17] and pedagogically reduced. (4) Central problems of escalation of violence arise where people in modern civilizations are confronted

with situations and possibilities for which they are poorly prepared by their biological equipment to cope in a socially acceptable way.

Differences in the aggressive behavior of men and women

There are clear differences between the sexes in the typology of aggressive and competitive behavior. In men, assertiveness and the desire to dominate are generally highly valued. The tendency to constantly measure one's strength is strongly pronounced. Ranking in the group is usually tested relatively quickly, directly and in ritualized forms, evaluated in agreement and accepted relatively stable in the sense of a hierarchy of dominance. The majority of violent crimes are committed by men [35,36]. There are few behavioral characteristics that show such significant differences between men and women: 86% of those suspected of committing a violent crime (assault) are men. In the case of rape, the figure rises to 99% [37]. According to Papstefanu, women are more inclined to "prosocial dominance." Rank positions are rather indirectly tested out in the competition for attention, hardly evaluated in agreement and lead in the sense of a hierarchy of validity to constant, often only latent competition. The need for harmony, social responsibility and adaptation are valued more highly, and competition is often fought out indirectly. Even if the lower aggressiveness of women can be confirmed statistically, a considerable part of it must be booked to the account of culturally practiced behavior patterns [36]. The precise observation of different strategies of how conflicts are carried out [35] is, however, a fertile field of peace research. Women have taken on a leading role in the inter-national peace movement, especially in the 20th century, due to the stronger immediacy of the responsibility for sons who had to go to war and often did not return home.

Taking into account the socially shaped parts of role patterns, there is much to be said for the thesis that women are more capable of peace than men. However, this only applies to the likelihood of violent conflicts in the immediate vicinity and does not directly allow plausible statements to be made about the capacity for peace at the political level.

The Egoism Paradigm of Evolutionary Ethics

Change of perspective from "sympathy" to struggle for existence

Darwin does not start from the Hobbesian conception of man as a pure egoist but presupposes social instincts that lead man to help each other. In contrast to animals, which are guided into the execution of certain actions by specific, blind instincts, man has the "general desire to help his comrades" [38]. This shows itself as sympathy, which constitutes a significant part of the social instinct, indeed is its cornerstone [38]. "Sympathy" is the guiding concept of Darwin's attempt to bridge biology and molecular theology. In the ethical and social theoretical interpretation of the evolutionary approach in Social Darwinism, these differentiations, which Darwin tried to make, among other things, following the moral philosophy of David Hume, were largely forgotten [39]. Instead,

the idea gained the upper hand that the boundless struggle for existence, also in the context of societies, was the reason for higher development and therefore to be evaluated as good. Alternative social interpretations of evolution (for example, Peter Kropotkin in 1902 in the book "Mutual Aid in the Animal and Human World") remained of secondary importance or were reinterpreted collectivistically e.g., in Engels and Marx [39]; for an attempt at a systematically new approach to understanding the "evolution of cooperation,"[40]. For the theory of the struggle for existence there are plausible views in history: This seems to prove again and again that the human tendency to violence and cruelty breaks out under the thin varnish of cultural taming by law and morality. A dramatic example of this are the reports of child soldiers in the Congo who, in order to become members of a gang, must first shoot their parents or relatives and then receive five dollars in return (Die Zeit, 28.08.2003). This shows abysses of humanity of unimaginable brutality. In extreme situations of misery, social uprooting and war, there seems to be little reliance on the social instincts of man. The only viable argument that can be held against anthropological cultural pessimism in the face of such situations is to point out that escalations of violence always have social causes. Aggression is not only an individual fact but is also socially generated and learned [41]. Those who attribute the abysses of sadistic inhumanity to the account of nature alone according to the model of "biology as fate" fail to recognize and trivialize the sociocultural causes of violence.

Social darwinism

Social Darwinism is by no means only a historical phenomenon; its patterns of interpretation determine, in a partially concealed, differentiated or radicalized form, considerable parts of the current ethical political and scientific-theoretical discussions, for example in the form of sociobiology or in some forms of "economism". Its systematic basis is the idea of progress through the competition of "free" utilitarian striving [42]; for a critical analysis of problematic generalizations in contemporary theories of competition, see [43]. At the heart of sociobiology is the theory of the selfish gene, that is, the assumption of the control of behavior by all dominant imperative of genetic fitness maximization [31]. Wilson, who founded this research direction with his book Sociobiology [44], is justified in his concern to focus more on the biological determinants of human behavior. These have not infrequently been pushed too far into the background in a tradition that defined humans primarily by their reason and regarded them as a special case of nature. The application of game-theoretical analyses to behavioral models has brought to light an astonishing range of empirical confirmations for the assumption of individual success optimization [30]. Sociobiology considers aggression strictly related to the maximum propagation advantage of each individual's own genes as a biologically necessary fact. Aggression is interpreted under the umbrella of a utilitarian paradigm. The absolutization of the utilitarian principle, however, poses some problems: The theory of the selfish gene presupposes methodically what it claims to explain, namely that only what can be traced back to an advantage count as rational. It is based on a metaphysics of

the gene. The view of genes as ultimate, self-consistent units and as the actual agents of evolution is based on an "animism of genes" [45]. It is not a biologically justifiable theory. Sociobiological ethics has so far been largely speculative in character: the focus is not on problems of application, but on general questions about the nature of the ethical. It represents a fundamental challenge to ethics that has generated intense and sustained debate [7,8,14, 42,43,45,46].

There are essentially two attempted solutions

One is the strict separation between biology and ethics. Wuketits, for example, formulates: "One will, I believe, see the achievements of 'ethical behavior' precisely in the fact that man is able to overcome his 'biological nature' and can act 'morally right' even when this nature commands him to do otherwise" [12]. Morality is thus a defiant "nevertheless," an antithesis to man's biological disposition. Another school of thought is the attempt to relativize the scope of the egoism paradigm and thus also the aggression paradigm within evolutionary research itself [47,48 Vogt 2008, 567-571]. This is then seen as an important sub-element of development, but not as the only or even sufficient explanation for the emergence of patterns of order and higher development. In this perspective, factors such as cooperation and caring also appear as fundamental to the dynamics of development and behavior. In the tradition of Christian ethics, there is a strong tradition for both the antithetical and the integralistic models (cf. section 5.3). Empirically, for example, many indications of recent brain research speak for not underestimating the social disposition of human beings (cf. on this in this volume A. Holderegger). The nature of man is incurably ambivalent in the antagonism of egoism and altruism, aggression and care, cooperation and deception. Therefore, man's ability to be at peace does not seem to be excluded by nature, but always endangered and unstable.

Difference between egoism and aggression

Aggression is often by no means beneficial. It is a biologically based behavioral drive of self-assertion, of the combative measurement of strength, which should by no means be equated unseen with the action drive of utility maximization. Therefore, Wilhelm Korff speaks of a triadic structure of self-assertion, material use and care [5]. Alternatively, one can also speak of aggression, instrumentalization, and altruism or of rivalry, utility maximization, and affirmation. Especially for peace research such a triadic model offers decisive differentiations, which can free from the dead ends of not resolvable antitheses with conceptual pairs like "egoism - altruism", "sociable unsociability" (Kant), "love and hate" [49]. The usual bipolar patterns of thought often end up in alternatives that ultimately cannot be meaningfully decided [30, 39,50,51]. In contrast, a triadic model opens up a perspective that does not define the moral as a negation of the supposedly bad nature or as a naively optimistic counterpart to this equates it with a certain, positively valued impulse to act. Rather, morality is understood as an open process of personal integration that keeps the different impulses for action in a fluid equilibrium, so that they mutually limit each other and can be put into service for a life plan

that is considered meaningful [5]; for interpretation: [8,39]. The moral ought to be not determined by a substantive opposition to the natural will, but by the act of personal self-determination. In such a perspective, altruism, peaceableness, solidarity or whatever one names the moral postulates do not appear as the more or less heroic antithesis to “nature” understood as a negative foil, but as an achievement of integration and control of heterogeneous drives for action (on the ethical significance of concepts of integration [52], through which man comes into being as a person and constitutes himself as a free subject. The endangerment of such integration achievements is then not simply to be located on the level of nature, but also on the level of society. This prevents the anthropological approach to explaining aggression, violence and war from undermining the sociological critique that describes them as power always latent or manifest in social structures (Popitz 1986, 11-39).

Self-Preservation or Struggle for Recognition?

In their discussion of why people wage wars, Thomas Hobbes and Georg Hegel offer quite different models. Precisely because they differ so fundamentally in their conceptions of man, models of interpretation and ethical-political conclusions for strategies to overcome war and violence, they are very well suited as a starting point for philosophical reflections on this.

Struggle for self-preservation

Hobbes refers to the presocial state as the “state of nature.” In this state, every human being has a natural right to self-preservation. Because public order is lacking, man lives in a state of permanent threat and reacts to this in turn with violence and cunning. For the state of permanent fear of violent death leads even basically peaceful people to commit aggressive acts in order to survive [53]. In this respect, a “war of all against all” prevails. The fear of warlike attacks and ultimately of one’s own death motivates the desire for protection and security from others. The urge for a social union is thus based on self-interest and the calculation of benefits, since a secure lack of freedom is preferable to a violent and uncertain freedom. The only purpose of founding a state is the protection and defense of isolated people through internal peace and defense against external dangers [54]. However, leaving the state of nature, Hobbes emphasizes, cannot change the fundamentally selfish nature of man. Hobbes sees man as a selfish utility maximizer who cannot keep peace outside of society [53]. Despite this in some respects pessimistic premise of his view of man, he concludes that man at the same time strives for peace, albeit from a calculated utility. The basis of Hobbes’s concept of peace is radical subordination to the political sovereign. The problem of power control cannot be critically reflected upon within the framework of his approach.

In the context of the “new wars” in the context of state disintegration, the Hobbesian model seems to be urgently relevant today: One speaks of “neo Hobbesian wars” [55] which are not waged between but within states. The long duration, the mixing of civilian and soldier status, the seemingly limitless brutality, the lack of rules, and the economic benefit-oriented goals are characteristics that are in “immediate proximity [...] to war in the

classical Hobbesian sense” [55]. “The comparison with a struggle for self-preservation can be drawn when the loss of the state’s monopoly on the use of force renders law and order meaningless and conflict actors fight for all that seems useful to them for the purpose of self-preservation.” [56] The loss of belongingness in disintegrating states generates a high potential for violence: “Man’s power to injure is presumably guided by indifference more than by any other motive, such as hatred and contempt.” [57] Against the interpretation of the wars of state disintegration as a relapse into the state of nature it can be objected, however, that the extreme social uprooting of the people in the disintegrating states does not correspond to an original state to be assumed in history towards the becoming human. The humanity of man is not first guaranteed by the state but has gradually developed out of social dis-positions and structures, the beginnings of which can already be found in prehistoric times. However, it is always endangered. Violence is “not a mere operational accident of social relations, not a marginal phenomenon of social orders, and not merely an extreme case or an ultima ratio (of which not so much should be made of). Violence is indeed [...] an option of human action that is constantly present [57].

Struggle for recognition

“Recognition” means a reciprocal relationship between subjects in which each sees the other as his equal and at the same time as separate from himself. Hegel, who introduced this concept into philosophy [58], considers relations of reciprocal recognition as constitutive of subjectivity: One becomes an individual subject by recognizing and being recognized by another subject [56,59,60]. Recognition is thus the origin of freedom, but it is initially opposed by the social order of the antagonism of master and slave [56]. The master wants his will to be recognized by the servant without recognizing his will. The servant seeks to take the place of the master and then do likewise. War is based on man’s will to force the other to recognize his will without recognizing the other’s will. Peace can only be found when people mutually recognize their will and identity as free and inviolable in its dignity. Hegel wanted to overcome the model of social struggle introduced by Hobbes and Machiavelli by no longer seeking the reason for the practical occurrence of a conflict among people in the motive of self-preservation, but by tracing it back to man’s striving for recognition. Since man himself becomes a subject through recognition of the other, the conflict understood in this way has a dynamic to-wards social and moral progress [59,60]. In his transfer of the recognition theory to society, Honneth ties in with Hegel’s concept of social struggle which takes its starting point from moral feelings of injustice instead of predetermined interests. The struggle for social value and legal recognition constantly sets conflicts in motion. When individual experiences of disregard are interpreted by a particular group as “their” key experiences, collective demands for extended relations of recognition emerge [56,59] which can also discharge in warlike conflicts. The current war in Ukraine is not a rational conflict over opposing interests, but a conflict of recognition in the struggle over different identity structures [61]. Different rules apply to this type of conflict than to conflicts of different interests. Compromises, for example, usually

have no chance. From the point of view of peace ethics, the main thing is to learn how to deal with identity- and recognition-conflicts with mutual respect and tolerance [2].

The overlapping of recognition and resource conflicts

Due to globalization, recognition conflicts are particularly virulent. This is because different cultures with their views of humanity, interpretations of the world, moral codes, and legal systems encounter each other and are experienced by people as alternatives whose advantages and disadvantages they compare and between which they can or must decide. The transcultural encounters lead to whole cultural systems struggling for recognition on a national and international level and their representatives constantly fighting battles for recognition [60,62]. The experience of disregard and humiliation is no less virulent as a cause of conflict than the experience of hardship and misery. It is sometimes deliberately used as a method of warfare and as a political calculation to escalate conflicts (e.g. rape in the Balkans and in Africa). Many current wars and conflicts can be interpreted as a struggle for recognition, e.g., the struggle for national sovereignty in the Balkans, Palestine or Chechnya. Huntington's theory of the "Clash of Civilizations" [63], which focuses on so called fault line wars between cultures, can be interpreted with Hegel as a model of recognition conflicts. The conflicts between Western and Islamic countries or groups seem to confirm Huntington's thesis in a most dramatic way: It is plausible to assume that the conflicts triggered by the September 11 attacks are not about material interests, but about the reaction to a cultural grievance. It is highly problematic, however, that Huntington presents the cultural blocs in a very sweeping way. In the Near and Middle East, for example, it is precisely the very complex differentiation between the various Islamic currents and groupings that is important if one wants to understand the conflicts and recognize possibilities for viable solutions (for a critical discussion of Huntington, see [42]. Moreover, it is problematic that the interpretation and staging of threats function according to the pattern of a self-fulfilling prophecy and partly generate and reinforce the conflicts they want to combat. Simultaneously with the new virulence of conflicts of recognition, that of conflicts of existence is also increasing. The main reason for this is the ecological crisis, which is already depriving several hundred million people of their livelihoods, for example in the form of climate change, water shortages or the degradation of fertile soils [64,65]. Since climate change is largely anthropogenic, i.e., caused by humans, and the sufferers in the global South are not identical with the main polluters in the global North, it is rightly interpreted as a conflict of justice and not accepted as fate. This overlapping of resource and recognition conflicts is particularly explosive from a socio-ethical and political point of view. Both the need for self-preservation, physical integrity and material prosperity and the need for recognition, i.e., cultural and social equality, are basic anthropological forces that can lead to violent conflicts at the individual and collective levels. Especially when recognition and existence or resource struggles overlap, highly complex conflict situations arise. Although the social causes of wars are rightly the

focus of contemporary conflict research, the models of Hobbes and of Hegel offer an insightful complement in terms of understanding the anthropology of war.

Cultural Tools for Peacemaking

Peace through law

Kant first introduces the title of his famous peace treatise "Zum ewigen Frieden" satirically: it is taken from an inn sign on which a cemetery was painted. From the perspective of practical politicians, who start from principles of experience and look down on the philosopher's school wisdom, it seems that we find eternal peace only in death. Life, development is always connected with conflicts. Kant explicitly rejects the idea that his philosophical concept of overcoming the institution of war is naive and unworldly. He assumes that the violent settlement of conflicts can be overcome by the institution of law, to which the state's monopoly on the use of force belongs, and its international integration through a treaty between nations. Law is an order of distrust [5]. It is not harmony, but always takes place in litigation. By definition, it is linked to the power to coerce, that is, to force in the sense of potestas. Anthropologically, man is a "rule maker" [5,66]. He is by nature designed to control himself and the shaping of social coexistence through sanction-proof rules. The establishment and gradual refinement of such rules is the most important basis of man's ability to live in peace. Politically, too, Kant's vision of international peace has become reality in essential aspects today through the institutions of the UN, the recognition of human rights, and the complex system of international treaties. We have reached a level of legal guarantee and negotiation diplomacy worldwide for which Kant was one of the most important pioneers. Here Christian social ethics should contradict modernity critical cultural pessimism and recognize genuine human progress.

Peace through interdependence of interests

In the mid-19th century, Herbert Spencer unfolds a very different vision of overcoming interstate aggression. For him, it is not the institution of law, but that of the division of labor and thus of the intertwining of interests, which leads to mutual dependence and thus makes consideration for other states appear rational on the basis of economic interests [39]. Emile Durkheim continued this theory under the heading of division of labor (ibid. 145-149). The systematic core of Spencer's concept is an ethics of competition [43]. What Spencer does not sufficiently consider is that only the change from the right of the strongest to the right of priority, i.e., the first, makes the striving for dominance culturally viable. On the other hand, from a socio-ethical point of view, the thesis of the decoupling of the motive for action and the effect of action is justified. This was already the core of the social-theoretical justification of competition in the moral philosophy of the British Enlightenment before Spencer, for example in Mandeville (*Private Vices, Public Benefits*, 1732). The strength of these perspectives lies in their ability to integrate ethically and socially, via institutions of competition, the strong impulses for action of the human striving for advantage. Our civilization has an essential root in the

agonal culture of Greece and one of its secrets of success. Against this background, peaceable cannot mean complete harmony, but only cultural sublimation of the forms of competition. This cultivation also includes the ability to renounce violence and to accept rules. Ethically, the idea of peace through interdependence and rationalization of the pursuit of advantage, on which Hobbes ultimately also relies, has many ambivalences [8,42]: Ecologically, we are currently wrecking the planet because we can neither coordinate the pursuit of advantage globally nor align it in the long term. Such an unboundedness of the calculus of advantage seems to overtax human reason and politics. The idea of peace through law, as conceived by Kant, has a systematic priority over the economic reconstruction of morality if only because the economy needs a legal framework in order to develop productively, whereas law does not depend on the economy in the same way.

Theological visions of peace in conflict with different views of man

Biblical anthropology accepts that human beings are also prone to aggression. It does not idealize man. Instead of whitewashing violence, the Bible radically questions its forms and causes. "The Bible tears apart the veil of violence" (DBK 2000, 27). It unsparingly shows how man's omnipresent tendency to violence threatens the order of creation and coexistence, as in the story of Cain and Abel. Such a sober perception of violence in its many facets is the first prerequisite for its human overcoming. Despite all weakness and sinfulness, however, man is believed to have the possibility of good [67,68]. In Christian ethics there are two quite different traditions. On the one hand, there is the Pauline-Augustinian line which understands the doing of good on the whole as overcoming human nature. On the other hand, there is the Aristotelian-Thomistic line which rather affirmatively assumes the striving for happiness inherent in man. According to the Thomistic line, the doing of good has rather the character of integration and rational control of the predispositions inherent in man. Grace is not an antithesis to nature but presupposes and perfects it ("Gratia naturam supponit et perfecit"). For Thomas, however, reason remains the decisive characteristic of the nature of man, so that a neo Thomistic naturalistic appropriation of his concept does not correspond to the original intention. Man is not given to himself, but given up, this is also true for dealing with aggression. The possibility of overcoming and controlling it is inherent in the nature of man, but it is by no means stabilized; it is an unfinishable task of humanization. To me the Aristotelian Thomistic line seems more plausible. Applied to the question of aggression and the pursuit of utility, this means: A generally binding guiding conception of human coexistence that aims at a complete elimination of aggression and individual striving for utility is directed against the anthropological conditional structure of human action [69]. It would miss the human structure of morality and would not be realizable. Rather, we should strive for a constructive classification of these impulses for action by way of an integrative use, control and redirection of the vital energy connected with it by other, counteracting impulses. In my opinion,

the chances of a society capable of peace depend to a large extent on the fact that it does not rely solely on an altruistic morality of renunciation but integrates the complex network of human drives for action and patterns of interaction into a dynamic of gradual human and social integration.

The conception of morality as a defiant nevertheless and as an antithesis to the biological disposition of man, as conceived by many biologists, theologians, and philosophers [12,13], is an overestimation of human reason. In borderline situations, the radical negation of human tendencies to aggression and egoism is always necessary, individually and collectively; as a normal case of everyday life, man's spontaneous disposition does not offer bad chances for a peaceable society. At the same time, however, the Augustinian insight remains inescapable that the promise of salvation according to the Christian conception is not based on human achievement, but on grace: peace in the comprehensive sense of salvation and a successful life is not feasible, but a gift.

Beyond zoological morality

The tension between the "aggression paradigm" of evolutionary theories and the "social paradigm" that prevails in the field of moral concepts cannot be resolved. By nature, man is not peaceful, but aggressive. The minimization of cultural constraints and frustrations does not lead to the minimization of aggression. A culture of peace does not result directly from the behavioral repertoire inherent in man by "nature". In the biological and cultural evolution, however, man has been given a variety of mechanisms for limiting aggression. As a rule, aggression becomes dangerous when weapon systems and fields of conflict arise for which people are culturally and politically unprepared [70-75]. The aggression inhibition inherent in nature fails, for example, if the enemy can be destroyed with ABC weapons at the push of a button. Moreover, as totalitarian and fundamentalist systems have shown time and again, human beings are highly susceptible to political instrumentalization. There is an innate and politically abusable need for enemy images. Man is capable of peace only under the condition of a constant education to maturity, freedom and democracy.

This cultural education can and must permeate the whole person. If it remains superficial, it will flake off in critical situations. According to the analyses of Helmut Plessner, however, there is at least the possibility that human behavior is culturally shaped to the core, that the cultural imprints do not cover the unchanged pre-culturally shaped nature like a thin surface layer, but that the cultural living conditions can shape the human drive structure as a whole [3,4]. Plessner characterizes the specific form of human vitality by the capacity for passion which opens up new motivational forces for man beyond the biologically given forms or gives new forms and contents to the biologically given drives for action. In his anthropological definition of the "conditio humana" Plessner strongly criticizes the zoological conception of human drive forms which by undifferentiated transfer of observations on animals leads to the misunderstanding of a purely negative

understanding of morality as an external compulsion [76-80]. The mechanical understanding of drives, as found in many biologists, but also in the basic models of Freudian psychoanalysis, does not do justice to man. It is part of the nature of man that he can always grow beyond seemingly predetermined limits in unexpected ways. A "zoologization of morality" [3] does not do justice to human possibilities. As a summary of these considerations, it can be stated: Man is by nature a cultural being and thus also by nature designed for peace in the sense of overcoming violence and sublimating the forms of conflict [23]. However, this possibility is always endangered and requires moral cultural as well as legal institutional stabilization. The antagonism between the longing for peace and the striving for selfpreservation and recognition is irrevocable in a limited world. The global situation, which is characterized by state disintegration, technical destruction possibilities of great range, profound ecological change as well as a coexistence of different civilizations, generates many conflicts for which we are by our anthropological conditions of action only insufficiently prepared. All the more the claim of just peace depends on a deeper analysis of the "moral grammar of social conflicts" [59] in order to set the necessary learning processes in motion. Precisely because the human being is constantly challenged anew in the tension between conflict and cooperation to overcome destructive behaviour, reconciliation is a task of the human development and especially of (Christian) peace ethics [1].

References

- Markus V (2022) Being a christian in a fragile world. Revisions of Peace Ethics in View of The Ukraine War. *Feinwarz net, Theological Feuilleton*.
- Markus V, Rolf H (2021) Proactive tolerance as a way to peace. In: Küppers V (Ed.), *Proactive Tolerance. The Key to Peace, Nomos, Baden-Baden, Germany*, pp. 19-35.
- Helmuth P (1976) *The question of the human condition. Essays On Philosophical Anthropology, Baden-Baden, Germany*.
- Helmuth P (1965) *The stages of the organic and man. (2nd edn), Berlin, Germany*.
- Wilhelm K (1985) *Norm and morality. Investigations into the logic of normative reason. (2nd edn), Freiburg, Germany*.
- Ludger H (1993) *The ethical rationality of modern times. Handbook of Christian Ethics 1: 19-45*.
- Knapp A (1989) *Sociobiology and moral theology. Criticism of the ethical conclusions of modern biology. Weinheim, Germany*.
- Zelinka U (1994) *Normativity of nature - nature of normativity. An Interdisciplinary Study on The Question of The Genesis and Structure of Norms, Freiburg, Germany*.
- Helmut S (1980) *System-functional, anthropological and person-functional approach to legal sociology. Ibid, The Sociologists and The Law. Treatises and Lectures on the Sociology of Law, Institution and Planning, Opladen, Germany*, pp. 95-146.
- George ME (1984) *Principia ethica. Stuttgart, Germany*.
- Wolfgang W (1981) *The biology of the ten commandments. Why nature is not a role model for us. (5th edn), Munich, Germany*.
- Franz MW (1993b) *Evolutionary ethics and its critics. Attempt At Metacriticism. In: Lütterfelds W (Ed.), Evolutionary ethics between naturalism and idealism. Darmstadt, Germany*, pp. 208-234.
- Hans M (1987) *Nature and morals. Ethics in Biology, Darmstadt, Germany*.
- Philip H (1984) *Sociobiology, ethics and theology. In: Zygon (Ed.), Journal for Religion and Science, Florida, USA*, pp.185-206.
- Herbert SM, Ulrich B, Detlef (1997) *Psychology of aggressiveness. (2nd edn), Goettingen, Germany*.
- Herbert S (2011) *Aggression*.
- Jan PR (2008) *Trust and violence. Essay on a special constellation of modernity. Hamburg, Germany*.
- Johan G (1975) *Structural violence. Contributions to peace and conflict research. Hamburg, Germany*.
- Sigmund F (1920) *Beyond the pleasure principle. (3rd edn), Frankfurt, Germany*, pp. 213-272.
- Sigmund F (1930) *The discomfort in culture. Study edition. In: Mitscherlich A (Ed.), Frankfurt, Germany*, pp.191-270.
- Friedrich N (1887) *On the genealogy of morals. Works VI (2nd edn), Berlin, Germany*.
- Wilhelm R (1970) *Character analysis. Cologne, Germany*.
- Rutger B (2020) *Basically good: A new history of mankind. Reinbek, Germany*.
- Thomas H (1993) *Criticism of media-ethical reason. The Ethical discussion about the film in Germany in the 20th Century, Munich, Germany*.
- Dollard, John D, Leonard WM, Neal EM, Sears OH, et al. (1939) *Frustration and aggression. New Haven, Connecticut, US*.
- Michael T (2016) *A natural history of human morality*.
- Konrad L (1963) *The so-called evil. On the natural history of aggression. New Edition, Munich, Germany*.
- Konrad L (1973) *The eight deadly sins of civilized mankind. (16th edn), Munich, Germany*.
- Christian V (1989) *From killing to murder. Real evil in evolutionary history*.
- Wolfgang WS, Ulla (1991) *The principle of self-interest. New Edition, Munich, Germany*.
- Richard D (1976) *The selfish gene. Gen, (2nd edn), Oxford, Heidelberg, Germany*.
- Joachim B (2008) *The cooperative gene. Farewell to Darwinism, Hamburg, Germany*.
- Hans EM (1996) *Prospects of the civil war. (2nd edn), Frankfurt, Germany*.
- König B, Markus V (1998) *Behavioral research. In: Korff W, Beck L, Mikat P (Eds.), Encyclopedia of Bioethics, Gütersloh, Germany*, pp. 688-701.
- Regina MD, Reinhild S (2002) *Violence ratios. Feminist perspectives on gender and violence*.
- Kohler F, Katharina P (2003) *Violence and gender, constructions, positions, practices, opladen*.
- Michael M (2002) *Doing masculinity-on the gender logic of male acts of violence. In: Dackweiler RM, Schäfer R (Eds.), Violence Relationships. Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Violence, Frankfurt, Germany*, pp. 53-80.
- Charles D (1966) *The descent of man. In: Schmidt H (Ed.), Stuttgart, Germany*.
- Markus V (1997) *Social darwinism. Philosophy of science, political and theological-ethical aspects of the theory of evolution, Freiburg, Germany*.

40. Robert A (1991) *The evolution of cooperation*. (2nd edn), München, Germany.
41. Judith H (2009) *Mind over matter. The questioning of free will through modern brain research as a challenge for theology and ethics*, Münster, Germany.
42. Markus V (2009) *Social darwinism. On the interaction between the concept of nature and social theory*. *Theology and Faith* 99: 548-571.
43. Ulrich T (2010) *Competition as a concept of justice. Criticism of Neoliberalism*, Marburg, Germany.
44. Edward OW (1975) *Sociobiology, the new synthesis*. Mass, Cambridge, UK.
45. Erbrich P (1995) *On the consistency of the sociobiological term egoistic gene*. In: *Theology and philosophy* 70, Freiburg, Germany.
46. Wilhelm L (1993) *Evolutionary ethics between naturalism and idealism*.
47. Margulis L, Dorion S (1986) *Microcosmos*. New York, USA.
48. Robert W(1991) *Beyond natural selection*. Cambridge, UK.
49. Eibl E, Irenäus (1970) *Love and hate. On the natural history of elementary behavior*. Munich, Germany.
50. Jean WC (2007) *Egoism from below against paternalism from above*. Leipzig, Germany.
51. Franz WM (1993) *Doomed to Immorality? On the natural history of good and evil*. Munich, Germany.
52. Manfred M (1995) *Art. Integration*. In: *Görresgesellschaft (Ed.), Staatslexikon, (7th edn)*, 3: 111-118.
53. Herfried M (1993) *Thomas Hobbes*. Frankfurt, Germany.
54. Thomas H (1651) *Leviathan, or the matter, form, and power of an ecclesiastical and civil state*. In: *Fetscher I (Ed.), (4th edn)*, Frankfurt, Germany.
55. Trutz TV (1999) *Forms of war. On the typology of warlike action power*. In: *Neckel S, Schwab MT (Eds.), Orders of violence. Contributions to a political sociology of violence and war*, Opladen, Germany.
56. Christina K (2008) *War and peace in the perspective of christian social ethics*. Munich, Germany.
57. Heinrich P (1992) *Phenomena of power*. (2nd edn), greatly expanded ed. Tübingen, Germany.
58. Georg HWF (1817) *Encyclopedia of the philosophical sciences*. In: *Nicolin O (Ed.), (8th edn)*, Hamburg, Germany.
59. Axel H (1994) *Struggle for recognition. On the moral grammar of social conflicts*. Frankfurt, Germany.
60. Nancy F, Axel H (2003) *Redistribution or recognition? A political-philosophical controversy*, Frankfurt, Germany.
61. Markus Vogt (2022) *The dangerous construction of national, religious and moral identities in The Ukrainian war*.
62. Charles T (1993) *Multiculturalism and the politics of recognition*.
63. Samuel H (1997) *Clash of cultures. Reshaping world politics in the 21st century*. Original: *The clash of civilisations*. Munich, Germany.
64. UNDP [United Nations Development Programme] (2007) *Human development report. Fighting climate change: Human solidarity in a divided World*, Berlin, Germany.
65. WBGU [German Advisory Council on Global Change] (2008) *World in transition. Security risk climate change*, Berlin, Germany.
66. Wilhelm K (2003) *Creation has God at its back and in front of it*. Wilhelm Korff in *Conversation with Wolfgang Küpper*, In: *Bachleitner G, Winger W (Eds.), Modernity in transition*, Freiburg, Germany, pp. 176-211.
67. Markus V (2020a) *Reconciliation as a principle of christian peace ethics*. *Amos International* 3: 3-9.
68. Markus V (2020b) *Paths of peace*. In: *Martin T, Eugen B, Herder (Eds.), The main works in discourse*. Freiburg, Germany, pp. 335-372.
69. Josef RH (2001) *Why we want to win*. Munich, Germany.
70. Thomas AV (1987) *Theologische Sum II-II, quaestio 57-79 (law and justice)*.
71. Thomas B, Werner V, Stephan Z (2007) *Handbook theology and popular film (1)* Paderborn, Germany.
72. Georg E (2002) *Violence explained socially anthropologically*. *International Handbook of Violence Research*, Wiesbaden, Germany.
73. Erich F (1974) *Anatomy of human destructiveness*.
74. Immanuel K (1999) *To eternal peace*. Stuttgart, Germany.
75. Papstefanou C (2005) *Competitive behavior as a motor of lifelong personality development*. Munich, Germany.
76. In: David R (Ed.) (1986) *The anthropology of violence*. Oxford, England.
77. Markus V (2021a) *Christian peace ethics and its relevance for tolerance and reconciliation in Ukraine*. In: *Küppers V (Ed.), Proactive tolerance. The key to peace*. Baden-Baden, Nomos, Germany, pp. 117-137.
78. Markus V, Arnd K (2021) *Proactive tolerance. The key to peace*. Nomos, Baden-Baden, Germany.
79. Edward WO (1980) *Biology as destiny. The sociobiological foundations of human behavior*, Frankfurt/Main.
80. Walter Z, Wolf CS (1993) *The importance of empirical science and technology for ethics*. *Handbook of Christian Ethics* 1: 297-316.

For possible submissions Click below:

[Submit Article](#)