

# **Immanuel Kant on Toleration**

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## Thesis Summary

This thesis provides an account of Kant's views on toleration, derived from the exegesis of relevant sections of his corpus. It begins by systematically surveying all direct examples of toleration-language in Kant's works, and analysing these with a view to articulating Kant's understanding of toleration as it relates to both the moral and political spheres. The thesis then turns to consider how ideas of toleration are used more broadly in his work, in selected texts where explicit toleration-language does not appear but where toleration does figure conceptually or indirectly. Other contemporary readings of Kant on toleration are then evaluated in light of the conclusions reached. Although it is a study of toleration-terminology and related conceptual thinking across all of Kant's corpus, the thesis primarily concentrates on works produced within the context of the political turmoil in the aftermath of the French Revolution, specifically *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, and *Toward Perpetual Peace*, alongside with his earlier (1784) essay *What is Enlightenment?* The thesis argues that it is possible to identify in Kant a constructive concept of toleration, while proposing that any reading of Kant on toleration should be the result of a more systematic and comprehensive study of toleration in his works than some other recent reconstructions in the contemporary literature. It will be suggested that for Kant toleration functions to support and facilitate both personal-moral and political progress along Kantian lines, even though Kant's conception of toleration contains significant limitations. These conclusions emerge more clearly from some of the works studied than others, but nonetheless are argued to be present in a number of Kant's writings of the 1780s and 1790s in relation to a variety of moral and political questions.

### **Statement by Candidate**

The work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Signed: A. Bain

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> October 2017

(Andrew McEwen Bain)

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## *Chapter 1 - Introduction*

### **1.1 Why Kant on Toleration?**

Toleration of minorities and their views continues to be a perennially important question for many societies.<sup>1</sup> In contexts characterised by diversity, such as contemporary western societies, the question of how much toleration should be extended by the state and wider society to those with political, religious or other views which are seen to be at variance with, and potentially undermine, the liberal assumptions of the established order is a pressing one. In many western countries in particular, finding answers to how to make social pluralism “work” arises quite sharply whenever issues such as immigration policy, the conduct of religious groups, terrorism and state surveillance, or national identity are in view. However, difficulties arise in asking questions about state or societal “toleration” of those with whom the majority do not agree since the basis on which toleration might be extended or withheld is often not clear. Further, exactly what might be entailed by “toleration” in either the personal or the political sphere can be difficult to sharply articulate,<sup>2</sup> even though contemporary discussions of toleration are ultimately grounded upon a very extensive history of philosophical treatments of toleration in the late-seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. This thesis seeks to enrich conceptual discussion of toleration by considering Kant’s perspective on the matter. On the one hand, as a major and influential figure writing on moral and political matters at the end of a period of over a century during which toleration of religious minorities in particular was much-discussed in western philosophy and more widely, Kant is obvious choice to interrogate on this question. On the other hand, Kant is also a controversial choice, since he has not been the subject of substantial research on toleration because he himself does not appear to devote much attention to it within the context of his very substantial corpus. However, as we shall see Kant does give significant attention to the concept of toleration. It is the contention of this thesis that in so doing, Kant offers a nuanced, relatively consistent, and largely unappreciated account of

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<sup>1</sup> The contemporary literature on toleration as a general subject is vast. The following short sample drawn from works published in the last five years indicates through the titles alone the level of both interest and controversy which continues to surround toleration as a topic: Martha Nussbaum, *The New Religious Intolerance: Overcoming the Politics of Fear in an Anxious Age* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2012); Teresa Bejan, *Mere Civility: Disagreement and the Limits of Toleration* (Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press, 2017); Wendy Brown & Rainer Forst, *The Power of Tolerance: A Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014); Brian Leiter, *Why Tolerate Religion?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014); Alfred Stepan and Charles Taylor (eds), *Boundaries of Toleration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Glen Newey, *Virtue, Reason and Toleration: The Place of Toleration in Ethical and Political Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 32-34.

toleration and its place both in the moral life of the individual and in the state's regulation of right conduct at the societal level.

## 1.2 Primary Sources

The burden of this thesis is to provide an account of Kant's views on toleration, derived from the exegesis of relevant sections of his work where he refers to toleration either directly or indirectly. We shall call here "direct" uses of toleration in Kant those instances where he explicitly uses terms which we might directly translate as toleration. We shall refer to as "indirect" examples of toleration in Kant, those cases where he does not directly use the terminology of toleration, but instead discusses concepts or ideas that we would think of as examples of toleration, without explicitly using the language of toleration. As we shall see in Chapters 2 and 3, toleration appears at least briefly in some form in many of Kant's works. Of those texts which contain either significant use of toleration language, or toleration-like concepts, the most notable works are his 1784 essay *What is Enlightenment?*, together with several moral and political works produced in the 1790s in the anxious context of the political turmoil occurring in the wake of the French Revolution: *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Religion* (1793),<sup>3</sup> *Theory and Practice* (1793), *Toward Perpetual Peace* (1795), and *The Conflict of the Faculties* (1798).<sup>4</sup> Of Kant's three major presentations of his practical philosophy, we will concentrate on *The Metaphysics of Morals* (1797) as the one which contains the most material directly relevant to this thesis. This also has methodological advantages, given it is produced in the same later period of his life as most of the other works considered.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Available in English translation in Immanuel Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology* (Translated by Allen W. Wood and George di Giovanni. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 39-215. Hereafter, all references to passages from Kant's works are cited by the volume and page number of the Academy Edition of Kant's works, *Kant's gesammelte Schriften*, Vols 1-12 edited by the Prussian Academy of Sciences; Vol 13 by the German Academy of Sciences in Berlin; Vols 14-29 by the Academy of Sciences in Göttingen. Where English quotations are given, these are all from the relevant volume of the text published in the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*.

with the exception of direct quotations are given in English and citation details are given for the relevant volume of

<sup>4</sup> All available in English translation in Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy* (Translated by Mary J. Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> English translation: *ibid.*, 353-603.

### 1.3 Readings of Kant on Toleration: Contemporary Perspectives

Because Kant has not written extensively on toleration, the number of scholars who have addressed the matter of his conception of it is not large. However, while not large, there is a focused and readily identifiable body of contemporary material on Kant's conception of toleration. The various views represented will be outlined in fuller detail in Chapter 4, where they are evaluated in light of our analysis of the primary sources. In brief, however, contemporary scholarship can be summarized as dividing along three key fault lines.

The first fault line concerns the question of whether Kant's conception of toleration is sufficiently developed to offer anything of positive value that is worthy of serious consideration relative to other proposals from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Some well-known scholars, such as Jonathan Israel, have argued in the negative on this point. In Israel's case, he suggests that Kant's occasional comments on toleration amount to a view of toleration which is relatively insipid in comparison with other figures of the later Enlightenment.<sup>6</sup> The fact that Kant says relatively little about toleration within the context of his vast corpus and, as we shall see in Chapter 2 he appears to dismiss it as outmoded and limited in one prominent text, might be taken as evidence of a *prima facie* case in this direction. However, against this, the other scholars considered below, particularly O'Neill, all regard toleration as being a more substantial and positive element of Kant's thought than Israel does.

The second major fault line concerns whether Kant's understanding of toleration is central to his wider practical project, or relatively marginal even if it does hold some significance. Onora O'Neill's seminal contribution argues strongly for the former conclusion.<sup>7</sup> O'Neill suggest that in spite of initial appearances, toleration structurally lies near the centre of Kant's entire practical philosophy, on the grounds that it is central to his concept of public reason and his account of political philosophy. O'Neill bases her reading of Kant on *What Is Enlightenment?*

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<sup>6</sup> Jonathan Israel, *A Revolution of the Mind: Radical Enlightenment and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> This view was first presented in Onora O'Neill, "The Public Use of Reason," *Political Theory* 14.4 (1986), 523-551. O'Neill subsequently advocated for key elements of the same view in Onora O'Neill, *Constructions of Reason: Explorations of Kant's Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 28-50; also in Onora O'Neill, "Kant's Conception of Public Reason," pages 138-182 in *Kant and the Concept of Community* (Edited by Charlton Payne and Lucas Thorpe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).



which she reads in light of his major critical works. By contrast, the positions of David Heyd,<sup>8</sup> Joaquín Abellan,<sup>9</sup> and Philip Quinn<sup>10</sup> are examples of the alternative, regarding toleration as relatively marginal, if still somewhat interesting and useful concept, in Kant's work.

Thirdly and lastly, a further key point of conceptual distinction among contemporary readings of Kant on toleration is whether Kant's understanding is primarily moral or political in orientation. O'Neill argues that toleration for Kant is essentially political in character and application, whereas Heyd, responding to O'Neill, claims that it is largely moral. Both O'Neill and Heyd see toleration as being tightly bound up with Kant's concept of public reason, however they have very different understandings as to how public reason and toleration operate for Kant. O'Neill considers toleration for Kant to be primarily an activity of the state, and his whole practical project to have something of a political orientation, with the result that toleration is largely political. By contrast, Heyd argues that because for Kant the political realm of juridical right is not the sphere within which public reason operates, toleration must be primarily moral. Others, such as Abellan and Quinn, consider that toleration for Kant is largely moral while still possessing significant political implications. According to Abellan, for Kant toleration is equivalent to respect, and thus like respect is a moral concept, albeit one that is sometimes appropriately applied in the political sphere. For Quinn, toleration arises necessarily for individuals from the epistemic limitations of their reason, and is therefore moral in the first instance even though it also has implications for the state and its officials.

#### **1.4 Thesis Outline**

In light of these disagreements in the contemporary literature, this thesis will return to the primary texts to seek to provide clarity on the three points of divergence noted above, and in so doing further the debate surrounding Kant's views on toleration. As we shall see in Chapter 4, the underlying deficiency in most contemporary readings of Kant on toleration is that they tend to focus too narrowly on a single text by Kant, or a very small group of texts. This project

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<sup>8</sup> David Heyd, "Is Toleration a Political Virtue?" *Nomos* 48 (2008), 171-194.

<sup>9</sup> Joaquín Abellan, "Immanuel Kant: Tolerance Seen as Respect," pages 207-220 in *Paradoxes of Religious Toleration in Early Modern Political Thought* (Edited by J. C. Luarsen & M. J. Villaverde. Lexington: Lanham, MD, 2012).

<sup>10</sup> Philip L. Quinn, "Religious Diversity and Religious Toleration," in *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 50 (2001), 57-80.

therefore seeks to offer a more complete account of Kant's view on toleration through a systematic and comprehensive review of his entire corpus.

In Chapter 2, we begin by noting that Kant does make a significant number of direct references to toleration through the use of several of the German terms which carry the idea explicitly. The chapter will systematically examine each of these references, organized by word-group (such as '*toleranz*' and '*dulden*'), giving particular attention to those texts where toleration is discussed by Kant with reference to moral and political matters. From these texts alone it emerges that Kant tends to conceptualise toleration in particular ways, and does not regard it simplistically or dismissively, as some such as Israel have suggested. In fact, Kant's usage of the terminology of toleration reveals that it has quite a constructive role within his moral philosophy, in supporting virtue and aiding progress towards enlightenment. For Kant, toleration in a moral sense is not merely a means necessary for individuals to "get on" in their personal relationships in an as-yet imperfect world or of enacting some moral duty or another for the time being: it also contributes towards moral progress. His political concept of toleration is also clearly delineated within his thought across those texts where he explicitly uses the terminology. However, unlike his usage of the terminology in a moral sense, when Kant talks *explicitly* or directly of toleration in the political sphere he only ever speaks of it as being a mere political necessity for the present time, rather than as also having a constructive function analogous to that associated with moral toleration.

In Chapter 3, we take the question beyond Kant's use of toleration language, to explore how Kant writes of toleration indirectly or conceptually (that is, without using the terminology of toleration itself). We will focus specifically on his political thought, to determine whether Kant does think of political toleration in a way that might mirror the more constructive usage identified in Chapter 2 with respect to his strictly moral philosophy. It emerges in Chapter 3 that such elements do appear in a small number of political texts, where Kant sees toleration in the political sphere as having an important role in facilitating constructive movement toward enlightenment. However, with respect to both his moral and political thought, it is clear that Kant's concept of toleration is limited, and quite strictly limited on some points as we shall see.

In Chapter 4, these relatively positive conclusions regarding Kant on toleration are related to the other contemporary readings of Kant on toleration. The interpretation of Kant on toleration which has been developed in Chapters 2 and 3, based on a broader range of primary texts than the alternatives, emerges as distinct from all of them. I will conclude that Kant's concept of toleration is quite developed, and contrary to Israel's claims, worthy of serious consideration. However, against O'Neill I will argue that Kant's concept of toleration. Important as it is, toleration not central to his entire practical system. Lastly, on the question of whether toleration is primarily a political or a moral concept for Kant, I will conclude that any systematic review of Kant's views on toleration must recognise that there are both moral and political aspects of toleration operating in his thought, and that both are significant in their own right.

## ***Chapter 2: Kant & the German Terminology of Toleration***

### **2.1. Overview**

As we have seen, there are several major lines of disagreement in the secondary literature on Kant's conception of toleration. The first step to resolving these disputes will be to explore in detail what Kant says directly about toleration. In total, Kant makes explicit reference to toleration in some 68 passages in volumes 1-23 of the Academy Edition of his works (i.e. across all of his published works, and his unpublished works excluding the lecture notes). In what follows, we will systematically consider all of these references, while concentrating on several where Kant's comments have particular relevance for his moral and political philosophy. These 68 references incorporate a variety of different German terms which carry the meaning of toleration and which are commonly translated into English as such, and our survey will discuss them by word-group (*toleranz*, *dulden*, *aushalten*, *verträglichkeit*, and *ertragen*, in that order) and within each word-group in chronological order where this is possible. A full listing of all instances of each term is provided in the Appendix. The view of toleration which emerges from this survey is of a concept which in at least some texts has a constructive moral value, though with some limitations, and which in political texts is restricted to merely a necessity for the protecting the peaceable operations of society and of the state in the present, rather than contributing towards a better future.

### **2.2. "Mere" Toleration in *What Is Enlightenment?***

Perhaps the best-known reference that Kant makes to toleration appears towards the end of his 1784 essay, *What is Enlightenment?* It is also this reference which forms the focus of O'Neill's seminal account which inaugurated the contemporary discussion of Kant and toleration. In the reference in question, Kant refers to toleration (here, *toleranz*) in a relatively negative sense, in a text that might readily be assumed at first glance to show that Kant has a conception of toleration that is both simple and unsympathetic:

A prince who does not find it beneath himself to say that he considers it his duty not to prescribe anything to human beings in religious matters but to leave them complete freedom, who thus even declines the arrogant name of *tolerance* [*toleranz*], is himself enlightened and deserves to be praised by a grateful world and by posterity as the one

who first released the human race from minority, at least from the side of government, and left each free to make use of his own reason in all matters of conscience.<sup>11</sup>

There are several features of this reference to tolerance which are noteworthy.

Firstly, Kant's concern in this text – at least explicitly – is with state prescription in relation to religious matters. In summing up at the end of this section, Kant states directly that he has written on enlightenment in relation to matters of religion because it is in this area in his time that governments are most inclined to act in ways that hinder the progress of enlightenment.<sup>12</sup> However, in the essay as a whole Kant is concerned with the operation of public reason in general *vis-a-vis* the state, and therefore it might be argued his thoughts about toleration here could function similarly, in matters beyond the public regulation of religion. For Kant, the public use of reason involves the expression of views by a citizen who is exercising practical reason with reference to the good without having their reasoning constrained or shaped by their social role or context.<sup>13</sup> For example, when a military officer speaks to his troops about war strategy it is a private use of reason, but when the same officer writes about warfare addressing the wider world of scholars this is a public use of reason. He contrasts it with the private use of reason, which involves citizens expressing ideas in (and shaped by) their capacity as an officer of the state, a clergyman, a teacher, or other social roles.<sup>14</sup> We will return to this distinction in Chapter 3.

Secondly, Kant's apparent criticism of "tolerance" here is that it is *arrogant*, and in this context it is arrogant in not allowing full freedom for subjects in relation to religion. This is because it implies that although the prince in question does not actively circumscribe the religious beliefs of his subjects, in merely *tolerating* divergent beliefs, he arrogantly implies their inferiority. For where a tolerant prince still expresses a preference by merely tolerating some views while enthusiastically supporting others, he effectively falls short in Kant's view regarding the duty to give freedom to the reason of individual citizens in matters of conscience. In a context such

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<sup>11</sup> Kant, *What Is Enlightenment?*, 8:40.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.41. Also, immediately prior to 8:40, Kant has discussed the question of the duties of the clergy, in 8:38-39.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 8:36-37.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 8:37-38.

as Prussia in the 1780s, even the mere opinions of such a prince will hold considerable weight, and often at this time will in fact be expressed in state policies and postures which give less actual freedom to the “tolerated.”<sup>15</sup> It is for this reason that a posture of toleration is deemed arrogant: the merely tolerant person effectively says to their conversation partner: “I will tolerate your view, however you should know that my view is superior.”

Thirdly, we should note that there are limitations to the extent of Kant’s criticism of toleration as state policy. The “name” of tolerance is portrayed as superior to other freedom-damaging possibilities, a kind of last frontier in the movement from infantile tyranny over the conscience to fully free adulthood. Kant’s comments immediately prior speak of his own time as being not an enlightened age, but an age of enlightenment, in which the road ahead to full freedom for the individual in religious matters is being travelled along but has a very long way to yet go to reach its destination.<sup>16</sup> In the selection quoted above, Kant appears to indicate that there is as yet no ruler who has fully realised his duty in this regard. Given that toleration appears to be superior for Kant to other options that fall short of the goal such as a prescribed state religion or state interference in the internal affairs of minority faiths, it is reasonable to assume that Kant’s criticism of toleration as a policy is a criticism relative to his ideal standard, the goal towards which he hopes that history is moving. In the absence of the realisation of such an ideal in his own time, the implication is that toleration, while still arrogant, is preferable to other alternatives outside of the ideal of enlightenment.

### 2.3 Other Instances of *Toleranz*

*Toleranz* also appears in a small number of places in his unpublished works on anthropological topics.<sup>17</sup> Along with his comment on Herder’s anthropology in his shorter published work on

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<sup>15</sup> An example of this is the experience of groups such as the Mennonites (and others in a similar position such as the Herrnhuter) in mid and late 18<sup>th</sup> Century Prussia and other “tolerant” contexts such as the Netherlands. These groups were generally tolerated but were not given the same degree of state support or public encouragement from leading government figures as the Lutherans or the Reformed, and they often found sustaining their community life and their experience as individual citizens to be more challenging than for members of the officially-supported religious groups, even if their experience was somewhat more positive than under less enlightened governments of the time such as Poland’s. See: Peter J. Klassen, *Mennonites in Early Modern Poland and Prussia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 180ff.

<sup>16</sup> Kant, *What Is Enlightenment?*, 8:40.

<sup>17</sup> Kant, *Reflections on Anthropology*, 15:580, and “On Philosophers’ Medicine of the Body,” in the *Handwritten Notes on Anthropology*, 15:974.

this topic of 1785, these references describe how different human races might “tolerate” different climatic conditions in a way that is quite difficult in the short term, but over a long period of time might lead towards greater but still imperfect acclimatisation.<sup>18</sup> This use of the term by Kant, although in quite a different context, suggests that Kant regards *toleranz* as conceptually containing the idea of limited congruity between a person and their surrounds or circumstances alongside that of gradual improvement. In this way it is analogous to Kant’s discussion of toleration in *What is Enlightenment?*

At one point in his *Opus Postumum*, Kant offers a tantalising passing reference to *toleranz* used in an ethical sense, preceded in the phrase immediately beforehand by the related term *dulden* to which we shall turn shortly: “The greatest danger to people as they interact amongst themselves is that they may wrong others. To suffer injustice is the opposite of this and does not devalue respect, and to tolerate [*dulden*] it is often even meritorious if one expects that such tolerance [*toleranz*] may not offend the mind.”<sup>19</sup> Kant in this reference indicates that to “tolerate” injustice, in the sense of “to put up with it,” is an antidote to the human-social tendency to wrong each other, and states that personal toleration of being wronged is meritorious so long as the apparent act of tolerating that which is wrong does not offend the mind. Unfortunately, this comment from Kant is undeveloped. However, it does indicate that in his thought toleration is not necessarily regarded as a wholly negative concept which plays no constructive role in his thinking. We can clarify a little further what Kant means here by setting this comment alongside Kant’s discussion of servility in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, where he indicates that we must do nothing that undermines the dignity of humanity that is within us.<sup>20</sup> If we read the comment in the *Opus Postumum* as being consistent with this direction in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, the toleration spoken of is something constructive in the current imperfect social order, while being limited to not tolerating anything which strikes at human dignity itself.

Elsewhere, *toleranz* appears in one place in a letter written around the same time as *What is Enlightenment?* by an acquaintance and correspondent of Kant’s in relation to state policy

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<sup>18</sup> Kant, *Review of J. G. Herder’s Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Humanity*, 8.57.

<sup>19</sup> Kant, *Opus Postumum*, 22.302.

<sup>20</sup> Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:435.

towards religion.<sup>21</sup> Toleration in this text is used neutrally, the focus of the remark being that toleration of Protestantism by Catholic rulers in the 1780s was being used as a ruse by the latter to convert the former group. This underlines the importance of religious applications of the term within Kant's circle of acquaintances and his context, but as we do not have Kant's reply, we cannot glean more than this from the reference in question.

## 2.4 *Aushalten*

Having considered this relatively small number of texts, we have reached the limits of Kant's use of *toleranz*, and turn to consider other terminology which Kant might use to articulate the concept of toleration. *Tolerieren* is often used in modern German to refer to toleration and closely related ideas, however it does not appear in any of Kant's works. *Aushalten* is a German term which carries some of the sense of "to tolerate," and does appear in Kant's works in several places, usually with the more precise meaning of "to bear," "to endure" or "to suffer." Most of the examples of this term in Kant's writings appear in relation to matters well-removed from the focus of this study.<sup>22</sup> For example, in the *Critique of Pure Reason* it is used to refer to a capacity to "persist" in the sense of enduring or permanent existence, without any apparent positive or negative implications, simply describing what Kant considers to be abiding metaphysical entities or concepts.<sup>23</sup> Likewise in his correspondence, Kant in 1786 speaks of children unsuitable for academic education "enduring" the full length of their schooling when they might have spent the time learning in other domains with less money wasted.<sup>24</sup> In the *Critique of the Power of Judgement* it occurs in one place only, where Kant is describing the kinds of auditory stimuli which persons will delight in or otherwise: "no-one would be able to long endure [*aushalten*] listening to this song."<sup>25</sup> *Aushalten*'s one occurrence in *The Conflict of the Faculties* refers to physical suffering only.<sup>26</sup> It is used on a small number of occasions in *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, including in one place where

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<sup>21</sup> Kant, "Letter from von Friedrich Victor Lebrecht Plessing" (15 March, 1784), *Correspondence*, 10.372.

<sup>22</sup> In addition to the references discussed below, the term also appears in Kant in his very early *Essay on the Maladies of the Mind* (of 1754, at 1.271), in his *Correspondence* (at 10.412, 10.253, 11.113, 11.166 & 11.505), his work on education (9.463 & 457), his *Handwritten Notes on Anthropology* (15.742, 205), *Draft Sketches for the Philosophy of Religion* (20.431, 438), and in his *Opus Postumum* (21.71 & 284). In all of these cases the term is used in the same sense as in the examples described above, to refer to human endurance of unpleasant, difficult or challenging contexts, circumstances, or stimuli.

<sup>23</sup> In the "A" edition at 3.417, and in the "B" edition at 4.9 & 4.259.

<sup>24</sup> Kant, *Correspondence*, 12.428.

<sup>25</sup> Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, 5.302.

<sup>26</sup> Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, 7.110.



he encourages biblical theologians to be educated in philosophy so as to understand the right limits of both religion and reason and to help recognise that philosophy and theology are complementary to one another: “a religion that rashly declares war on reason will not long endure [*aushalten*] against it.”<sup>27</sup>

## 2.5 *Dulden*

*Dulden* and its relative *duldung* appear in Kant more often than *toleranz*, however a considerable number of these references appear incidentally or even conversationally in Kant, where he would ask his readers to “tolerate” him in the sense of “bearing with him,” or describes “putting up” with different kinds of people in a casual relational sense.<sup>28</sup> In several places it appears in his earlier anthropological and geographical works, most usually with similar meanings described above regarding *toleranz*, of how different races or other types of humans will tolerate various physical conditions, or how human beings generally speaking will tolerate various trying or negative circumstances.<sup>29</sup>

Several of Kant’s other uses of *dulden*, however, are more notable, particularly in his writings in the mid-late 1790s. One such example appears in 1795 in *Toward Perpetual Peace*, in Kant’s discussion of cosmopolitan right applied to the case of foreigners who arrive in the lands of others.<sup>30</sup> Kant appears to be dealing with the case of Europeans who travel to other continents, and he asserts that such travellers have a right to hospitality: this is a limited *right to visit* and to seek commerce [*verkehr*] in the broad sense of a range of types of human

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<sup>27</sup> Kant, *On Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, 6:10 (hereafter this work is referred to as: Kant, *Religion*). The other appearances of the term in this work are at 6:69 and 6:202, the first referring straightforwardly to a capacity to endure something difficult but finite (purgatory, in this case), and the second in the sense of the proudly-religious type of person not being able to “withstand” (*aushalten*) comparison with the honest moral individual.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. in his *That Might be True in Theory but not in Practice*, 8:276 (hereafter this work is referred to as: Kant, *Theory and Practice*), and *Correspondence*, 12:142. As well as the references discussed here, the other uses of *dulden* and its relatives in Kant are: *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (at 7:171 & 257).

<sup>29</sup> See for example Kant’s *Handwritten Notes on Reflections on Anthropology* (at 15:313, 558 & 652) and on *Medicine* (at 15:974), and on *Further Reflections on Philosophy of Law* (19:556).

<sup>30</sup> Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace*, 8:357-360. While no other uses of *dulden* appear in *Perpetual Peace*, interestingly it does appear in one place in Kant’s unpublished drafts of the work, where it is used in passing without negative implication, at 23:160.

interaction, and to not be treated with hostility.<sup>31</sup> It is distinct from the right to be a guest in the sense of being accepted into the household or society which is being visited. Kant's use of *dulden* in this context is to state that "this right [to visit], to present oneself for society, belongs to all human beings by virtue of the right of possession in common of the earth's surface on which, as a sphere, they cannot disperse infinitely but must finally put up [*dulden*] with being near one another; but originally no one had more right than another to be on a place on the earth."<sup>32</sup> Here the concept of mutual human toleration is based upon the original common occupancy and possession of the earth's surface held by all humanity before the creation of states and boundary-claims, together with the fact that the earth is of limited spatial extent and lacking extremities (being a sphere).<sup>33</sup> This necessitates by its basic geographical facts a principle of toleration of one another's physical presence and of the right of others to seek beneficial interaction. Humans from different lands will therefore inevitably encounter one another. Kant argues that his idea of cosmopolitan right is therefore necessary to safeguard the "public rights of human beings" and an essential condition of perpetual peace.<sup>34</sup> In Kant's time this was a matter of practical concern, as such a view as he espouses would have put him at odds with at least some contemporary practices of European colonialism.<sup>35</sup> The toleration which human beings are required to extend to one another is primarily a constructive right for Kant in the sense that it allows humans to *seek* commerce or interaction with those in distant places: but not to demand or require it. It is restricted in its application, in that Kant defines as *inhospitable* the actions of European traders and colonists in travelling to other countries who behave coercively towards the local inhabitants.<sup>36</sup> In this way, the kind of toleration required

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<sup>31</sup> The key term *verkehr* is often translated into English as "commerce," however it appears to incorporate more than commercial relations, and include all constructive international relations between travelling individuals and citizens and states elsewhere: "interaction" in this sense a more appropriate term, as suggested by Pauline Kleingeld, "Kant's Cosmopolitan Law: World Citizenship for a Global Order," *Kantian Review* 2 (1998), 72-90, here 75-77.

<sup>32</sup> Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace*, 8:358.

<sup>33</sup> Sharon Anderson-Gold, "Cosmopolitan right: state and system in Kant's political theory," pages 235-249 in *Politics and Metaphysics in Kant* (Edited by Sorin Baiasu, Sami Philström and Howard Williams. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), here 237.

<sup>34</sup> Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace*, 8:360.

<sup>35</sup> The question of Kant's views on colonialism, and how these as they appear in his later works such as *Perpetual Peace* may differ from his earlier views, has in recent years developed into a significant area of scholarly discussion in its own right. Flikschuh and Ypi's Introduction to their edited volume, *Kant and Colonialism: Historical and Critical Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1-18, provides an outline of some of the key issues and contemporary scholarly contributions.

<sup>36</sup> Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace*, 8:358-359.

by Kant's principle of cosmopolitanism, while essential to human trade and peace, is not to be used as a pretext to impose on others.

In his *On a New Superior Tone in Philosophy*, written at a time (1796) when active state censorship had become a substantial concern, Kant explicitly points to the prospect of state action against some kinds of philosophical expression as a consideration that his educated readers should keep in view. Kant observes that one of the characteristics of the “new” philosophy which he is critiquing is a certain boldness which attracts many admirers, and considerable attention more broadly: a degree of attention which the police authorities would be expected not to *tolerate* [*dulden*].<sup>37</sup> In this place, it is possible that Kant has in mind his own difficulties with the Prussian censors barely three years beforehand, and with Wöllner still in power over censorship matters, Kant might wish to distinguish his own brand of philosophy from those kinds which he considers are rightly the object of the censors' interest.<sup>38</sup> Whatever his exact motives may be, in this comment we find a rare explicit reference to formal state censoring action with respect to its citizens, regarding specifically a phenomenon which in Kant's view is treated ambiguously, and where to not tolerate is equated with state action against certain forms of expression. By contrast, a much more positive use of the same term in relation to philosophical expression appears in a letter Kant received from a sympathetic friend critical of those who had loudly criticised Kant's ideas as people who are lacking in tolerance [*dulden*]. Kant was presumably appreciative of the sentiment, however we cannot know for certain whether he might have used the same term in reply if the roles had been reversed.<sup>39</sup>

Two years afterward, in his *The Conflict of the Faculties* of 1798, Kant asks the question regarding “mystical” sects, that is religious groups whose teachings are fatal to the development of reason, whether it is better that “the government confer on a mystical sect the sanction of a church, or could it, consistently with its own aim, tolerate [*dulden*] and protect [*schützen*] such a sect, without giving it the honour of that prerogative?”<sup>40</sup> For Kant, the distinction between these two possibilities appears to be significant. Kant strongly argues in

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<sup>37</sup> Kant, *On a New Superior Tone in Philosophy*, 8.403-404.

<sup>38</sup> On Kant's intellectual response to the increase in censorship in Prussia from 1788 onwards, see Steven Lestition, “Kant and the End of the Enlightenment in Prussia,” *Journal of Modern History* 65 (1993), 57-112.

<sup>39</sup> *Correspondence*, 11.446, from Johannes Elert Bode (9 September, 1790).

<sup>40</sup> Kant, *On the Conflict of the Faculties*, 7:59.

what follows that the state should not give public sanction as a “public ecclesiastical faith” to mysticism or any other kind of religion which does not serve the goal of supporting subjects to become morally good, and that publicly-supported or sanctioned religious teachers must be bound by the state to an orthodoxy which supports the ends of reason.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, he notes that “it is not the government’s business to concern itself with the future happiness of its subjects,” and “mysticism has nothing public about it and so escapes entirely the government’s influence.”<sup>42</sup> Although he does not directly state this conclusion, for Kant the fact that such religions have no place in the public sphere and do not deserve state sanction clearly implies that they lie outside the possible sphere of state influence. Therefore, in so far as they relate to the individual’s private quest for future happiness and do not seek public sanction, they should be tolerated simply because the state has no influence in that sphere. The form of toleration which Kant has in view here is merely of a negative kind, a recognition by the state that it is incapable of making or enforcing laws with respect to the relevant area. A further implication for Kant concerns what the state should not tolerate: any religions or religious activities which seek to operate within the sphere that concerns the state, and which would undermine the moral ends Kant has in view.<sup>43</sup> Kant’s understanding of toleration presented here is both similar to and different from that found in his earlier remarks in *What is Enlightenment?* There is a similarity in that in both works, toleration of a religious grouping for Kant means the government, at some level, protecting the sect in question (without positively supporting it in any way) so that it may exist without being interfered with or closed down. However, Kant’s way of speaking about toleration also differs between the two works. In *What Is Enlightenment?* Kant explicitly suggests that toleration always and in itself contains a substantial negative element (as “mere” toleration), whereas in *The Conflict of the Faculties* toleration is not spoken of negatively in any explicit sense, but merely indicated to have its limits in terms of what the state should and should not tolerate.

At one point in his handwritten notes (undated), within the *Further Reflections on Moral Philosophy*, Kant uses *dulden* to associate the personal characteristic of toleration in the same sentence with two less ambiguously positive characteristics. In a brief and undeveloped short

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 7:60.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Kant does not give any examples of what this might include in *On the Conflict of the Faculties*, but we could reasonably surmise that it would include the kind of issues he refers to four years later in the *Metaphysics of Morals* (6:325 and 6:327), which we will consider in the next chapter.

comment, he writes that the ethical will is to be “tolerant [*dulden*], mutually loving [*lieben*], and respecting [*achten*].”<sup>44</sup> This reference is particularly notable, given that Kant also associates the same three ideas in a short phrase in 1797 in the *Metaphysics of Morals* in the same period as the other key appearances of *dulden* discussed above, even though he uses *verträglichkeit* instead of *dulden*, a term which does not appear elsewhere in Kant’s corpus but which expresses the idea of toleration and is translated as “toleration” by Mary Gregor in the Cambridge edition of Kant’s works in English. The listing together of tolerance, mutual love and respect in the *Metaphysics of Morals* occurs again in Kant’s short appendix “On the virtues of social intercourse,” where we are told that it is a duty of virtue to relate to those in our immediate circle and with whom we are in direct contact, in certain ways: “a disposition of reciprocity – agreeableness, tolerance [*verträglichkeit*], mutual love [*liebe*] and respect [*achtung*].”<sup>45</sup> As persons act in this way socially, we “bind others” by inviting like responses, “and in so doing we promote a virtuous disposition by at least making virtue fashionable.”<sup>46</sup> In a general and indirect sense, Kant considers that behaving socially in these ways – including exhibiting tolerance – can help to contribute to the development of his ideal society by promoting virtue. We can unpack what Kant means by toleration in this text by looking to the immediate context of his remarks: shortly beforehand, Kant argues for toleration-like behaviour (without using explicit toleration-language) by saying that even when someone is regarded by ourselves as ignorant, we still have ethical obligations towards them, and are not to take offense at that which is merely unconventional or unusual but still good in some way.<sup>47</sup> That is to say, in speaking of tolerance in his appendix on social intercourse, Kant appears to be calling for an openness to, or at least patience with, views or actions which are not held by ourselves and which we might find puzzling, socially inappropriate or unsettling.

## 2.6 *Ertragen*

Lastly, the term *ertragen* is sometimes used by Kant with meanings which carry some sense of the idea of toleration. The majority of these references appear in his pre-critical works of the 1760s and 1770s dealing with matters of anthropology, where as was the case with some of the other toleration-terminology discussed above, Kant describes the “toleration” of different

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<sup>44</sup> Kant, “Further Reflections on Moral Philosophy,” in *Handwritten Notes on Moral Philosophy, Philosophy of Law, and Philosophy of Religion*, 19.299.

<sup>45</sup> Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:473-474.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 6:474.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 6:468-469.

human races or groups for various physical conditions.<sup>48</sup> Also in this early period, in the notes associated with his 1764 work *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, Kant uses the term seven times to refer to how individual humans will “tolerate” various kinds of feelings and sense-impressions;<sup>49</sup> a similar usage also appears in his 1759 *Some Reflections on Optimism*.<sup>50</sup> In his lectures on pedagogy, published by an editor in 1803, but most likely written in 1776-77,<sup>51</sup> a different kind of tolerance functions in a similarly positive instrumental sense, to serve human educational development: developing a tolerance – in the sense of endurance – for the setbacks and challenges associated with learning over time. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the fact that the human mind cannot “tolerate” certain conceptions (in the sense of holding onto them intelligibly) points out the limits of human reason. In this respect it has a positive role, in the sense of serving epistemological ends.<sup>52</sup> Lastly, an inability to continue tolerating the torment of living is described as leading to suicide in some in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*.<sup>53</sup>

More significantly in relation to his moral and political philosophy, Kant speaks of *ertragen* in three places in his *Metaphysics of Morals*. In the first of these, Kant is discussing the requirement that the citizenry not resist the legitimate head of state when this authority is acting rightly. The head of state cannot be rebelled against or have their person attacked on the basis that they have abused their authority. Instead, “a people has a duty to put up with [*ertragen*] even what is held to be an unbearable abuse of supreme authority,” because to resist the legislatively highest person in the state would be tantamount to resisting the law itself, since in attacking the supreme element within the legal constitution one would be attacking the whole legal structure and system.<sup>54</sup> Toleration is therefore here a matter of “putting up with”

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<sup>48</sup> E.g. *On Physical Geography*, 9.321 & 9.435; *Of the Different Human Races*, 2.440, see also Kant’s *Handwritten Notes on Reflections on Anthropology*, and *Handwritten Notes on the Course on Anthropology*, at 15.542, 15.578, 15.584 & 15.415, 15.741.

<sup>49</sup> Kant, *Comments on Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, 20.8, 9, 60, 74, 99, 167, 187. On toleration in the sense of “endurance” in this work, cf. Lars Tonder, *Tolerance: A Sensorial Orientation to Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 64-65.

<sup>50</sup> Kant, *Some Reflections on Optimism*, 2.29.

<sup>51</sup> Kant, “Education,” in *Logic, Physical Geography and Education*, 9.487. On the dating of the work, Georg Cavallar argues for 1776-77, in “Sources of Kant’s Cosmopolitanism: Basedow, Rousseau, and Cosmopolitan Education,” *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 33.4 (2014), 369–89.

<sup>52</sup> Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 3.409 & 4.351; also reflected in his pre-critical writings at 2.373 (*Dreams of a Spirit-Seer Elucidated by Dreams of Metaphysics*, of 1766).

<sup>53</sup> Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, 7.258.

<sup>54</sup> Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:320.

what for citizens might seem to be almost-intolerable behaviour on the part of the head of state, for the sake of preserving the constitutional structure as a whole and in particular Kant's conception of the sovereign as underwriting the rightful legal basis of any society. Citizens may raise complaints against the sovereign power, but not move to resistance.<sup>55</sup>

In the two other places in the *Metaphysics of Morals* where Kant uses the language of *ertragen*, the focus is on the individual. Kant, in speaking of rightly understanding one's duty to oneself, refers to "the duty of not needing and asking for others' beneficence, since this puts one under obligation to them, but rather preferring to bear [*ertragen*] the hardships of life oneself than to burden others with them and so incur indebtedness."<sup>56</sup> *Ertragen* is here used in the sense of tolerating something difficult, which it does not come naturally to us to bear. While saying nothing in itself about human relationships with one another or the state, it does help to exegese the reference to toleration earlier in the work regarding cosmopolitan right. The term there could have connotations of "putting up with" or "bearing" the burden or difficulty of one another's presence on the globe and the challenges and discomfort that might come through having to share the earth together and work at being hospitable in relation to international travel and commerce. Kant's third and final use of *ertragen* in the *Metaphysics of Morals* also refers to the individual, in this case to the cultivation of virtue: "accustom yourself to *put up with* [*ertragen*] the misfortunes of life that may happen and *to do without* its superfluous pleasures."<sup>57</sup> Kant is approving of this kind of personal "toleration" of adversity, but again within limits. The practice of virtue should in addition to this "negative kind of well-being" also incorporate an element that is purely moral, and yet also adds "an agreeable enjoyment to life."<sup>58</sup> Here Kant incorporates both Stoic and Epicurean elements, but sets forth quite a different vision of the moral life to either. Kant sees the moral life as being much more than a contest between reason and natural desire as it is for the Stoics, while still (in contrast to the

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 6:319. It should be noted that while Kant's explicit statements on the matter are as outlined here, scholars have puzzled for some time over how to relate Kant's consistent position in *The Metaphysics of Morals* with his occasional sympathetic statements towards the English "Revolution" of 1688-89 and even the French Revolution, with some arguing that there is room in a Kantian theory for resistance to tyranny under at least some circumstances. See for example Sarah W. Holt, "Revolution, Contradiction, and Kantian Citizenship," pages 209-231 in *Kant's Metaphysics of Morals: Interpretive Essays* (Edited by Mark Timmons. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); and Christine Korsgaard, "Taking the Law into our own Hands: Kant on the Right to Revolution," pages 207-328 in *Reclaiming the History of Ethics: Essays for John Rawls* (Edited by Andrews Reath, Barbara Herman, and Christine Korsgaard. Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>56</sup> Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:459.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 6:484.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 6:485. Cf. Kant's comments on the Stoics on this point in *Religion*, 6:59.

Epicureans) emphasising tolerance of misfortune and a disinterest in pleasures where this does not arise from the exercise of virtue. For Kant, moral duty is something to be done gladly and which results in a kind of happiness (“an agreeable enjoyment to life”).<sup>59</sup> Notably in this text, as with Kant’s use of *toleranz* in *What Is Enlightenment?*, we see Kant presenting a concept of toleration which is positive, and yet limited and in need of being allied with other constructive elements. Toleration of the misfortunes of life can promote the development of virtue, and yet Kant also makes it clear that the kind toleration he has in view needs to have added to it other moral features.

## 2.7 Conclusion

Kant’s usage of the specific terminology of toleration is relatively limited in relation to our purposes and to the overall size of his corpus, particularly as the vast majority of the places where Kant uses the term bear no relation to his moral or political philosophy. Notably, most of the richer or more significant instances appear in his writings of the mid or late 1790s, with the main exception being his 1784 discussion in *What Is Enlightenment?* However, as we have seen, the various terms involved are used mostly in the same general way. This enables us to gain a sharper understanding of what Kant means when he speaks of toleration. Importantly it enables a definition of toleration to be enunciated in relation to Kant which can be used to identify other key texts in Kant which relate to the same basic idea and which can also be used to build towards a Kantian account of toleration. Toleration, for Kant, refers to the enduring of or patience with objects or contexts which we normally do not find agreeable, but which we determine to not resist or oppose but instead to “put up with.” This may apply to individuals “tolerating” the actions or posture of the state within which they live, or tolerating an uncomfortable climate, proximity to foreign and unfamiliar persons, or the misfortunes of life. It may refer to the state tolerating groups (particularly religious sects) whose views or activities the ruler might find distasteful, but which are nonetheless beyond the right province of the executive power to regulate. As such, the concept of toleration for Kant spans both moral philosophy and virtue and political philosophy and issues of justice.

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<sup>59</sup> Cf. Allen Wood, “Religion, Ethical Community, and the Struggle against Evil,” pages 121-137 in *Kant and the Concept of Community* (Edited by Charlton Payne and Lucas Thorpe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).



More than this, where toleration appears in a positive light, or has some kind of constructive or virtuous element to it, it often does so because it is operating in relation to some other more substantive positive feature or ideal. Most commonly this is with reference to the idea of *hope*, with toleration occupying the role of a midwife in relation to some better Kantian future.

Toleration in this way functions for Kant as an intermediary concept. For example, in *What Is Enlightenment?* toleration functions as the best and latest (although still quite problematic) stop on the road to an enlightened society. In some of his anthropological writings, tolerance is a step towards proper acclimatisation or adaptation to new circumstances. Toleration of injustice is a meritorious and therefore appropriate response to being wrongly treated in a world that as yet falls well short of Kant's ideal. Toleration can also function as a praiseworthy response to the temptation to give up correct Kantian philosophical notions, at least with respect to the nature of religion, and in this way it can help individuals along the way towards Kant's ideal. At the level of the state, rightly applying practices of toleration with respect to matters of religion in the community can also assist in moving society in what Kant would regard to be the right direction. A form of toleration in his own era of European expansion, in relation to cosmopolitan right, was regarded by Kant as a necessary prerequisite for progress towards perpetual peace, and in the sphere of personal relations, exhibiting toleration alongside other characteristics towards those in our immediate social context can also help to promote virtue. Lastly, toleration may also serve for Kant to assist in the cultivation of virtue in response to the misfortunes of life.

From this survey, it is apparent that toleration for Kant can function as both a moral and a political concept. However, there are differences between how toleration functions in these two spheres, at least in terms of Kant's explicit use of toleration-terminology. Toleration in a political sense is presented more negatively, as something which states in the present time necessarily practice in relation to some of their citizens, a "putting up with" or cautiously permitting of activities which the state or other citizens do not enthusiastically support. Thus we see toleration considered in relation to the possibility of state censorship of forms of religion and philosophy in *The Conflict of the Faculties*, *On A New Superior Tone in Philosophy*, and *What Is Enlightenment?* At one point in the *Metaphysics of Morals* toleration is spoken of politically in relation to citizens putting up with the abuse of state authority. Although in this case it is citizens in view rather than the state, the idea is the same: toleration is something practiced patiently in relation to that which does not represent an ideal state of

affairs for Kant. In all of these political examples, toleration does possess value as an appropriate stance in the present time, while having serious limitations and as such highlighting the need for something better in the future. However, in none of these cases where toleration is spoken of politically does the practice of toleration serve more constructively to promote the development of virtue, or facilitate progress towards enlightenment. Toleration is essentially a political necessity for the time being and nothing more. By contrast, in some of the examples where Kant speaks of toleration in a moral sense, it does also possess the more constructive and positive characteristic of serving or promoting virtue, and the goal of enlightenment. In the *Opus Postumum* and twice in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, in relation to the virtues of social intercourse and also on how we ought to handle the misfortunes of life, toleration contains this more constructive element. Lastly, in *Perpetual Peace*, a form of toleration is a significant ingredient supporting the construction of a better future for humanity. Although appearing in a largely political work, the discussion in question is primarily addressed to individual moral behaviour, specifically European travellers visiting other parts of the globe, and so it is very much the exception to the rule. While appearing in a political work, this positive and constructive view of toleration has a primarily personal-moral focus and so supports the pattern that has been identified regarding Kant and toleration.

That said, it may be the case that in the political sphere Kant does in fact envisage something of a constructive role for toleration, but one that is simply not apparent from the instances where he *explicitly* uses toleration language. Kant is a complex thinker who is perfectly capable of extending the political conception, which we have outlined above, through the use of toleration-like concepts, that is, indirect references to toleration or through discussions that seem to be about toleration even though the language of toleration (i.e. words we would typically translate into English as “toleration”) do not appear. These discussions may well enrich or alter our understanding of Kant’s views on toleration and so, in the interests of completeness regarding Kant’s understanding of toleration in the political sphere, it is important that we consider them in depth. In the next chapter we shall do that by exploring Kant’s use of toleration-like concepts in some of his political texts, with a view to identifying additional elements in his political concept of toleration, and whether these allow us to speak of a constructive form of political toleration in Kant.

## *Chapter 3 – Toleration-Like Concepts in Kant*

### **3.1 Introduction**

The idea that toleration should be practiced appears in a number of contexts within Kant's writings where the language of toleration is not explicitly used. As we have seen in studying Kant's explicit or "direct" use of the language of toleration in the previous chapter, toleration for Kant consists in "putting up with" or "bearing with" things which the perfectly-reasoning person would not regard as ideal. Toleration is exercised either because to function in this way represents the person's (or the state's) duty, or because to exercise toleration in this way operates to promote the movement towards Kant's ideal for individuals or societies. In the previous chapter, the pattern that began to emerge was of political toleration largely being of the former type (i.e. a duty to put up with something), and moral toleration of the latter type (i.e. putting up with something to facilitate progress towards an ideal). This might suggest that Kant conceived of toleration quite differently in these two contexts. In this chapter we shall explore "indirect" cases where Kant does not directly use the language of toleration (that is, words which we might directly translate as toleration, which we explored in the previous chapter), but instead discusses concepts or ideas that we would think of as examples of toleration. The indirect examples discussed in this chapter have been chosen for their conceptual similarity to the "shape" of toleration in Kant's thought identified in the previous chapter through our survey of all direct references to toleration. They are from political texts in Kant's corpus. This is partly because there are not as many clear examples within Kant's moral texts,<sup>60</sup> but primarily to explore the extent to which Kant's conception of political toleration contains a more constructive element, oriented towards supporting progress into a better future, than emerged in Chapter 2. The previous chapter concluded by noting the clear existence of such a constructive view of moral toleration, but with a very limited political conception sitting alongside it. Therefore in this chapter, selected political texts in Kant will be examined, with a view to drawing out the more constructive elements within Kant's political idea of toleration. As the examples we shall consider indicate, when our enquiry is broadened beyond direct examples of toleration in Kant to indirect ones, Kant's conceptualisation of political toleration

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<sup>60</sup> Or, some of the indirect examples which might be offered do not add much to what has been identified through the direct cases discussed in Chapter 2. For instance, Kant's concept of friendship might be said to contain elements of the idea of toleration, however the relevant conceptions have already been touched on in Section 2.5 above, with reference to *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:473-474.

often appears as facilitating progress constructively towards an ideal, as well as being a necessity for the peaceable operation of society.

We will explore indirect examples of political toleration in two parts, firstly examining Kant's comments on the state's toleration of the public uses of reason, and secondly the substantial question of religious toleration by the state. In the first part, we begin by examining Kant's thinking in *What is Enlightenment?* regarding the relationship between the public exercise of reason and the limits of toleration of dissenting views or those inimical to the role of the state. We then move to Kant's major discussions of the 1790s in *Perpetual Peace* and the *Metaphysics of Morals* regarding the operation of republics and cosmopolitan right. We will consider in depth Kant's comments on how the state ought to tolerate religious expression which either the state may rightly (according to the dictates of reason) disagree with or a majority of its citizens disagree with. Kant's relatively simpler and briefer discussion in *The Metaphysics of Morals* will be examined first, before we move to the more complex commentary in *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. His text *On the Conflict of the Faculties* also touches on some, but not all, of the issues which arise from the other works considered here, and so some consideration will be given to selected passages from this work also, although a full discussion cannot be included in a study of this size. As we shall see, Kant's views on these political matters support the contention outlined in the previous chapter that his system holds a valid, constructive and practically useful space for toleration, including as a transitional facilitator towards Kant's ideal society. For Kant, political toleration among other things provides an environment which is necessary for facilitating the growth and development of reason within citizens and their interactions with one another. As such, we will extend in this chapter the conclusion of Chapter 2: the following analysis indicates that not only moral, but also political toleration possesses for Kant a substantial constructive element, even if it has its limitations.

### **3.2 The Public Use of Reason in *What Is Enlightenment?***

Kant's account of the public use of reason, articulated in *What is Enlightenment?*, indicates that individuals may – and in some cases should – set forth views in the public context which differ from and critique those of the state and/or the accepted view, and that the state should not only accept this but welcome it. The dichotomy which Kant establishes between the public

use of reason and the private use of reason provides for a notable restriction on the expression of views by persons, in cases where the “private” use of reason is involved. Where persons are acting not for themselves but as an officer or representative of the state or another institution, such as in their role as a public servant, military officer, or member of the clergy, then they do not possess liberty to give their own contrary views to the established position of the state or institution that they are a part of.<sup>61</sup> To give a modern example, a clergyman may not on Kant’s view, while representing his office, publicly criticise his church’s public position on same sex marriage.

Does that then mean that all citizens, including office holders, when they are not in fact acting in these types of roles, may consistently publish views critical of their state’s or institution’s positions or of accepted societal norms? Kant’s answer is a clear “no,” for several reasons.<sup>62</sup> Firstly, Kant argues subsequently in the *Metaphysics of Morals* that views which are expressed in combination with seditious actions should be restricted by the state, along with questions which are asked with a view to taking actions which undermine the constitution.<sup>63</sup> Secondly within *What is Enlightenment?* itself, Kant repeatedly describes the public use of reason as being use of reason by the person acting as *scholar* and setting his ideas before *readers*.<sup>64</sup> In saying this, Kant is not suggesting that only those such as himself who are formally employed as scholars may write in this way. He proposes examples of various *practitioners* such as military men and clergy as well as scholars in the literal sense as possessing the right, when not acting in their formal office, to offer scholarly thoughts on military or religious matters which are not the accepted views of their respective institutions.<sup>65</sup> However, Kant does speak of “readers” at a time when only a smaller part of society could read, and uses the adjective “scholarly” to describe the kinds of opinions that may usefully and validly be articulated on these matters of public interest.<sup>66</sup> Particularly when his own historical context is borne in mind, it is quite doubtful that Kant would here mean that such opinions can be offered by any citizen,

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<sup>61</sup> Kant, *What Is Enlightenment?*, 8:36-38.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. O’Neill, “Kant’s Conception of Public Reason,” 143-146.

<sup>63</sup> Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:318-319.

<sup>64</sup> Kant, *What is Enlightenment?*, 8:37-39.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 8:38.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 8:37, 8:38.

such as the illiterate in his own time, given his reference to “readers.”<sup>67</sup> It is also unlikely that he considers that such opinions could be offered in any context, such as being shouted at a potentially seditious mob, rather than printed in a written publication for polite society.<sup>68</sup> However, in the context of near-universal high schooling in “developed” countries where university-level qualifications are held by a third or more of adult citizens and access to information produced by specialists is exponentially more widespread than it was in Kant’s time, it is worth observing that Kant’s perspective may be applied differently. We might argue that many communities today are examples of societies where most adult citizens can in fact offer opinions in a way that functions as the exercise of public reason. In this way, it may be that Kant would regard the contemporary context in many “developed” countries as one which is considerably closer to his ideal than the Europe of his own time.

However, when it comes to what may be legitimately published in print, Kant is notable in supporting toleration of content which he himself even considers to be potentially harmful, in the sense of being detrimental to his own project and hopes for public society. Kant takes what we might describe as a posture of “mere tolerance” towards the activities of writers and publishers who are driven by motives of profiting through publishing what is popular, even to the extent of deceiving masses of readers who delight in being pleasantly deceived.<sup>69</sup> Although this type of activity slows the progress of enlightenment through the reading population, it is still to be tolerated, because the public business of manufacturing and trade is an expression of good citizenship, and perversely it also provides opportunity for serious philosophers to write in opposition to it.<sup>70</sup> In this way, political toleration while having in this case a strong “negative” element, at the same time acts as a constructive facilitator of progress.

The framing concern around the public exercise of reason for Kant is the progress of society in the direction of enlightenment, a society of persons who are able to make use of “their own understanding confidently and well... without another’s guidance.”<sup>71</sup> Broadly speaking this

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<sup>67</sup> Kenneth R. Westphal, “Kant’s Moral Constructivism and Rational Justification,” pages 28-46 in *Politics and Metaphysics in Kant* (Edited by Sorin Baiasu, Sami Philström and Howard Williams. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), here 31-35.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:319 & 6:322.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 8:436.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 8:437.

<sup>71</sup> Kant, *What Is Enlightenment?*, 8:40, see also 8:35.

leads to a general imperative for states to allow freedom to flourish, specifically freedom to offer public critique on matters of religion and state policy.<sup>72</sup> The restriction of private reason (for those acting in official capacities) alongside the enlargement of the space for the public use of reason, is the surest route for Kant to a reasoning state and a society of enlightened citizens.<sup>73</sup> State toleration of a variety of views with which the executive leadership may not agree is therefore an essential constructive ingredient for progress towards enlightenment, with a restriction on the coercive activity of the state to create a tolerated space being necessary as a pre-condition for subjects to themselves develop their the public reasoning capacities.<sup>74</sup> For the same reason, Kant is opposed to bodies in religious matters “freezing” orthodoxy for all time since in religion, as in all things, enlightenment will only be achieved if humans are free to rationally work towards their own progress. Once again he believes that a posture of toleration in this case on the part of religious “authorities” towards their membership is essential to enable movement towards enlightenment.<sup>75</sup> However, notably, Kant is silent on the question of whether the state ought to act against churches or other societies under their dominion who dictate such requirements for their members (such as freezing orthodoxy), even though he explicitly shows awareness of the existence of such cases, offering the example of the “classis” (courts) of Dutch Reformed Church and their confessional fixidity.<sup>76</sup> Instead, Kant is interested in indicating that the *state* should not place requirements regarding adherence to particular religious doctrines, or prohibiting the alteration of such beliefs, upon churches or citizens.<sup>77</sup> So the principle of state non-interference in religious belief in this text is established to ensure freedom of religion in order to ultimately contribute towards the Enlightenment project. Toleration functions as a constructive contributor towards human progress, by creating the space for individuals to develop as reasoning agents.

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<sup>72</sup> Thomas Feigl, “Teleology in Kant’s Philosophy of History and Political Philosophy,” in *Politics and Teleology in Kant*, edited by Formosa, Goldman & Patrone (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014), 176-77.

<sup>73</sup> Kant, *What is Enlightenment?*, 8:41-42.

<sup>74</sup> Feigl, “Teleology,” 176.

<sup>75</sup> Kant, *What is Enlightenment?*, 8:39.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 8:38.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 8:40-41; Nicholas Tampio, “Pluralism in the ethical community,” pages 175-192 in *Kant’s Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason: A Critical Guide* (Edited by Gordon E. Michalson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), here 180-181.

### 3.3 Toleration as Necessary for National & International Order: Republicanism & Cosmopolitanism in *Toward Perpetual Peace* & *The Metaphysics of Morals*

Kant, in his defence of his version of republicanism under the heading of his First Definitive Article in *Toward Perpetual Peace*, argues for what we might today describe as representative democracy. That is, a situation in which the power of the people is sovereign and legislative, but where the republican principle of the separation of powers is upheld by not granting the people as a whole executive power (as in direct democracy) by placing this power in the hands of one or several who govern.<sup>78</sup> Part of Kant's concern on this point is to avoid the problem of despotism, for in Kant's view a situation where the people as a whole hold the executive power as well as legislative sovereignty "is necessarily a despotism."<sup>79</sup> This is "because it establishes an executive power in which all decide for, and if need be, against one (who thus does not agree), so that all, who are nevertheless not all, decide; and this is a contradiction of the general will with itself and with freedom."<sup>80</sup> Kant in this passage presents a concern for the interests of the minority (the "one," who does not agree) who might have different interests or views than the majority in the matter being decided upon. His proposed constitution allows for a very small executive which paradoxically has a far greater capacity to be representative of all citizens in its decision making than a misguided democratic experiment which conflates executive power with legislative sovereignty.<sup>81</sup> While this is not an example of "toleration" in the strict sense, it is a closely related idea, namely the concept that the state, and the constitutional establishment which underlies it, must not decide always and only in accordance with the views and interests of the majority. Minority divergence must be tolerated.

Even where the views of a minority are driven by selfishness, Kant's general political theory does not dictate that they be censored. He understands that human societies are not governed by reason, but are made up of a mass of competing and typically selfish interests.<sup>82</sup> His proposed way forward is to arrange things constitutionally and in terms of state policies such

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<sup>78</sup> Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace*, 8:352. Cf. Wolfgang Kersting, "Politics, freedom and order: Kant's political philosophy," pages 342-366 in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant* (Edited by Paul Guyer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 342-366, here 359; Paul Formosa, "The Ends of Politics: Kant on Sovereignty, Civil Disobedience and Cosmopolitanism," pages 37-58 in *Politics and Teleology in Kant* (Edited by Paul Formosa, Avery Goldman & Tatiana Patrone. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014), here 39-42.

<sup>79</sup> Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace*, 8:352.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 8:353.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 8:354-55, 365-66.



that these selfish dispositions strive against each other in such a way that it results in laws which are good and creates the conditions for progress through the positive moral education of the people.<sup>83</sup> Ultimately the end-goal of this progress is the convergence of all people around Kant's moral ideal, with national and international peace and harmony resulting.<sup>84</sup>

Kant's starting point, articulated some years earlier in his 1784 *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim*, was that humanity's "unsocial sociability" requires that a juridical framework be put in place to regulate it in the direction of a healthy competitiveness that is a spur to progress rather than destructive interactions.<sup>85</sup> Subsequently in *Religion*, Kant explicitly makes clear the limits of such juridical solutions to do anything more than govern our outward conduct. Our unsocial sociability is grounded upon humanity's radical evil and so cannot be substantively addressed through the external community of the state, but only the voluntary "ethical community" which relates instead to the internal moral realm of the individual.<sup>86</sup> However, so far as the juridical order of right is concerned as outlined in *Perpetual Peace* and *The Metaphysics of Morals*, an implication of Kant's scheme is that allowing minority as well as majority views and interests to interact freely, rather than minority views being intolerantly closed down by the state, is a pre-condition for a functioning state and a peaceable society based upon right. A related idea is briefly put forward in Kant's comments on secret societies in his *Theory and Practice* (1793). Here, Kant argues that where a state requires obedience to coercive laws in the absence of "a spirit of freedom," then reasoned discussion among citizens will simply be driven underground to secret societies, for "it is a natural calling of humanity to communicate with one another, especially in what concerns people generally."<sup>87</sup> Without freedom being permitted to express itself in this way, the state cannot "get the knowledge it requires for its own essential purpose," and it makes it much harder for subjects to "be

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 8:366. Cf. *Religion*, 6:93-94.

<sup>84</sup> Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace*, 8:366.

<sup>85</sup> Kant, *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim*, 8:22. Allen Wood discusses this in some detail in "The Evil in Human Nature," pages 31-57 in *Kant's Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason: A Critical Guide*. (Edited by Gordon E. Michalson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), here 31-41. For an account which relates Kant's conception to those of some of his contemporaries, as well as some current perspectives, see: Martha Nussbaum, "Radical Evil in the Lockean State: The Neglect of the Political Emotions," *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 3:2 (2006), 159-178, here 171ff.

<sup>86</sup> Kant, *Religion*, 6:94, 98-99. For a summary of Kant's radical evil and unsocial sociability theses, and different contemporary scholarly perspectives on these, see Paul Formosa, "Kant on the Radical Evil of Human Nature," *The Philosophical Forum* 38.3 (2007), 221-245. We shall return to Kant's concept of the ethical community below when the *Religion* text is considered in depth later in this chapter.

<sup>87</sup> Kant, *Theory and Practice*, 8:305.

convinced by reason that this [the state's] coercion is in conformity with right.”<sup>88</sup> However, it must be emphasised that toleration in this sense is merely of the kind which we observed in the previous chapter with respect to direct references to political toleration. It is a necessary function of the state supporting the articulation and operation of juridical right, but as such it supports the necessary operations of the community in the present, and is not a constructive element, facilitating progress towards the goal of enlightenment.

A similar picture emerges with respect to Kant's discussion of cosmopolitan right, “the right of citizens of the world, insofar as individuals and states, standing in the relation of externally affecting one another, are to be regarded as citizens of a universal state of mankind.”<sup>89</sup> In both *The Metaphysics of Morals*<sup>90</sup> and *Toward Perpetual Peace*<sup>91</sup> he posits this right as firstly a condition for beneficial interaction between peoples, and secondly as a means by which peace among states might be promoted and secured. This together with Kant's articles in *Toward Perpetual Peace* indicating that states are neither to interfere in one another's internal affairs nor take over existing political units,<sup>92</sup> establishes a tolerance-like principle for relations among states.<sup>93</sup> In other words, states are to tolerate one another's existence on the globe, and to tolerate at least the offer of contact and commerce from other states and peoples hospitably. Further, the powerful or larger states are not to destroy or interfere in the smaller and weaker, but should tolerate their existence. However, there is also a second point of relevance to the question of toleration. In both *Toward Perpetual Peace* and *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant regards cosmopolitan right as being founded upon humanity's original common possession of the earth, a space of limited and bounded extent. That we continue to share the earth in common as inhabitants - not in a property rights or common ownership sense, but simply as inhabitants – places obligations on states with respect to other human beings.<sup>94</sup> They are to tolerate their presence and their communicating with us, and even if the latter is offensive to

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace*, 8:349-50. Kant on cosmopolitan right is a substantial topic in its own right, on these particular elements cf. Pauline Kleingeld, *Kant and Cosmopolitanism: The Philosophical Ideal of World Citizenship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 76-86.

<sup>90</sup> Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:352-355.

<sup>91</sup> Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace*, 8:357-360.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 8:344, 346.

<sup>93</sup> This stands at the level of a general principle for Kant, and is not without exceptions, particularly the case of civil war which is also briefly mentioned in one of the same passages in *Toward Perpetual Peace* (8:346). Cf. Formosa, “The Ends of Politics: Kant on Sovereignty, Civil Disobedience and Cosmopolitanism,” 53-54.

<sup>94</sup> Katrin Flikschuh, *Kant and Modern Political Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 179ff.

us, we are to respond hospitably, and not destroy or seek to injure them. The implications for a Kantian theory of toleration are thus that when visitors from other cultures present themselves for society, we or our government may indicate that we do not wish to communicate further with them and send them away. But we cannot refuse the *attempt* at communication, nor respond harmfully if we dislike or disagree with those who come into contact with us.<sup>95</sup> A toleration of at least the presenting-presence and attempts at communication from those from other cultures or countries is essential for the operation of peaceable relations at a global level.

### 3.4 Kant, Religion & Toleration in *The Metaphysics of Morals*

The question of toleration and freedom of religion is a significant one for Kant, and we now turn to consider this in some detail, firstly in relation to his discussion in *The Metaphysics of Morals* and secondly in *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. In the former work, Kant makes it clear that so far as the realm of religious belief expresses itself at the present time within the domain of the state, the state has rights to regulate and interfere with religious groupings and their property and activities.<sup>96</sup> There are limits in this regard to the toleration that should be practised by the state. It cannot restrict toleration out of pragmatic considerations or even for reasons that are some combination of moral principle and practical prudence, as politics must be a pure expression of right, not a pragmatic admixture of prudence and right.<sup>97</sup> Of particular interest is the right of the state to police churches with a view to maintaining public peace and civil harmony. The foundation of this right is the fact that churches are needful to the state as they cater to the requirement for a people to “regard themselves as subjects of a supreme invisible power” – and because people regard churches as speaking for this supreme power, there is real potential for the public teachers of churches to undermine the state.<sup>98</sup> Therefore Kant grants to the state the right to prevent religious teachers from using their influence to the detriment of “public peace” by generating disputes within or between religious groupings that might “endanger civil harmony.”<sup>99</sup> To ensure that the state is

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<sup>95</sup> There are potentially some limits in the case of refugees, for example in relation to cases where turning someone away who is fleeing persecution could lead to their destruction. There is significant discussion of the implications for this matter of Kant’s views in the recent literature; a recent perspective and survey of contemporary approaches can be found in: Adam Knowles, “Hospitality’s Downfall: Kant, Cosmopolitanism, and Refugees,” *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 31 (2017), 347-57.

<sup>96</sup> Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:326-327.

<sup>97</sup> Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace*, 8:380; Paul Formosa, “‘All Politics Must Bend Its Knee Before Right’: Kant on the Relation of Morals to Politics,” *Social Theory and Practice* 34 (2008), 157-181.

<sup>98</sup> Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:327.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

able to be aware of potential threats of this kind to civil harmony from various sub-groups and act upon them swiftly, Kant grants to the executive a power of *inspection*. The shape of this power helps to delineate exactly where Kant envisages the extent and the limits of toleration to lie, at least in relation to religion and questions of public order and social harmony. He grants that while minority associations may meet and discuss all manner of opinions, their opinions and related activities must be open to the state, to ensure that there is no risk to the state or to public safety from any quarter.<sup>100</sup>

For religious minorities, this is a notable restriction upon their activities. The same logic could potentially be extended to other groups, for example dissident political parties, on the grounds that their ideologies or convictions are capable of exercising a great power over their adherents which could become detrimental to the state or to civic harmony. In today's context, the principle could also be greatly extended in relation to its invasiveness or potential for abuse regarding citizens' privacy, due to the technological possibilities available to states to engage in surveillance and data-collection activities which reach well-beyond 18<sup>th</sup> Century requirements for keeping church doors unlocked when minority groups were gathered. The rights of minorities to express and act in certain ways in public which may cause offence appears to have some justification in Kant's system for being tightly restricted or prohibited rather than tolerated by a state. The basis for a state imposing such restrictions would be its reading of current social circumstances and tensions, which might otherwise tolerate this expression of distinctive opinions. Kant's position on this point as articulated at 6:327 in *The Metaphysics of Morals* is not an isolated or passing remark. Shortly beforehand, he grants to the state the power to police so as to provide for "public security, convenience and decency."<sup>101</sup> Kant does not specify or give examples indicating what he means by "convenience," and as we have seen his concept of public security relates to the maintenance of civil peace and of the state's own preservation. Regarding "decency," he argues that "the government's business of guiding people by laws is made easier when the feeling for decency... is not deadened by what offends the moral sense," and lists as examples of what might offend in this way, "begging, uproar on the streets, stench, and public prostitution."<sup>102</sup> Such "indecent" acts need not be tolerated by the state. Effectively Kant recognises that decisions regarding both the risk of

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 6:325.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 6:325.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 6:325.

moral offence and civil disputes, as well as decisions about which restrictions to employ on which groupings within society, are a matter for the state to decide upon as it exercises its executive police powers.

However, Kant's view does raise some difficult questions. Consider the earlier example of religious disputes potentially causing public disturbances and the responsibility for the state to act to prevent such problems from arising. Practically speaking, most states will tend to find it easier to place restrictions on the smaller grouping or sub-group than on the larger involved in the situation, and on the grouping that is less politically organised than on one that is better-connected. Kant does not enjoin the state to act to protect groupings that might be more vulnerable, but only to act to preserve public peace and harmony. Although he does prohibit the state from interfering in the internal constitutions of small and weak religious sects as well as large and powerful ones, this may prove to be of limited comfort to a small grouping comprised largely of uninfluential members of the lower classes who, while peaceable, find that some of their views provoke threats of violence from a majority or a powerful church. To this we might add that Kant's "decency" and "convenience" justifications for state restrictions on groups are potentially quite broad and could be used (or misused) to limit the activities of minorities extensively. In particular, the concept of "convenience" which Kant leaves undefined at face value, appears to allow for state restrictions to be put in place on very shallow grounds. To summarize, on this point Kant is expressing a very limited, and we might say rather impoverished, form of state toleration which has no positive constructive value at all and is not directed at positive future ends or ideals. Rather it is intended to provide for a peaceable and ordered society.

Against these quite limiting aspects of state toleration proposed by Kant, we can set his view that discriminating against certain minority faiths by excluding those who hold them from state service, such as the example of Irish Catholics in the Eighteenth Century, is to be avoided.<sup>103</sup> This is because it is effectively an example of the state interfering in a sphere where it has no jurisdiction, relating to the private activity of individual subjects regarding their own "salvation" and perfection-seeking. Any subject of a particular state is therefore both under "the sufferings of this era under the higher authority of men of this world," and has a right to

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 6:368.

access the “advantages” that are open to all other eligible members of the relevant juridical community, such as the opportunity of state service.<sup>104</sup> To exempt any class of subjects from either the costs or the potential advantages of their membership of the political community on the grounds of their religious faith is to act as though the state and its foundation is not the sole supreme authority in relation to the earthly affairs of its subjects. Kant, at one particular point elsewhere in the same work, does make a distinction between active and passive citizens, with only the former being entitled to full citizenship rights. However, the basis on which this distinction is made relates to the capacity to function as one’s own master (normally based on employment status), a criterion far removed from a person’s private religious beliefs.<sup>105</sup> For Kant, this protection for those who form part of a religious minority or of a different faith to their ruler, is a corollary of the state’s rights to make judgements regarding the earthly property of religious entities within their domains.<sup>106</sup> Matters of private religious faith are not in any way to influence or be taken into account in the affairs of the state so long as they remain truly private and religious, even as the concerns of the state are not to act upon or influence the private realm of personal religious faith. However, even when we note this more generous element to Kant’s views on religious toleration in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, it still remains a merely “permissive” form of toleration which simply prevents the state from impacting negatively upon the freedom and autonomy of its subjects in the present, rather than something which may constructively facilitate movement towards enlightenment or a better society or political order in the future.

### 3.5 Kant, Religion & Toleration in *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*

We now turn to Kant’s views on the question of toleration of a variety of religious views by the state as we find them in *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. These appear as less censorious of minority views than is the case in the later *Metaphysics of Morals*. This might be because his remarks in the earlier work are produced in the midst of Kant’s own troubles with the heavy hand of Wöllner’s religious program,<sup>107</sup> whereas by the time *The Metaphysics of Morals* was published this threat had diminished with Wöllner’s system having lost some of its

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 6:314-316. See also his earlier remarks in *Theory and Practice*, at 8:366. Cf. Ronald Beiner, “Paradoxes in Kant’s Account of Citizenship,” pages 209-225 in *Kant and the Concept of Community* (Edited by Charlton Payne and Lucas Thorpe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

<sup>106</sup> Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 6:368.

<sup>107</sup> Manfred Keuhn, *Kant: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 363-66.

influence and about to come to its end in late 1797.<sup>108</sup> However, his thinking in both works is built on largely the same conceptual foundation, although importantly for our purposes here Kant develops his thinking in *Religion* so as to set forward a more constructive view of toleration than is the case in *The Metaphysics of Morals*.

The bulk of the relevant material is presented within Part III of the work, although he does also make some substantial pertinent remarks in the Preface, where he writes concerning the relationship between theology and philosophy (and theology and the sciences) within a university.<sup>109</sup> The question of censorship looms large for Kant personally at this time, in light of the rejection of an earlier form of part of the work by the Prussian censors several months before the publication of *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*.<sup>110</sup> Kant gives theology the right to “exercise censorship” over philosophy and the other disciplines when they seek to exceed the bounds of what can be known by reason. Conversely, that censorship should be exercised when theology steps out of its own sphere of biblical interpretation and the expounding of divine revelation, making claims concerning matters directly accessible to human reason which are thus the province of philosophy and the sciences. A related implication is that philosophy expounding on religious themes within the boundaries of reason must be tolerated by the state and the theological faculties. Kant also writes of university-based theologians censoring the comments of church-based theologians who overstep the mark in this way. However, this is not to be read as a form of self-regulation by a particular discipline (theology), as for Kant this is a reflection of institutional relationships in his own day.<sup>111</sup>

Kant regards those working in any Faculty in a university, including theology, to have a responsibility as members of the university to ensure that in academic and public discourse, no discipline makes claims which are beyond its competency and its proper function, remarks which he repeats in *The Conflict of the Faculties*.<sup>112</sup> What is interesting for our purposes is that

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<sup>108</sup> Ford, “Wöllner and the Prussian Religious Edict of 1788,” 523.

<sup>109</sup> Kant, *Religion*, 6:8-9.

<sup>110</sup> Keuhn, *Kant: A Biography*, 363-4.

<sup>111</sup> Kant, *Religion*, 6:8.

<sup>112</sup> Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, 7:62. Space does not permit inclusion of a discussion of Kant’s further remarks on this topic, in this later work, although it is interesting to note that in *The Conflict of the Faculties*, Kant gives university academics something of a dual role, as public servants as well as scholars, which philosophers before his time may not have recognised: see Hent de Vries, *Religion and Violence*:

for Kant, this is not merely a question of self-awareness or polite discussion among academics away from the public eye. He repeatedly uses the language of censorship and stresses the inappropriateness not only of academic theologians (and philosophers) of speaking beyond what they may know, but also of those located elsewhere socially, such as church-based clergy and theologians, being silenced when they make publicly-accessible statements which are not within their knowledge-capacities. A further issue he discusses subsequently is that even when speaking within the proper sphere of theology, theologians must recognise there are limits to how certain their knowledge can be. For example, it is impossible for anyone to be so certain of the will of God in a particular matter or case as to have grounds to confidently condemn someone to death for heresy. This pushes towards a measure of toleration in terms of not extinguishing views which those in power might find objectionable.<sup>113</sup>

In practice, Kant is urging those of his readers who are members of university faculties, at least, to *not tolerate* public speech of certain kinds, as individuals with a certain social and institutional position. Simultaneously he also makes a case *for toleration* of philosophers and theologians (and others) in their capacity of speaking within the domains marked out by their disciplines' knowledge-capacities. Kant in this way is indicating an important limit as to what should be tolerated in a society where reason is on the advance: claims of religion (or implicitly any other kind of speech) which oversteps the bounds of its competency and threatens the role of reason in relation to public knowledge-claims is to be treated intolerantly by those whose role it is to champion reason, namely university faculties. Kant's argument on this point builds upon his earlier comments in *What is Enlightenment?* regarding the public and private uses of reason.<sup>114</sup> Kant appears to be assuming in *Religion* that those who are members of any university faculty have a general responsibility to ensure that no knowledge-claims are made which masquerade as valid instances of public reason but which in actuality lack the characteristics of public reason because they are limited to a certain sphere.<sup>115</sup>

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*Philosophical Perspectives from Kant to Derrida* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 25-26.

<sup>113</sup> Kant, *Religion*, 4.2. Cf. Philip L. Quinn, "Religious Diversity and Religious Toleration," in *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. 50, No. 1/3, Issues in Contemporary Philosophy of Religion (2001), 57-80, here 73.

<sup>114</sup> Kant, *What is Enlightenment?*, 8:37-38.

<sup>115</sup> In Part III of *Religion*, Kant does not explicitly address the question of exactly when members of university faculties are exercising public or private reason. On the one hand, in *Religion* Kant would like them to restrict their own comments to the particular spheres where their own discipline can make valid knowledge claims. As seen above, Kant also sees members of the theology faculty as having a role in



On the other hand, however, Kant is also supportive of positive interaction between theology and philosophy, which he sees as both supporting the moral life of individuals in different ways in relation to their propensity to evil in the social context.<sup>116</sup> His aim in encouraging “censorship” is not to shut down discussion, but to advance the cause of reason by helping theologians, philosophers and others to correctly grasp the capacities and limits of the different disciplines. We might say that it is a “constructive intolerance.” Borrowing ideas between the disciplines at the level of offering analogies or providing insights is treated positively, provided that ideas from theology are not given authoritative status within the realm of philosophy, and vice-versa. Differences of opinion between theology and philosophy are not to be concealed, but freely discussed, for this kind of interaction helps to sharpen up the participants in terms of understanding the limits of their knowledge. To do otherwise “constitutes a lack of thoroughness where in the end nobody knows exactly where they stand in the whole with respect to the doctrine of religion.”<sup>117</sup> Theologians and pastors particularly are to give philosophy a fair and thorough hearing, since “in this way alone can the theologian be forearmed against all the difficulties that the philosopher may cause him.”<sup>118</sup> In relation to his context, Kant here is clearly speaking of discussion as it occurs in universities as well as in the training of pastors and theologians, and is unsurprisingly concerned to ensure that university theologians and pastors see philosophy as worthy of attention, and not to be censored when it speaks on matters accessible to reason.<sup>119</sup>

However, such discussions are publicly accessible and bear upon the general treatment of the role and claims of reason within influential social institutions. For Kant, therefore, importance is attached to both the beneficially intolerant “censorship” which might be exercised over

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“censoring” the commentary of others (such as church pastors). Kant urges this “censorship” with a view to promoting the right use of reason: this looks to be a public exercise of reason. On the other hand, Kant in *Religion* is also very concerned that academics, who are paid by the state to lecture within certain disciplinary boundaries, not speak outside the proper areas of competency of their discipline. Such a concern indicates that at least sometimes university academics’ use of reason has some characteristics of private reason. This appears to be an area of potential further exploration. Some additional relevant insights appear in: Ian Hunter, “The Intolerance of Reason,” *Linq* 23.1 (1996), 9-14.

<sup>116</sup> Allen Wood, “The Evil in Human Nature,” 31.

<sup>117</sup> Kant, *Religion*, 6:10.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> In the same place, Kant urges that all who complete studies in theology be required to undertake some philosophical training also: *ibid.*

either philosophy or theology when they overstep their bounds, as well as the constructively tolerant hearing with these disciplines might give each other in the name of clearly understanding the role of reason and faith in relation to each other and in society. It is appropriate to speak of the latter using the language of tolerance, given that Kant finds himself having to urge theologians particularly to grant a hearing to another discipline which they appear disinclined to value or to listen to. Overall, on these matters both the kind of toleration that is to be practised by the state, and the limits of that toleration, function constructively for Kant. Toleration of philosophy and theology operating properly within their appropriate spheres so that they may express themselves freely is essential for progress towards enlightenment. Alongside this, discouraging disciplines from operating beyond their competencies also supports the advance of the cause of reason against the priggishly harmful attempts of some theologians or religious censors to interfere with the domain of philosophy.

In Part III of *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, Kant gives a number of directions regarding how the state is to treat organised religion, which relate to the limits or otherwise of tolerance. Kant's view is that ideally at least, a church is a visible organisation of human beings ruled by the idea of "congregating" under "a banner of virtue," with a view to assisting one another to make progress against human evil.<sup>120</sup> However, importantly, it is an ethical rather than a political community: a grouping which is distinct from a state in that its members follow its laws freely rather than through the juridico-civil coercion rightly practiced by the state. This is because to compel or coerce that which can only be done freely (moral action, under the unifying principle of virtue) would be nonsensical. This has several implications. Firstly, the state should not compel any citizen to join any religious (or other ethical) community: "woe to the legislator who would want to bring about through coercion a polity directed to ethical ends! For he would thereby achieve not only the very opposite of ethical ends, but also undermine his political ends and render them insecure."<sup>121</sup> For a state to operate in this way would involve its seeking to reach coercively inside the minds of its subjects. To do that (if it were not impossible) would produce the opposite of autonomous reasoning citizens and thereby undermine both proper ethical ends and any order of right based upon reason. Likewise, the state should not compel religious communities to hold to or to dispense with particular beliefs, as these kinds of changes can only occur through the willing of

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 6:94.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 6:95-96.

the members. Toleration at this point is essential as a means of supporting the progress and self-development of the free reasoning capacities in citizens. However, the community as an entity which depends on a public constitution and laws which extend beyond the minds of the individual members, must “allow limitations, namely the condition that nothing be included in this constitution which contradicts the duty of its members as citizens of the state – even though, if the ethical bond is of the genuine sort, this condition need not cause anxiety.”<sup>122</sup>

Relative to his comments in *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant seems more reluctant in *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* to allow for the state to reduce the boundaries of toleration any further than this. He doesn’t, for example, advocate a decency test as a justification for intolerance. On the contrary, he emphasises that “it is self-evident that they must not on any account be hindered by the secular arm in the public use of their insights and discoveries in this field, or be bound to certain dogmas.”<sup>123</sup> “They,” for Kant, are interpreters of sacred scriptures operating within the context of a church. He does briefly indicate that quarrels among the clergy should not be carried on “from the pulpit” and suggests that the state has some role in discouraging this.<sup>124</sup> However, this idea is not developed, and Kant instead places emphasis on the role of public freedom of discussion and of free expression in religious matters by clergy and religious scholars. Kant’s hope and intention here is that over time the “ecclesiastical faith” found in organised public religions will come more and more to approximate the faith of moral religion which is freely willed by the reasoning individual.<sup>125</sup> He believes that if the thoughts and comments of the clergy and of theologians are open to public scrutiny and discussion, then this will aid the process by which they and their followers are gradually moved towards the true moral religion and away from dogmatism and superstition.<sup>126</sup>

Seen in this light, it is possible to make sense of a surprising comment of Kant’s within his discussion: namely, that the religious bodies themselves are to “not allow” the state to order

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 6:96. This last condition would of course be objectionable to some religious groupings, as it would require the state to not tolerate those that forbid their members from taking part in necessary civil roles, such as compulsory attendance of children at state sanctioned schools, sitting on juries, and undertaking compulsory military conscription.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 6:133.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 6:133.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 6:115 & 120-122.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 6:113-114.

their internal constitutions.<sup>127</sup> If the aim is to see religions and their adherents move towards the maxims of reason by experiencing freedom, then emphasising the importance of groups of religious individuals having the capacity to will their own freedom to constitute as they please makes sense for Kant to articulate. Again, the form of toleration of religious expression for which Kant advocates here is not merely a necessary permission granted to allow society to function peaceably for the present time, but a factor which constructively helps to facilitate progress.<sup>128</sup> At the same time, even as it operates constructively towards a better future, the shifts over time which Kant expects toleration to promote will mean that some forms of religion will, at least gradually, disappear as religion becomes progressively closer to being coterminous with morality. In time, toleration of those forms of religion which Kant regards as being most problematic will become less frequently necessary in practice, as they lose adherents and influence and in some cases, cease to exist altogether.<sup>129</sup>

So far as the state is concerned, Kant's theory has certain implications. Religious toleration for Kant cannot mean giving partial privileges to the "tolerated" minority while giving full privileges to others as had occurred in Britain since 1689. This is because offering or withdrawing certain civil advantages which are otherwise available to all exposes individual consciences to the temptation to act out of motives of gain, which is incompatible with freedom and "can hardly produce good citizens for the state."<sup>130</sup> More broadly, states should not claim that they allow freedom of conscience simply because they do not restrict what their citizens think privately within their own minds, while they do censor what might be said within churches or written by theologians. Kant condemns this, explaining that the state is not really granting any freedom to its citizens which they do not possess already, since it is impossible to

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 6:96.

<sup>128</sup> Nussbaum argues that Kant's account of toleration is incomplete due to its failure to provide any account of cultural support for individuals to strive towards moral perfection. However, at this point Nussbaum does not give Kant credit for how in his *Religion* he sees religion operating persuasively – as time-bound cultural phenomenon – for persons in the present to lead them in the present context towards enlightenment. See Nussbaum, "Lockean State," 171ff.

<sup>129</sup> The question of whether Kant sees all ecclesiastical religions as eventually disappearing altogether in practice is one where there is some ambiguity in his thought in the 1790s. On the one hand, he appears to look for a time when ecclesiastical faiths are dissolved in the universal recognition of rational moral principles (e.g. *Religion*, 6:135), while on the other he seems to say even in the same work that for as long as human nature remains in its current form (with a sensuous element) then ecclesiastical faiths will remain necessary (e.g. *Religion*, 6:102-103). Cf. Tampio, "Pluralism in the ethical community," 175-192.

<sup>130</sup> Kant, *Religion*, 6:134.

regulate by state law the inner thoughts of any individual.<sup>131</sup> On the other hand, spiritual authorities can at least hinder such individual freedom by using dogmas to instil “pious terror” in the minds of their followers, which for Kant is inimical to the progress of reason and morality.<sup>132</sup> However, his solution to this is not to urge that the state act intolerantly towards religions which might teach such doctrines, but to leave the external expression of faith unrestricted. This is because the key to social progress, and to individuals no longer being enthralled to such ecclesiastical-religious notions, is for the citizenry to become more aware of their freedom and more able to exercise their moral insight. As this occurs, coercion carried on via religious fear will become gradually less effective for individuals. If the state refrains from restricting public expression of faith, it engenders respect for duty by creating more space for autonomous reason: “external coercion hinders all spontaneous advances in ethical communion of the believers, which constitutes the essence of the true church, and totally subjects its form to political ordinances.”<sup>133</sup>

Religion, even as it (necessarily, in Kant’s view, until his vision of an ideal moral order comes about)<sup>134</sup> in its historical form contains dogmatic-traditional elements as well as moral ones, should not be allowed by the state to be subject to malicious attacks, as these weaken its value as a social good which serves the progress of morality.<sup>135</sup> In this sense, the state is to tolerate and to ensure that others tolerate a variety of religious expressions. “Toleration” is an appropriate category to use here. This is because it refers to the enlightened state “tolerating” religions which they would not agree with fully, because these religions contain “dogmatic” as well as “moral” elements: dogmatic elements which are necessary for the present time to ensure the adherence of those who are not yet fully self-directed by self-legislating reason, so that such people might gain from and be led forward by the moral elements within the religions in question.<sup>136</sup> Toleration at this point, as is the case in other contexts within Kant considered previously, appears as having something of a constructive-yet-transitional character. The state grants freedom of expression and activity to public faiths containing elements which are not fully in accord with reason and not purely comprised of the dictates of morality alone, because

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 6:134, note. Cf. Kersting, “Politics, freedom and order,” 342-366.

<sup>132</sup> Kant, *Religion*, 6:134, note.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 6:133.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 6:135-136.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 6:133.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 6:164.

this serves the end of society and its citizens developing their reasoning capabilities through the experience of freedom.<sup>137</sup> For Kant, progress occurs in an historical world where “compromise and reform belong together.”<sup>138</sup> In granting a right of toleration to its subjects, a state cannot force or push individuals to become better-reasoning, more moral persons, or promote virtue in any real sense.<sup>139</sup> However, a state can by establishing political rights of toleration help put in place ambient conditions within which these things may flourish, by allowing reason freedom to move and grow, by establishing laws and external norms which help subjects to become more aware of their capacity to freely exercise moral insight, and by shaping “social and economic institutions... wherever these tend to keep people dull and dependent.”<sup>140</sup>

### 3.6 Conclusion

As we survey the largely political texts where Kant supports one form of toleration or another, but without using explicit toleration-language, we find him advocating for toleration (with various limits) on the part of the state for two reasons. In some texts, specifically his comments on republicanism and cosmopolitanism in *The Metaphysics of Morals* and *Toward Perpetual Peace*, toleration operates merely as a necessary stance of the state for preserving peaceful and harmonious relations within society and between states. The same is true of his discussion of state policy regarding the regulation of religion in *The Metaphysics of Morals*. On both of these points, Kant’s view reflects that which we identified in relation to his conception of political toleration in Chapter 2.

By contrast, significant elements of his political theory as presented in *What Is Enlightenment?* and most substantially in his thinking on religious policy and the interaction of theology and

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<sup>137</sup> Cf. Philip J. Rossi, *The Social Authority of Reason: Kant’s Critique, Radical Evil, and the Destiny of Humankind* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 2005), 5-7.

<sup>138</sup> Kersting, “Politics, Freedom, and Order,” 359.

<sup>139</sup> Arthur Ripstein, *Force and Freedom: Kant’s Legal and Political Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 11-12.

<sup>140</sup> Thomas Pogge, “Kant’s Theory of Justice,” 421-22. Barbara Herman, “The Difference that Ends Make,” pages 92-115 in *Perfecting Virtue: New Essays on Kantian Ethics and Virtue Ethics*. Edited by Lawrence Jost and Julian Wuerth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), here 113, also argues that for Kant in the 1790s, the development of individual moral capacities while not actively created by sound political institutions, are normally preceded and supported by these. See also: Onora O’Neill, “Instituting Principles: Between Duty and Action,” 331-32.

philosophy in *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, presents toleration as positively constructive for Kant's goal of enlightenment. This is true even though it has a quite limited character and Kant envisions toleration declining in practical importance in the future as society approximates more closely his goal. In this way, we can recognise in at least some of Kant's political thought a parallel indirect conceptual account of toleration to the direct account which we outlined in the previous chapter in relation to his moral thought. Toleration for Kant in a political sense assists with the functioning of society at the level of preventing deterioration away from peace and harmony. But more than that, it also operates to facilitate society's members to move forward together constructively towards the ideal of enlightenment. It supports this goal by creating space for the public use of reason to be given as much play as possible (in *What Is Enlightenment?*) and to allow citizens maximum space to develop their moral insight in the sphere of religion (in *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*). The state is not capable of entering the ethical sphere and *making* or legislating for its subjects to become more enlightened, but in preserving their liberty (external freedom) through a robust policy of toleration, it provides an important support for them to exercise their autonomy (internal freedom).<sup>141</sup> This role of political toleration in Kant's thought is analogous to the value which Chapter 2 identified that he sees toleration as having in a moral sense. At the end of Chapter 2 we were able to conclude that toleration conceived of morally both supports human functioning in the present as well as promotes a better future. By contrast, at that point in our study it appeared as though political toleration was far more limited, being merely a necessity for community life to function in the present. However, if we expand our view to include indirect references to toleration within his political texts, as has been done in the present chapter, then it is possible to recognize a more positive and constructive aspect of political toleration in Kant. In providing for a right to toleration in the political-juridical sphere, Kant believes that states can not only enforce civil peace and harmony, but also help to make room for the progress of enlightenment.

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<sup>141</sup> Cf. Chris Surprenant, "Liberty, Autonomy, and Kant's Civil Society," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 27.1 (2010), 79-94. Surprenant does not draw an explicit connection to toleration, but does argue for a related idea to the one noted here, specifically that the political realization of liberty (understood as external freedom) is a precondition of autonomy (internal freedom).

## *Chapter 4 – Evaluating the Secondary Literature on Kant’s View of Toleration*

### **4.1 Introduction**

As we have seen, when both Kant’s usage of toleration-language and of toleration-like concepts is considered, a clear picture of the function of toleration in his thought emerges. Toleration has a significant and necessary political role in enabling society to function peaceably and harmoniously. States ought to grant and maintain rights of toleration for their subjects, particularly with respect to how they express their religious preferences and how they exercise the public use of reason. Nonetheless, Kant does place some quite substantial limits around the extent of the toleration which a state ought to grant. But toleration for Kant is more than just a political protection or permission for members of a society, important as that role is. Toleration also plays a constructive role in his philosophy at two levels. Firstly, as we saw in Chapter 2, in the moral sphere it positively promotes virtue in relation to how we as individuals respond to our misfortunes, approach social intercourse, and behave when visiting foreign lands. Secondly, as we saw in Chapter 3, toleration can also operate in a political sense to support the movement of society as a whole, together with its members, towards the goal of enlightenment: although this constructive political element was not apparent in Chapter 2’s examination of direct references to toleration, it did emerge clearly from the consideration of indirect references conducted in Chapter 3. However, in both the moral and political senses, toleration for Kant has significant limitations.

We now turn to relate Kant’s concept of toleration as it has been articulated in the previous two chapters to other contemporary perspectives regarding Kant’s views on toleration. There are a number of points on which our reading overlaps with that of some other commentators, while also providing a critique of these. In the literature concerning Kant on toleration, there are several broad positions represented. Firstly, some have suggested that Kant’s concept of toleration is underdeveloped and has little of positive value that is worth considering, in comparison with other alternatives from the period. Israel’s position represents this view, and given further serious study of Kant on toleration would be redundant if this view were to be proven true, it will be considered first.<sup>142</sup> If it is determined that Kant has something substantial to say regarding toleration, a further question is whether Kant’s conception of toleration is of central importance to his practical project, or relatively marginal even though it may possess

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<sup>142</sup> Israel, *A Revolution of the Mind*.



some significance. O'Neill is the primary representative of the former view,<sup>143</sup> with Heyd,<sup>144</sup> Abellan<sup>145</sup> and Quinn<sup>146</sup> are examples of the latter. Considered conceptually, the other major point of differentiation among contemporary views regarding Kant on toleration is whether Kant's conception is primarily moral or political in orientation. O'Neill argues that toleration for Kant is primarily political in nature and application, whereas Heyd in response to O'Neill suggests that it is largely moral. Abellan and Quinn propose alternative accounts that are largely moral but with quite significant political implications. In what follows, each of these positions will be considered in turn in light of the analysis conducted in the previous two chapters. We shall begin briefly with the view that Kant's views on toleration are underdeveloped and not worthy of serious attention, before more extensive consideration is given to O'Neill's views which are arguably the most substantial and seminal contributions within the contemporary literature. A number of other philosophers discuss or mention Kant's views on toleration, such as Robert Erlewine,<sup>147</sup> Lars Tonder,<sup>148</sup> Andrew Benjamin,<sup>149</sup> Cynthia Schossberger,<sup>150</sup> Hent de Vries,<sup>151</sup> and Rainer Forst.<sup>152</sup> However, these authors either clearly answer each of the above questions in the same way as those we will examine below

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<sup>143</sup> O'Neill, "The Public Use of Reason," also, O'Neill, *Constructions of Reason: Explorations of Kant's Practical Philosophy*, 28-50, and O'Neill, "Kant's Conception of Public Reason."

<sup>144</sup> Heyd, "Is Toleration a Political Virtue?"

<sup>145</sup> Abellan, "Immanuel Kant: Tolerance Seen as Respect."

<sup>146</sup> Quinn, "Religious Diversity and Religious Toleration."

<sup>147</sup> Erlewine presents a more subtle and arguably less persuasive account along similar lines to Israel, suggesting that while Kant's view is not lacking in useful resources on some points, it is much inferior to those of Moses Mendelssohn and Hermann Cohen: *Monotheism and Tolerance: Recovering a Religion of Reason* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010).

<sup>148</sup> Tonder, like O'Neill proposes an understanding of Kant on toleration which is both constructive and largely political in application, although with a different emphasis to O'Neill. His account also suffers from the same limitation we shall shortly discuss regarding O'Neill's approach, in that it concentrates on only a narrow portion of Kant's corpus (in his case, mostly on the third *Critique*). Lars Tonder, "Remembering Tolerance Differently," *Teoria* 32 (2012), 93-108; also, Tonder, *Tolerance*, 56-66.

<sup>149</sup> Benjamin also regards toleration as largely political in scope and essential to Kant's system. Andrew Benjamin, "On Tolerance: Working Through Kant," *Contretemps* 2 (2001), 25-38.

<sup>150</sup> Schossberger mostly assumes O'Neill's view of toleration in Kant's work, that is, as something politically-oriented that is closely associated with the nature and exercise of public reason: Cynthia Schossberger, "Raising a Question: Coercion and Tolerance in Kant's Politics," *Ethic@ - An International Journal for Moral Philosophy*, 5 (2006), 165-171.

<sup>151</sup> De Vries discussion of Kant concentrates on the limited question of freedom of expression amongst university-based philosophers within *The Conflict of the Faculties*: de Vries, *Religion and Violence: Philosophical Perspectives from Kant to Derrida*, 25ff.

<sup>152</sup> Forst's brief discussion considers Kant's understanding of toleration to be relatively peripheral and not constructive but merely a "permission conception" located in the political-judicial realm only. Rainer Forst, *Toleration in Conflict: Past and Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 327-28.

(and hence it would be repetitive to examine them here in further detail), or discuss toleration in Kant only briefly and tangentially.

## **4.2 Israel: Kant on Toleration as an Impoverished Concept**

Israel argues that Kant's idea of toleration is a heavily underdeveloped concept and an impoverished poor relative of that proposed by representatives of the radical Enlightenment such as Diderot and d'Holbach.<sup>153</sup> In light of the survey of Kant's corpus conducted above, these conclusions appear to be overly dismissive on the first score, while having something to say on the second. Although Kant does not say a lot on toleration relative to the vast size of his corpus, as we have seen above there is a consistency to his thinking on the matter and his concept is a constructive one which encourages toleration at the personal level as actively supporting virtue, and toleration in a political sense as an important constructive ingredient for progress towards Enlightenment. Certainly, Kant does not argue for as full-blooded a concept of toleration as did the radical enlighteners lionised by Israel, but his was a concept which recognised pragmatically how distant the reality of enlightenment was in his own time, and sought to facilitate movement in the right direction. However, in agreement with Israel, we must still acknowledge that relative to the radical Enlightenment and its legacy today in liberal societies, Kant's view as we have seen above has serious limitations, some of which are perhaps even more problematic in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, such as his views on the inspection power of the state in light of modern surveillance and data-processing technologies.<sup>154</sup>

## **4.3 O'Neill: Toleration as a Political Concept at the Heart of Kant's Practical Project**

If toleration in Kant is an important constructive concept worthy of serious attention, we might ask whether it is in fact central to his project, as O'Neill claims. O'Neill's central claim is that toleration for Kant is not merely a derivative value, but is closely associated with the grounding of practical reason itself. O'Neill observes that in several key places in his works, Kant makes assertions arguing that "the public use of reason should always be free."<sup>155</sup> Modern readers might dismiss this as an excessively limited claim for toleration on the grounds that for

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<sup>153</sup> Israel, *Revolution of the Mind*, 86, 128-138.

<sup>154</sup> See Section 3.4 above where other limitations are discussed.

<sup>155</sup> O'Neill, "Public Use," 525. As examples, O'Neill points specifically to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, A738/B766, and *What Is Enlightenment?*, 8:36 & 8:40.

Kant “public” reason is restricted to what would be regarded today as largely “private” personal expressions outside of the public sphere, and that Kant would only call on the government to defend toleration when it is actively threatened.<sup>156</sup> However, O’Neill argues that for Kant toleration is not merely an indifferent toleration of acts of expression in the sense of passive non-interference in the self-expression of others. Rather, it is more than this: toleration is the active hearing and recognition of communications from others with which we do not agree.<sup>157</sup> Seen in this way, Kantian toleration becomes a much more demanding expectation. In *What is Enlightenment?* Kant, according to O’Neill, argues that the exercise of public reason, where an individual addresses the world at large in her/his own voice, rather than addressing a defined context speaking in a state-regulated role, must be tolerated by the state in order to produce an enlightened society.<sup>158</sup> O’Neill therefore places considerable importance on the distinction in Kant between civil and intellectual freedom, which correspond to the private and public uses of reason respectively.

Public reason for Kant refers only to communications which could be addressed to the world at large without reference to any external authority. Kant’s key idea is that toleration by the state of these kinds of communications, including critical debate, is necessary to support the gradual emergence of an enlightened society guided by reason, and that intolerance of these kinds of reason-bearing communications undermines *all* uses of reason. Given that reason is the basis of Kant’s entire practical project, and for O’Neill all communicative uses of reason depend upon toleration, then according to O’Neill’s reading toleration becomes an essential foundation for Kant’s practical project as a whole.<sup>159</sup> It is for this reason O’Neill argues that toleration is central to Kant’s project. For toleration to be effective in supporting the advance of practical reason in society, it must move beyond granting permission to specific acts of expression to supporting norms of communication which enable the development of public reason. Therefore, according to O’Neill, it is specifically freedom of communication which is central to reasoning, and therefore toleration of this freedom which occupies a fundamental place in Kant’s practical system.<sup>160</sup> Our communication must be able to “bear the light of publicity” in

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<sup>156</sup> Ronald Beiner, “Hannah Arendt on Judging,” pages 89-156 in *Hannah Arendt: Lectures on Kant’s Political Philosophy* (Edited with an Interpretive Essay by Ronald Beiner. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), here 123.

<sup>157</sup> O’Neill, “Public Use,” 526-527.

<sup>158</sup> O’Neill, *Constructions of Reason*, 48-50.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 42ff.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

being understandable to all concerned with reason and genuinely open to reasonable debate to further the goal of an enlightened society.<sup>161</sup> Toleration for Kant involves the state acting to support this kind of communication, which is the sole means by which a community of reasoning persons can establish reason's sovereignty. Because toleration is an activity of the state, supporting specifically public reason operating as communication directed at a social goal, its character and application is political rather than moral. Indeed, it is the essential foundation of political progress. O'Neill writes:

Toleration in the Kantian picture is then not merely a political virtue or a practice which would have to be part of any achieved just polity. It is the only matrix within which a plurality of potentially reasoning beings can constitute the full authority of reason and so become able to debate without restrictions what a just political constitution might be.<sup>162</sup>

Toleration's centrality to Kant's wider project is understandable according to O'Neill, as in her view, "the entire critical enterprise has a certain political character."<sup>163</sup> O'Neill's reading has the effect of shifting "Kant on toleration" from being a highly peripheral topic to being a primary point of discussion, thereby making toleration integrally related to central themes in Kant's philosophy.

O'Neill's argument concentrates on a brief passage in a single shorter work of Kant's to assert her key claims. Before working backwards from this to argue that the three major *Critiques* support the conceptual apparatus of his comments in *What Is Enlightenment?*. This leads to her conclusion that toleration is central to Kant's practical philosophy. However, this approach has some methodological limitations. If toleration, as O'Neill conceives of it, is as central to Kant's enterprise as she suggests, one would expect it to gain at least some explicit sustained attention, if not be a central focus, in the core *Critical* texts. But, as we have seen, we do not find this. O'Neill's narrow concentration on *What Is Enlightenment?* means that important data present in Kant's works relating to toleration is not allowed to shape her account. By contrast, the more systematic and comprehensive study of Kant's whole corpus carried out in this thesis avoids

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<sup>161</sup> O'Neill, "Public Use," 547.

<sup>162</sup> O'Neill, *Constructions of Reason*, 50.

<sup>163</sup> O'Neill, "Public Use," 524.

this problem, and enables Kant's comments in *What Is Enlightenment?* to be set within the context of his remarks on toleration elsewhere.

The analysis offered above also broadens Kant's concept of toleration in directions not suggested by O'Neill, who by largely limiting her enquiry to the works of Kant's critical decade, does not incorporate much material from his writings of the 1790s which, as we have seen, add a lot to our understanding of Kant's account of toleration. Specifically, for O'Neill, Kant's understanding of toleration has an exclusively political focus or application. However, as we have seen Kant in not one but several works in the 1790s explicitly discusses toleration in moral terms. Also, in taking into account Kant's discussion of religious toleration in *Religion*, as well as some of his related comments in *The Metaphysics of Morals*, the analysis of these texts above reveals that by the 1790s Kant believed that there was an important role for toleration at a societal level which sometimes extends beyond the public exercise of reason as outlined by O'Neill. Regarding *What Is Enlightenment?* itself, considered in isolation from the rest of the corpus, our reading is largely in agreement with O'Neill's exegesis, including her recognition that political toleration in Kant's system operates as more than simply a right which helps society to function, but also promotes movement towards enlightenment and a society ruled by reason. However, the analysis presented in this thesis also fills out the picture more than O'Neill by taking account of Kant's comments of the 1790s, which above all highlight the constructive moral element of toleration for Kant which is absent from O'Neill's reading. Therefore, we can say that toleration is not exclusively political in application because there is also in Kant a significant moral role for toleration. In addition, the consideration given in this thesis to Kant's works of the 1790s fills out the account of political toleration more than O'Neill's focus on *What Is Enlightenment?* allows for, particularly in relation to elements such as religion, and cosmopolitan right.

A further implication for O'Neill's view is brought to light by the systematic survey conducted in this thesis. Her claim that toleration as outlined in *What Is Enlightenment?* is the central foundation for freedom of communication, which in turn forms the basis for Kant's entire practical project, does not appear to be supported by the evidence considered above. Certainly, in some places in *Religion* as well as *What Is Enlightenment?* where Kant speaks of toleration in a political sense, he does see it as supportive of freedom of expression, which in turn supports the progress of reason. However, in relation to the texts considered above, toleration

does not seem to bear the weight that O'Neill gives it for underwriting all public communication and reasoning. Even in many of the texts where Kant does write about toleration in a political sense beyond *What Is Enlightenment?*, he does so referring to other functions of toleration beyond O'Neill's focus on toleration as the foundation of public reason. As we have seen above, toleration operates in *The Metaphysics of Morals* as a necessary stance of the state for preserving peaceful and harmonious relations within society and between states, and in the *Religion* to grant citizens space to develop their moral insight in the sphere of religion. Even in *What Is Enlightenment?* itself, although toleration has something of a constructive role, it remains a second-best alternative for Kant. Indeed, he is partly dismissive and negative towards "mere" toleration in that text - hardly what we might expect if toleration is supposed to be, as O'Neill argues, the central element of his critical system. As we saw in Chapter 2, wherever Kant refers explicitly to toleration, the more constructive applications are in fact moral rather than political. These considerations do not seem to support O'Neill's claims about toleration in Kant, and the extensive role which Kant gives to toleration outside of the political sphere calls out for an alternative to her reading.

Lastly, a further limitation of O'Neill's account in light of our analysis is that her claim that Kant's version of toleration is more demanding than it is often assumed to be does not appear to have been borne out. Toleration for Kant remains something limited to a minority of communications, and the state is able to restrict much expression that any contemporary liberal account would permit, such as on Kant's use of "decency" and "convenience" as grounds for justified state intolerance of speech and action. Although freedom of expression is defended by Kant in an area such as religion, where it would be greatly valued by many, Kant also offers an account of the state's powers of regulation and inspection for reasons of public security which, while significantly limiting in his own time, provide justification for very extensive state intrusion on personal liberty in the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Kant's conception of toleration therefore seems ill suited to the role that O'Neill tries to give it of underwriting the entire function of reason, and her assessment of political toleration in Kant seems excessively positive.

#### 4.4 Heyd: Toleration as a Largely Moral Concept, Relatively Peripheral to Kant's System

Heyd's reading of Kant contrasts directly with O'Neill's, arguing that toleration for Kant is something exercised by individuals in a moral sense but which has at most a very limited, negative political element.<sup>164</sup> Heyd, considering Kant's comments in *What Is Enlightenment?* but disagreeing with O'Neill's analysis, argues that because for Kant the political realm of juridical right is not the sphere within which public reason rightly operates, toleration is not a political virtue for Kant.<sup>165</sup> It is only relevant in a full and constructive sense in the community of scholars, together with aspects of private interpersonal relations, meaning it is a moral concept rather than a political one, "which relates to the virtues of critical dialogue rather than to the way state authorities control our lives."<sup>166</sup> States might contain, or even encourage individuals who are tolerant of one another, but they are not tolerant themselves *as states*. Political toleration in *What Is Enlightenment?* is, according to Heyd, limited to a negative action on the part of the state, the evacuation of the sphere of public reason ("political abstention from censorship") so that individuals can get on with the business of reasoning their way towards moral improvement.<sup>167</sup> It is purely instrumental in that once the Kingdom of Ends is realized it will become redundant, and political toleration is denigrated by Kant in his comments on "mere" toleration in *What Is Enlightenment?* because it is a very poor relative of moral toleration practices within communities of scholars.<sup>168</sup>

Heyd observes that Rawls, O'Neill and others have sought to preserve toleration as a *political* concept rather than a moral one, even while toleration as a concept has become increasingly difficult to define as other liberal values have become firmly established.<sup>169</sup> Heyd's primary criticism of this approach is that it fails to recognise that we simply do not wish to ground contemporary liberal democracy on toleration, but instead on a group of other concepts centred around rights, justice, equality, and the rule of law. Toleration might be something practiced by a medieval sovereign with personal beliefs and preferences, but not by a modern state founded upon universalizable principles and rights. If a citizen goes beyond these rights into the

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<sup>164</sup> Heyd, "Toleration," 171-194.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 181-82.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

impermissible then the state *must* act against them, and if they do not then the state has no place to act: no room is left for toleration between these two postures.

An appealing feature of Heyd's view is that it seeks to establish a place for toleration today, by proposing a reading of Kant's concept of it which recognises that toleration as articulated in early modern Europe is no longer as valued in contemporary liberal societies, where the idea of toleration appears to be a limited and limiting one when set alongside respect, recognition and full equality before the law. To give a topical example, many proponents of same-sex marriage do not want same-sex relationships to be merely *tolerated*, they want them to be *recognised* as love relationships which are on par with opposite-sex relationships. While many today would intuitively agree that toleration is an outdated and patronising concept relative to respect or recognition in current contexts, Heyd goes further and gives reasons for specifically denying that toleration is a political virtue to be practiced by states or by citizens in the formal political sphere. His comments in this direction appear to cohere well with how Kant speaks explicitly and negatively of "mere" (political) toleration in *What Is Enlightenment?* More broadly, Heyd's claim, against O'Neill, that toleration is not a foundational value for Kant's system of practical philosophy is borne out by the conclusions of Chapters 2 and 3 above.

However, Heyd's denial that toleration for Kant has a substantial political dimension, or at least a constructive one, appears to run against the evidence we have identified within Kant's writings. As we saw in Chapter 3, Kant's broader conceptualisation of toleration in the political realm, especially with regard to religion, appears to have a positively constructive function which goes beyond simply supporting a basic juridical right or purely negative evacuation of the proper sphere of public reason. In particular, state toleration in both *Religion* and *What Is Enlightenment?* contributes positively towards the goal of enlightenment.

In playing down the political aspect of toleration, Heyd also suggests that toleration for Kant is primarily moral. However, although Heyd does correctly recognise that Kant has a constructive moral conception of toleration, he does not interact sufficiently with Kant's own account at this point. Heyd recognises the role that toleration is described by Kant in *What Is Enlightenment?* as playing in relation to the communications of public reason within the community of scholars, but does not see its constructive moral role as extending beyond this. By considering



the contribution of Kant's post-critical works, we should add to Heyd's account the positive role that Kant sees for toleration in relation to the virtues of social intercourse, and the way in which virtue may be promoted through how individuals respond to the misfortunes of life. As was observed in the case of O'Neill, a more systematic review of Kant's works substantially broadens Heyd's account, giving a more balanced picture.

#### **4.5 Abellan & Quinn: Toleration as Primary Moral, with Political Implications**

Abellan and Quinn both regard Kant's concept of toleration as being fundamentally moral, but unlike Heyd see this moral account as having significant political implications. Abellan sees toleration for Kant as "mutual respect between human beings" or "respect for the dignity of the person."<sup>170</sup> In Abellan's case, toleration is understood as a moral duty derived directly from the principle that a person cannot be utilized as a means but must be respected as an end in themselves.<sup>171</sup> Human freedom consists in independence from causal determination in nature together with the autonomy of human rationality to provide itself with its own practical laws. Intolerant restriction of this freedom, such as limitation of the autonomy of persons with respect to their religious beliefs, introduces an inappropriate heteronomy by requiring something of persons on the basis of causes (in the case of religion, specific metaphysical assumptions) not derived solely from autonomous reason. Toleration-as-respect for Abellan is defined as individuals avoiding coercion of others, so as to respect their autonomy and thus their capacity to set ends for themselves. This has the political implication that the state ought to "tolerate" in the sense of only employing coercion through laws which could be consented to by all, with the goal of promoting freedom in the external relations among people.<sup>172</sup>

Abellan's discussion has the advantage of clearly indicating in terms of core concepts in Kant's practical philosophy why states and other individuals are not to interfere in the exercise of reason by other citizens. It also explains why people are to "tolerate" certain actions and expressions in others which they may not practice themselves. However, it is not clear that his proposal is an account of Kant *on toleration*, notwithstanding the title of his piece. Abellan effectively conflates toleration with respect for persons, and in doing so utilizes very few of the

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<sup>170</sup> Abellan, "Immanuel Kant: Tolerance Seen as Respect," 209 & 215.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

references in Kant's works, discussed above, to toleration itself. Equating the moral sense of toleration with respect in Kant is a doubtful move. In the moral sphere, toleration appears for Kant to stand as a concept that is quite distinct from respect, highlighted by the fact that in none of his texts on toleration discussed in the previous two chapters is respect linked in any way to toleration. Further, the concept of toleration that we do find in Kant's work, as outlined in previous chapters, is clearly not equivalent to what Kant means by respect.<sup>173</sup> Kant consistently presents respect in unambiguously positive terms, whereas as we have seen above, he is aware of the limitations of toleration notwithstanding its positive functions, and regards toleration with a degree of ambivalence. These different treatments of respect and toleration on Kant's part strongly suggest he sees them as distinct concepts. Finally, Abellan's discussion of political toleration in Kant fails to acknowledge the constructive role it sometimes plays for Kant.

Quinn also presents a moral understanding of toleration in Kant with political implications, though from the rather different starting-point of Kant's epistemology. In Book IV of *Religion* as well as in *On the Conflict of the Faculties*, Kant argues that acting to kill in situations where this would not normally be an ethical action, on the basis of religious convictions, is always wrong.<sup>174</sup> This is because we can never have certainty that God would will such an action – whereas we do have at least near-certainty that it is morally wrong to perform such actions. From these passages, Quinn proposes that Kant implies a basis for a doctrine of toleration. Due to the epistemic limitations of human reason, we should tolerate the views and practices of others with whom we disagree on matters such as religion, which lie beyond the reach of practical reason.<sup>175</sup> By implication, the political authorities are also to exercise toleration and penalise subjects for their religious beliefs for the same reason. Quinn's contribution is notable in its advocacy of the role of toleration in Kant's work on the basis of his thinking about the limits of reason. As we have seen, this is an important idea in relation to Kant's discussion of toleration elsewhere in the *Religion* as well as other works. As we have seen above, there is clearly more to be said about toleration than introduced here, however to be fair to Quinn he is not seeking to outline a comprehensive account of Kant on toleration so much as to draw

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<sup>173</sup> C.f. Christine Korsgaard, *Creating the Kingdom of Ends* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), 137-143; Allen W. Wood, *Kant's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 42-47 & 144-45.

<sup>174</sup> Kant, *Religion*, 6:185-87; Kant, *On the Conflict of the Faculties*, 7:62-64.

<sup>175</sup> Quinn, "Religious Diversity and Toleration," 72-74.

attention to its epistemological foundations.<sup>176</sup> On that point, we might observe that for Kant the basis of toleration is not only epistemological (in the sense of the limitations of human reason), but also concerned with the *character* of practical reason and the *conditions* under which it may flourish. Toleration is called for not only because our judgements about others' beliefs might be wrong, but also because it can promote virtue, and support the progress of reason towards enlightenment.

#### 4.6 Conclusion

The conclusions drawn from the systematic review of Kant on toleration in Chapters 2 and 3 confirm some ideas present in the existing relevant secondary literature, but also highlight some gaps and deficiencies in that literature. On the first question identified at the beginning of this chapter, whether Kant's concept of toleration is sufficiently developed to be worthy of serious attention, we can clearly answer in the affirmative, and the dismissals of Israel and others can be set aside. Secondly, on the matter of whether toleration is central to Kant's system, the evidence considered in this thesis points to a negative answer, disagreeing with O'Neill's conclusion. While toleration does relate to and reflect key elements of Kant's practical philosophy and performs a role worthy of consideration in that sphere, at the same time its importance must not be over-emphasised: toleration for Kant is a significant but not central part of his system. Concerning the third and final question with which we began this chapter, regarding whether toleration for Kant is primarily moral or political, this thesis concludes that Kant has a relatively developed concept of toleration relating to *both* the political and the moral spheres. Regarding the various scholarly perspectives considered, O'Neill's account could say more about the former and acknowledge the presence of the latter by paying greater attention to Kant's thinking on toleration that is presented in his works from the 1790s. Likewise Heyd's minimisation of the political aspect of toleration in Kant could be addressed through attention to other parts of the literature. While accounting for some of the reasons for toleration, Abellan's discussion fails to adequately trace out the shape of toleration as it appears explicitly and conceptually across Kant's corpus, with the result that toleration is insufficiently differentiated by Abellan as an idea in its own right that is clearly distinct from respect. Quinn highlights the limitations of human reason as one key motivator for toleration,

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<sup>176</sup> Quinn's broader project, though not his reading of Kant, is thoroughly critiqued in a collection of essays: see James Kraft and David Basinger (eds), *Religious Tolerance through Humility: Thinking with Philip Quinn* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), particularly the contributions of William Lane Craig and Peter Byrne.

but his account needs to be supplemented by other factors if it is to explain the foundations of Kantian toleration. Only through a systematic review of Kant's corpus, as we have done here, can Kant's concept of toleration be grasped in all of its fullness. It is a concept which appears in both moral and political guises, and in both cases possesses a constructive as well as a "negative" aspect.

## ***Chapter 5: Conclusion***

In this study, toleration for Kant has emerged as a significant concept, which while not central or foundational to his system, has a valuable place in his understanding of both moral progress towards enlightenment and the role that state and political actors can have in actively supporting and facilitating this constructive movement. The suggestion that Kant's conception of toleration is underdeveloped or not worthy of serious attention can be set aside. So too can the assumption that Kant saw toleration only negatively. As such, his well-known critical comments on "mere toleration" in *What Is Enlightenment?* should not be taken to sum up all of the senses in which Kant conceives of toleration across his works. Toleration for Kant has limitations and deficiencies as an idea, and in some places he clearly hopes for an enlightened future in which toleration does not need to be practiced as frequently as in his own time. Nonetheless, toleration for Kant – both moral and political - has an important role in supporting the movement towards this better future. Kant is aware of some of the difficulties surrounding toleration, and I have pointed out further limitations and issues within his own particular conception of it, such as his problematic allowing of intolerance on grounds of convenience and decency. Notwithstanding this, the analysis performed in this thesis highlights that Kant shows us that toleration has positive value in not only helping us to "get along" together in our personal and political lives and preventing us from impacting negatively upon the freedom and autonomy of each other, but can also help assist with the construction of enlightenment.

The survey in Chapter 2 of Kant's explicit or direct references to toleration made this last point clear in relation to the moral sphere. Toleration promotes and strengthens virtue, in relation to social intercourse and in handling the misfortunes of life. A form of toleration as practiced by individuals in cross-cultural encounters is a significant ingredient supporting the construction of a better future for humanity. Chapter 2 also demonstrated that a clear and coherent political conception of toleration exists for Kant. In Chapter 3, a consideration of indirect uses of toleration regarding the political sphere allowed us to identify that political toleration, like moral toleration as outlined in Chapter 2, can also operate constructively for Kant.

The picture of toleration in Kant which emerged from Chapters 2 and 3 represented the results of a more systematic and comprehensive review of toleration in Kant than is present in other

contemporary readings. This allowed us to clarify and further the current debate around Kant on toleration, confirming that Kant's conception is significant and worthy of attention, while not being foundational to his practical philosophy as a whole. When his corpus as a whole is considered, Kant's idea of toleration emerges as having substantial and constructive moral and political dimensions within his thought. Some other readings fall down at precisely this point, failing to fully recognise either the moral or the political components due to too narrow a concentration on parts of his work.

There is more that could be said concerning Kant and toleration. This thesis has clarified the different forms which the concept takes within his thought. However, while it has confirmed that it is a significant and distinct idea for Kant and differentiated from other concepts such as respect, the precise nature of the relationship between toleration as outlined above and other key moral and political ideas in Kant remains to be articulated. Also, in light of continued interest today in toleration and in the different forms it may take, the implications for contemporary debate about toleration of the constructive potential of toleration which Kant points to are a tantalizing prospect for future exploration.

***Appendix: Occurrences of Toleration-Terminology in Kant***

<b>Term</b>	<b>Work</b>	<b>Occurrences</b>
Toleranz	<i>The Metaphysics of Morals</i> <i>What Is Enlightenment?</i> <i>Review of J. G. Herder's Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Humanity</i> <i>Reflections on Anthropology</i> <i>On Philosophers' Medicine of the Body</i> <i>Opus Postumum</i>	6:435 8:40 8:57  15:580 15:974  22:302
Aushalten	<i>Essay on the Maladies of the Mind</i> <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> <i>Critique of the Power of Judgement</i> <i>On Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason</i> <i>The Conflict of the Faculties</i>  <i>On Education</i>  <i>Correspondence</i>  <i>Handwritten Notes on Anthropology</i> <i>Draft Sketches for the Philosophy of Religion</i> <i>Opus Postumum</i>	1.271  3.417, 4.9, 4.259  5.302  6:10, 6:69, 6.202 7.110  9.463, 9.457  10.412, 10.253, 11.113, 11.166, 11.505, 12.428 15.742, 15.205  20.431, 20.438  21.71, 21.284
Dulden	<i>On the Conflict of the Faculties</i> <i>Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View</i> <i>That Might be True in Theory but not in Practice</i> <i>Toward Perpetual Peace</i> <i>On a New Superior Tone in Philosophy</i> <i>Correspondence</i> <i>Handwritten Notes on Reflections on Anthropology</i> <i>Handwritten Notes on Medicine</i> <i>Further Reflections on Moral Philosophy</i> <i>Handwritten Notes on Further Reflections on Philosophy of Law</i>	7.59 7.171, 7.257  8:276  8:358 8:403  12.142 15.313, 15.558, 15.652  15.974  19.299  19.566

Dulden (continued)	<i>Unpublished Draft of Perpetual Peace</i>	23.160
Verträglichkeit	<i>The Metaphysics of Morals</i>	6:473
Ertragen	<i>Some Reflections on Optimism</i> <i>Dreams of a Spirit-Seer</i> <i>Elucidated by Dreams of</i> <i>Metaphysics</i> <i>Of the Different Human Races</i> <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> <i>The Metaphysics of Morals</i> <i>Anthropology from a</i> <i>Pragmatic Point of View</i> <i>On Physical Geography</i> <i>Handwritten Notes on</i> <i>Reflections on Anthropology</i> <i>Handwritten Notes on the</i> <i>Course on Anthropology</i> <i>Comments on Observations on</i> <i>the Feeling of the Beautiful</i> <i>and the Sublime</i> <i>“Education,” in Logic,</i> <i>Physical Geography and</i> <i>Education</i>	2.29 2.373  2.440 3.409, 4.351 6:320, 6:459, 6:484 7.258  9.321, 9.435 15.542, 15.578, 15.584 & 15.415  15.741 20.8, 20.9, 20.60, 20.74, 20.99, 20.167, 20.187  9.487



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