

Kantian Conditions for the Possibility of Justified Resistance to Authority

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Immanuel Kant's theory of justifiable resistance to authority is complex and, at times, appears to conflict with his own practice, if not with itself. He distinguishes between the role of authority in "public" and "private" contexts. In *private*—e.g., when a person is under contract to do a specific job or accepts a social contract with one's government—resistance is forbidden; external behavior must be governed by *policy* or *law*. In contexts involving the *public* use of reason, on the other hand—e.g., when a person is faced with a moral decision or is engaged in a philosophical dispute—the freedom of conscience sometimes *requires* resistance, especially in cases where other persons inappropriately attempt to usurp authority over matters that are rightfully up to the individual to decide. In texts such as *Perpetual Peace*, Kant looks forward to a political situation wherein no political resistance (e.g., in the form of *war*) would be necessary. Yet in *Metaphysics of Morals*, he argues that a citizen never has the right to revolt against one's government, suggesting we must cooperate even with war. On a personal level, Kant openly praised both the American and the French revolutions; yet when his own writings on religion were deemed by the censor to have come into conflict with the king's edict, Kant failed to resist the (arguably unjust) authority; instead, he gave up his (apparently public) right to free philosophical expression, promising never to write or speak on religion again during the king's reign. I shall argue that a key to resolving these tensions lies in the principle that *universities* must promote a healthy, *public* "conflict" between philosophers and all "private" employments of reason. The only ground for disallowing private resistance, therefore, is the underlying presence of genuine *philosophical* resistance.

I. The problem of conflicting values in authority-based contexts

Immanuel Kant's theory of justifiable resistance to authority is complex and appears at times to conflict with his own practice, if not also with the theory itself. In texts such as "The Doctrine of Right" (Part I of *The Metaphysics of Morals*), he argues that citizens never have the right to revolt against their government, suggesting we must cooperate even with war or situations involving politically-motivated abuse.¹ Similarly, individuals in various types of contractual relationship, such as that between an employer and an employee, are duty-bound to cooperate with whatever policies or laws those in authority over them may impose.² In other texts, such as *Perpetual Peace*, where Kant envisions a future world situation that will leave no room for political resistance of state against state (i.e., no room for *war*), he argues that this ultimate goal of human history can be reached only if states first agree to form themselves into a Federation of States, for this world body can then serve as a *higher* authority whose international laws each state would be obligated to obey, just as individuals within any given state must obey its internal laws.³ By means of theories such as these, Kant weaves into the very fabric of civil society a seemingly absolute requirement of *obedience* to whatever person or body may hold a position of authority over us. Many commentators have pointed out that this highly *conservative* message to individuals seems incongruent with the fact that Kant is widely regarded as one of the founding fathers of political *liberalism*. The main thrust of Kant's political theory seems clearly designed to enshrine *freedom* and individual *liberty* as necessary requirements of an enlightened political community, so why does he repeatedly emphasize obedience to authority?

Turning our attention to Kant's personal views, we find a similar tension. Kant openly praised both the American and the French revolutions.⁴ Yet in 1794, when his own writings on religion were deemed to be inconsistent with the king's edict imposing religious censorship, Kant failed to

resist the (arguably unjust) authority; instead, he *gave up* his presumed right to free philosophical expression, promising never to write or speak on religion again during the king's reign.⁵ Kant has often been accused of lacking courage by responding to the censorship issue by simply caving in to the unjust pressure. It is worth noting here at the outset that his personal response in this case is actually consistent with his official theory, that we are to obey those in authority over us, even when we feel as if we are being abused. The tension remains, however, between his seemingly wimpish response to being censored and his seemingly wholehearted endorsement of revolutions around the world. In relation to both his private views and his official theories on the issue of resisting authority, commentators have therefore tended to be perplexed when attempting to explain how the sage of Königsberg could have held such divergent positions.

In what follows I shall argue that we can resolve these tensions by coming to a proper understanding of three important perspectival distinctions. (A perspectival distinction is a description of two or more opposing ways of viewing one and the same subject matter, such that *true statements* can be made from each opposing viewpoint, even though the statements seem contradictory if considered in the abstract.⁶) The first key distinction is between the “private” and “public” spheres of rational discourse. As we shall see, Kant's call to absolute obedience relates only to actions that occur in the *private* sphere. The second distinction is between the higher and lower faculties of the *university*. And the third is between assessing one's own moral obligations to those in authority and appreciating reason's influence on the historical development of the human race. I shall argue that for Kant the role of universities in general, and of the lower faculty (i.e., of philosophers) in particular, is crucial to a proper understanding of both his official theory (that disobedience to authority in the private sphere is never justified) and his personal expressions of support for various actual revolutionary movements (on the grounds that they are an inevitable

expression of *public reason* at certain crucial turning-points in human history).

II. Two perspectival distinctions: Private vs. public spheres and higher vs. lower faculties

In his short essay, entitled “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?” (and in several other publications), Kant crucially distinguishes between the way authority functions in the “public” (*öffentlich*) and “private” (*privat*) contexts. His distinction tends to be somewhat confusing because in certain respects he uses these terms in a way that is opposite to the typical use of their contemporary English equivalents. We are acting in the *private* sphere in any situation where we are under contract to do a specific job or have entered (at least implicitly) into a social contract with our government. As I mentioned at the outset, Kant famously and controversially argues that resistance is *forbidden* in such contexts; external behavior *must* be governed by *law* (in the case of citizen-state relations) or *policy* (in the case of employer-employee relations), inasmuch as these are private agreements that can always be terminated by the individual, if the requirements imposed by the authority become too harsh to bear. Among the few absolute requirements that Kant’s theory of statecraft requires of all just governments is that *slavery* is forbidden and that citizens must always be free to emigrate.⁷ The reason Kant is so insistent on these points, whereas he is not so insistent that, for example, a democratic system is necessarily better for the people than a monarchical system, is that individuals *must* be free to terminate their relationship with the country of their citizenship, just as employees must be free to quit their jobs.

We are acting in the *public* sphere, by contrast, whenever we are faced with a moral decision or are engaged in an open, philosophical discussion of issues relevant to ourselves or to all citizens of our state. In these contexts, Kant claims, the freedom of conscience sometimes *requires* resistance, especially in cases where other persons attempt to usurp authority over matters that are

rightfully moral and are therefore up to the individual to decide. Despite the common caricature of Kant as an extreme individualist, his moral philosophy is actually community-oriented to a large extent, depending as it does on the principle of *universal* values; this is why he regards a situation that poses a *moral* challenge as a matter of “public” concern, even though in a sense moral decisions relate to each individual’s “inner” rationality and are in that sense personal matters. Ideally, we work out the details of our moral obligations through free and open dialogue with others who are part of our social network of relationships. Kant is well known for regarding lying as one of the primary examples of an immoral act.⁸ So it should come as no surprise when he argues that our ethical (public) obligation trumps our political (private) obligation in the case of lying: presumably even if one’s employer or government were to *order* a lie, we would be justified to resist.⁹

This first perspectival distinction suggests two basic conditions for the possibility of justified resistance to authority, although Kant himself does not spell them out very explicitly. First, if one’s government or one’s employer does *not* permit its citizens or employees to terminate their contracts, then this would seem to be a sufficiently irrational situation to justify a person in resisting the authority’s policies or laws. Citizenship, like employment, is a *private choice*, and on this assumption alone does it make sense to demand that those who accept the terms of the contract must obey the policies imposed on them by the recognized authorities. Second, a government (and, arguably, an employer) that leaves no room for philosophical debate also provides the citizen (or employee) with a justified rationale for resistance—though in this case it seems likely that Kant would say the only legitimate form of resistance is to terminate the contract (i.e., to emigrate or to quit one’s job).

Kant discusses the second perspectival distinction in several publications, culminating in his

late work, *The Conflict of the Faculties*. In this book, Kant comments on the significance of the fourfold division in the structure of the Prussian universities of his day. The three “higher” faculties (theology, law, and medicine) were charged with the task of educating professionals who would have a direct influence on the welfare of the general public. Priests and their churches are to care for the spiritual welfare of the citizens in any state; lawyers and law enforcement agencies are to care for the welfare of people’s property; and doctors and hospitals are to care for people’s physical welfare. In each case, these professionals are under contract, ultimately with the government, to follow pre-established guidelines to insure that they treat the people properly. As such, governments (and so also, specific employers) have not only the *right* but the *obligation* to set up standards and to require that the members of each profession obey these standards. As Kant points out in *What Is Enlightenment?*, there would be a subtle irony in a situation where these professionals were *never* under *any* circumstances allowed to question the status quo. The irony is that ordinary citizens look to such professionals to *establish* the guidelines for good practice, but if they are duty-bound to *obey* those guidelines, then how will the guidelines ever improve as knowledge develops?

Kant’s key to resolving the problem of how the higher faculties can both obey the rules as they now stand, and yet also question them in an effort to promote healthy change, lies in the role of the *lower* faculty, the faculty of philosophy. The task of philosophers in the university is not merely to debate amongst themselves, but also to engage in a healthy “conflict” with members of the *higher* faculties. Philosophers’ debates with theologians, lawyers, and doctors constitute a *public* employment of reason, even though the matters they are debating relate to the *private* sphere that, as such, commands absolute obedience. In other words, Kant’s ultimate rationale for never allowing private individuals to resist the status quo is his assumption that an undercurrent of

genuine *philosophical* resistance is present in the public sphere. As Kant again puts it in “What Is Enlightenment?” (largely a tribute to the enlightened policies of King Friedrich Wilhelm I):

But I hear from all sides the cry: *Do not argue!* The officer says: Do not argue but drill! The tax official: Do not argue but pay! The clergyman: Do not argue but believe! (Only one ruler in the world says: *Argue* as much as you will and about whatever you will, *but obey!*)¹⁰

When the private use of reason is at issue, arguing with the rules is simply inappropriate: the duty of the good citizen is to obey. But such a stance is tolerable only in a context where the authorities do not regard *public argument* as threatening to their authority. Kant’s position, in other words, is that society in general ought to imitate the healthy conflict that should be exemplified by the university structure, wherein students can at one and the same time be trained (from within their own faculties) to be responsible, law-abiding members of professions such as lawyer, doctors, and priests, and yet also (when undertaking concurrent philosophical studies) systematically question the very policies and procedures they are learning to trust. A political system that can insure peace and stability, and thereby minimize the risk of being toppled by revolutionary forces from within, must seek to imitate this balance between public freedom of expression and private compliance with the law.

The key distinction provided by *What Is Enlightenment?* is between the use of *coercion*, which is based on the state (*civil* coercion being possible only in virtue of the state’s existence), and the use of *persuasion*, which is a distinctively *human* power and therefore can be done only by those who have preserved their own humanity. A state cannot *allow* individuals to use violent resistance, because to do so would be to contradict its own sovereignty. A revolution that succeeds is in this sense taking a step backwards, reverting from the civil state to the state of nature. Resistance at this level is therefore justifiable, on Kantian grounds, only if its purpose is not to

overthrow the state but to *communicate* with it, with the state's ultimate improvement as the goal.

Several commentators have argued that, provided one's resistance to authority takes the form not of active subversion, but of what we would nowadays call *civil disobedience* (at least in the passive form of refusing to obey), then it serves as an essentially *communicative act* and as such is justified and not subject to the charge of being subversive of authority. One who disobeys in a *civil* manner (i.e., non-violently) is not attempting to cheat the system or set oneself up as an authority that is somehow *above* the law (this being the core of Kant's objection to individuals deciding unilaterally to break the law), but is attempting to communicate to those who make the policy that the purposes of justice are not being served as adequately as they could be, so that certain aspects of the existing policy or existing law need to be reformulated. Understood in this way, civil disobedience, especially when performed by groups rather than by individuals, can be regarded as a *public* rather than a *private act*; as such, it does not necessarily contravene Kant's principle that in the private sphere one must always obey.

III. The third perspectival distinction: Individual morality vs. the role of reason in history

The foregoing two perspectival distinctions, between the private and public spheres of rational discourse and between the higher and lower university faculties, enable us to grasp the limits of Kant's apparently absolute insistence on obedience to authority. It turns out that Kant is not rejecting any and all forms of disobedience; instead, his point is that, viewed from the political perspective alone, it would be self-contradictory to formulate a law or policy giving citizens the *right* (within the private sphere) to disobey. Rights, and the laws or policies on which they are based, function as tools of coercion. If I disobey a traffic law, for example, the existence of the law gives a policeman or the courts the *right* to employ coercive force against me. A right to *disobey*

would empower an individual to apply a similar degree of coercive force against a policeman or a judge, simply because I do not like the law. Kant rejects *this* justification for resisting authority because it would undermine the entire basis for civil society.¹¹ Rather than appealing to coercive force (a tool of the *private* sphere), justified resistance must transcend private political agreements by appealing to *public reason*. In other words, any acceptable form of civil disobedience must be an essentially communicative act, whose main purpose is not to *force* the authorities to change but to influence public opinion; if one's government is good, then such acts will eventually lead to the desired change of policy.¹² The goal of all such public discourse, according to Kant, is to learn to "think in the position of everyone else";¹³ when a person is not in a position to form an actual group that is powerful enough to influence the sovereign, this mindset can still be used as the key to determining when an individual person is justified in resisting authority. The problem here is that the general public, even (or perhaps, especially) in a democracy, is often influenced by non-moral incentives *not* to think from the unprejudiced position of the common good; ordinary, unenlightened people often have in mind only the rewards they stand to gain from the particular faction they support, and in this way the unforced force of public reason tends to be ignored.

This deeper understanding of Kant's position only highlights the strangeness of the fact that Kant himself openly declared his support for actual revolutions of his day, such as those in the USA and France. In order to understand how this could be more than just blatantly inconsistent or disingenuous, we must call attention to a third perspectival distinction, between an individual's moral self-understanding and the historical evolution of the human race.

In those passages where Kant admits that an individual has a right to resist authority, he bases this on what he calls an "internal juridical duty", stemming from the "right of humanity in our own person";¹⁴ this is closely related to what Kant calls "duties to oneself". Kant holds that these *take*

precedence over our external duty to obey the sovereign power.¹⁵ This is because to disobey our duties to ourselves causes us to turn ourselves into a mere thing, and we lose all dignity, essentially sacrificing the humanity in ourselves. Kant states at one point that we must avoid any situation that involves “debasement of humanity in one’s person (*homo noumenon*), to which the human being (*homo phenomenon*) was nevertheless entrusted for preservation”.¹⁶ Kant’s point is that *human beings* should view their *political rights* as an opportunity to preserve *humanity* and its *moral duties*. Morality is what is being preserved here, not the state. As Kant writes near the end of *Metaphysics of Morals*: “Be no man’s lackey. – Do not let others tread with impunity on your rights”.¹⁷ Thus, he earlier makes an explicit allowance for at least a passive form of what we would call *civil disobedience*: “Obey the government (in everything which does not conflict with inner morality that has authority over you)”.¹⁸ In an article discussing these issues Sven Arntzen interprets these passages to mean that “the exercise of political authority must, for its own preservation, observe the limits expressed by the principle of humanity.... Political authority requires for its own preservation that the subject resist under the relevant circumstances.”¹⁹ But this interpretation misunderstands the referent of Kant’s distinction between the noumenal (moral) and phenomenal (political) perspectives on this issue. Civil disobedience is justified only if its purpose is to preserve the (moral) *goodness* of the political authority, not to preserve the existence of a political system *per se*. From *that* perspective, as we have seen, resistance will always appear to be self-contradictory. In other words, the political perspective on its own gives us no justification for resistance to its authority.

A proper understanding of Kant’s meaning is crucial, because the phenomenal side of this third perspectival distinction, that will enable us to understand the self-consistency of Kant’s views on justified resistance, is that what is true for the individual’s moral obligations in the present

situation is not necessarily the same as what is true for the overall evolution of the human race. According to Kant, reason itself develops, and we may therefore look forward to human history eventually reaching an inevitable goal, as described most fully in *Perpetual Peace*. The rational (though perhaps unreachable) goal of the human race is to build a society where people are good enough so that fewer and fewer (and ideally, *no*) external laws will be needed in order to coerce us to be good. The categorical imperative insures that being good means cooperating with other rational beings (including animals and even nature, insofar as these can be conceived as in some sense rational agents). Laws are needed only insofar as people are *not* cooperative. So, not cooperating with a so-called “bad law”, or even with a “bad regime”, displays a disposition that will ironically cause the political situation to become worse—i.e., to be supplemented with more and more fine-tuned laws that will restrict the people’s freedom (by forcing them to cooperate) still further.

The only exception is the situation where one is so overwhelmed by the *moral evil* one is being asked to perform that those in power will clearly recognize your act of passively refusing to obey as posing a challenge to the status quo. In the cases of both the American and French revolutions, the motivation was not merely a lack of justice for an individual or for a small interest group, but outrageous moral acts that raised the level of concern from one of ordinary treason to one of promoting humanity’s historically-significant moral evolution. As noted above, Kant accepts the distinction introduced by Hobbes and others, between the “state of nature” (where brute force and the will of the most powerful determine what is right) and the “civil state” (where people enter into a contractual agreement with governing authorities). The reason he officially rejects the legitimacy of revolution is that a revolution inevitably requires, at least temporarily, the destruction of a civil state and a return to the state of nature. By contrast, gradual reform from

within is always preferable. Revolution can be justified, it seems, only if all other avenues of change have been attempted without success, and if the public use of reason by the people confirms that the status quo has become too immoral to tolerate.

We are now in a position to suggest two reasons that Kant could have given to clarify why he approved of the American and French revolutions, as cases of justified resistance to the government authority. First, he was not a citizen of those countries, so he was also not subject to their social contract. In this very pragmatic sense, he would not have found himself duty-bound to obey or affirm the principles of their regimes. In other words, unlike citizens of the British colonies that became the USA or of pre-revolutionary France, Kant the citizen of Prussia was in a position where he could observe events in these other countries in a more objective matter. While he would have been obligated to obey the authorities in those countries, had he been a citizen, his distance enabled him to assess the events from the perspective of their historical implications. Therefore, even though individuals involved in these events acted immorally when viewed from a purely political perspective, the basic moral values they enshrined can be appreciated as empirical evidence confirming Kant's belief in the inevitable progress of human history toward more rational (i.e., moral) social structures.

A second rationale that Kant might have cited is that the British and French regimes were *not* allowing their people to terminate their collective contract with their government. If he perceived the British and French governments as putting their subjects into a situation of virtual collective slavery, then Kant's admiration for the ideals of these revolutions is not as inconsistent as it initially seems. His statements regarding the illegitimacy of revolt all refer to the *internal consistency* of the law or constitution: the sovereign cannot build into the law of the land a *right* to overthrow the government, for this would undermine the force of the law itself and create a

paradoxical situation whereby the sovereign is not sovereign. This, Kant thinks, would be a recipe for disaster. It makes no sense for a government to have a law, or for a company to have a policy, that states “if you disagree with the rules, you do not need to follow them.” Instead, Kant’s position is that enlightened governments will encourage their citizens to *debate* the rules in public as much as they wish, provided they obey the rules in their private relations until such a time as the rules may change as a result of public debate. This is not inconsistent with the view that in some—hopefully rare—cases, the only recourse an enlightened public has is to revolt. There is no necessary inconsistency in rejecting revolution in general as a legitimate political strategy, because it lacks civility and requires a return to the brutality of the state of nature, thus involving its perpetrators in morally questionable actions, but at the same time admitting that from the perspective of the long term historical development of humanity, revolt may be the only way forward when a highly oppressive regime refuses to heed public reason.

IV. Conclusion: Summary of the Kantian conditions for justified resistance to authority

Having defended the consistency of Kant’s position on the necessity of obedience to proper authorities with his admiration for successful democratic revolutions, I shall now conclude by summarizing the basic Kantian conditions for the possibility of justified resistance to authority. First and foremost, we have seen that resistance in the form of public, philosophical debate is itself a fundamental condition for the possibility of an enlightened government. In much the same way that resistance functions in the physical world as a constructive expression of the balance between the opposing forces of attraction and repulsion,²⁰ every political authority *needs* resistance in some form. In a healthy, enlightened society (or a company or any other structured organization), resistance occurs through the agency of rational public debate, for which philosophers ought to be

the exemplars. Properly functioning philosophy departments in properly functioning universities are crucial to Kant's vision of the enlightened state. In the context of such enlightened societies, citizens are *always* obligated to obey the law, even if they disagree with it—the sole exception being those rare cases when obeying a law would require a person to act immorally. No citizen in such a society would ever be justified in staging a revolution, because it will always be more productive, from the standpoint of human history, to change the system from within. The highest degree of legitimate resistance in such contexts would be a passive form of civil disobedience, which must always remain peaceful in order to be called “civil”.

In a society that does *not* enjoy the freedom of expression that makes all of this possible, resistance of other types may be needed. In such contexts, for example, it is far more likely that a person might be required to do something he or she regards as immoral. Kant's position is that subjects in such a society should still obey the law even when they disagree with it (just as Kant himself assented to the king's censor when he was accused of having expressed views on religion that were deemed subversive of the government's approved doctrines). This is because obedience is good, and making moral goodness real in human society is the rational goal of human history. But in extreme circumstances, when even civil disobedience (i.e., passive non-compliance) on the part of large portions of the population fails to persuade the sovereign authority to change its ways, the ultimate expression of resistance, revolution, may be the only option that will honor our human duty to preserve the humanity that ought to be reflected in every political system. In cases where the sovereign wrongly attempts to squash all resistance, revolution is justified by the broadest demands of human evolution, because ultimately no political system can thrive without public resistance.

NOTES:

¹ 6:320-323. Even if the constitution of one's state is clearly defective, "it is still absolutely unpermitted and punishable to resist it" (6:372). For enlightenment comes not through revolution but gradual reform (8:36 ["What Is Enlightenment?"]; cf. 6:355). See also *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, where he associates revolution with "barbarism" (7:326). Interestingly, in *Perpetual Peace* he admits that "violent revolution" may be the only way a republican constitution can occur in a democracy (8:353; cf. 8:372). References to Kant's writings cite the volume and page numbers of the Berlin Academy edition.

² For "it is an external duty to keep a promise made in a contract" (6:220), even if the other party has no power of coercion to force me to comply (6:219). Kant thus devotes a whole section of the Doctrine of Right to "Contract Right" (6:271-276). As applied to states: even though a revolution may in a sense be justified "by a bad constitution" (8:372-373), "during the revolution anyone who took part in it by violence or intrigue would be subject with right to the punishment of rebels." Cf. 6:353.

³ In the "Second Definitive Article for Perpetual Peace", Kant calls this body a "league of nations" (8:353-357). Kant makes similar suggestions in *Metaphysics of Morals* (e.g., 6:349) and elsewhere, as in *Idea for a Universal History* (8:28) and *On the Common Saying* (8:311).

⁴ See e.g., Manfred Kuehn, *Kant: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp.4,155,340-343,375-378, 400,405.

⁵ For Kant's own account of this event, see his Preface to *The Conflict of the Faculties* (7:5-10).

⁶ For a thoroughgoing examination of this principle and its relation to Kant's philosophical system, see Chapter II of my book, *Kant's System of Perspectives: An architectonic interpretation of the*

Critical philosophy (Lanham: University Press of America, 1993).

⁷ Kant carefully distinguishes between slavery and the practice of employing domestic *servants*, which is allowed (6:282-284); the only exception is that the state can treat certain kinds of criminals as if they were slaves (6:333). On the right of emigration, see 6:338.

⁸ The duty never to make a “lying promise” is the standard examples Kant uses to illustrate one of the four basic types of duty (perfect duties to others) in both *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (4:402-403,419) and *Critique of Practical Reason* (5:21,61).

⁹ This, I take it, is one of the key points made in Kant’s infamous 1797 essay, *On a Supposed Right to Lie from Philanthropy* (8:425-430), though his choice of examples makes Kant easy prey for those who think he is justifying a cold disregard for the welfare of others. Kant makes the duty to disobey explicit in *Religion* (6:100n; cf. 6:154n), where he argues that “when human beings command something that is evil in itself (directly opposed to the ethical law), we may not, and ought not, obey them.”

¹⁰ 8:36-37.

¹¹ As Sven Arntzen points out (“Kant on Duty to Oneself and Resistance to Political Authority”, *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 34.3 [July 1996]:409-424, quoting p.410), commentators agree that Kant’s main point is to argue that “there can be no *positive* law according to which a subject has a right of resistance.”

¹² For an excellent account of how Kant’s position leads to just such a view of civil disobedience, see the concluding chapter of Redar K. Maliks, *Making the Center Hold: Kant on Sovereignty and Resistance* (Columbia University PhD dissertation, 2008). See also Kant’s *On the Common Saying*, 8:304.

¹³ This is the second of three “maxims of the common human understanding” that Kant lists in

Critique of Judgment (5:294). It is closely related to the first of the three characteristics of “the freedom to think” that Kant defends in his essay *What Is Orientation in Thinking?* (8:144): “how much and how correctly would we *think* if we did not think as it were in community with others to whom we *communicate* our thoughts, and who communicate theirs with us!”

¹⁴ 6:236 (*Metaphysics of Morals*).

¹⁵ In *Lectures on Ethics* (Collins), Kant says: “the duties that stem from right and benevolence are not so binding as those towards myself” (27:433).

¹⁶ 6:423. Arntzen (*op cit.*, p.414-419) rightly emphasizes the importance of this passage but misunderstands the preservation as being about the juridical state, not the *moral* state.

¹⁷ 6:436 (*Metaphysics of Morals*).

¹⁸ 6:371 (*Metaphysics of Morals*).

¹⁹ Arntzen, *op cit.*, p.424.

²⁰ Cf. Kant’s *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*; e.g., 4:527,552-553.