

I recently argued that the Kantian view offers an attractive and distinctive alternative to both political liberalism and perfectionism.<sup>1</sup> Paul Weithman's "In Defense of Political Liberalism," challenges my argument in two ways.<sup>2</sup> First, he argues that Rawls's version of political liberalism is not subject to the problems I attribute to political liberalism. Second, he argues that elements of the Kantian view that I describe should actually lead the Kantian to endorse Rawls's version of political liberalism. In what follows, I take up these challenges in turn.

#### I. RAWLSIAN POLITICAL LIBERALISM'S RESPONSES TO OBJECTIONS

##### A. *Objectionable Laws*

I distinguish the Kantian view from political liberalism by focusing on political liberalism's commitment to what I call the acceptability constraint: "the justification for political institutions and laws must be acceptable to all reasonable people who are subject to them."<sup>3</sup> I then consider how political liberalism treats a law prohibiting tattoos on the grounds that they are degrading. I suggest that political liberals would object to the law because it violates the acceptability

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1. Japa Pallikkathayil, "Neither Perfectionism nor Political Liberalism," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 44 (2016): 171–96.

2. Paul Weithman, "In Defense of a Political Liberalism," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 45 (2017): 397–412.

3. Pallikkathayil, "Neither Perfectionism nor Political Liberalism," p. 173.

constraint since the claim that tattoos are degrading is subject to reasonable disagreement. But I argue that this misdiagnoses the problem with that law, which is that whether one gets a tattoo is simply not the business of one's fellow citizens. That is, the core objection to such laws is about freedom rather than about reasonable disagreement. Weithman argues that Rawls would agree with the Kantian's assessment of this case because Rawls does not invoke the acceptability constraint at the relevant argumentative stage.

I am going to briefly outline how I understand the place of the acceptability constraint in Rawls's view. Although this reading of Rawls differs in some ways from Weithman's, it supports Weithman's assessment of the tattooing case.<sup>4</sup> But I will argue that the Rawlsian treatment of that case suggests an objection that is distinct from but closely related to my original objection.

As I understand it, Rawls's view goes something like this. In *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls uses the original position to identify the principles of justice that constitute fair terms of cooperation for free and equal citizens. And there he argues that the principles of justice as fairness would be chosen in the original position. Later, Rawls indicates that the original position may also be used to identify the principle governing the legitimate use of political power, that is, the liberal principle of legitimacy: "our exercise of political power is only fully proper when it is exercised in accordance with a constitution the essentials of which all citizens as free and equal may reasonably be expected to endorse in light of principles and ideals acceptable to their common human reason."<sup>5</sup> Rawls is explicit that the liberal principle of legitimacy is meant to be responsive to the fact of reasonable pluralism, that is, that political liberalism views "the diversity of reasonable religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines found in democratic societies as a permanent feature of their public culture."<sup>6</sup> Given its content and motivation, I take Rawls's

4. I review the differences with Weithman's reading of Rawls in note 10.

5. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, expanded ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 137.

6. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, p. 136.

liberal principle of legitimacy to be a version of the acceptability constraint, or a close cousin to it.<sup>7</sup>

Rawls goes on to indicate what it takes to satisfy the liberal principle of legitimacy: “Only a political conception of justice that all citizens might be reasonably expected to endorse can serve as a basis of public reason and justification.”<sup>8</sup> One of the defining features of a political conception of justice is that it is presented as freestanding: the ideas of society as a fair system of cooperation and citizens as free and equal are not presented as part of a comprehensive doctrine, but instead as drawn from democratic political culture. Recasting justice as fairness as a political conception of justice enables it to meet the liberal principle of legitimacy, since people with different comprehensive doctrines are thereby able to endorse it. Justice as fairness, however, is not the only reasonable political conception of justice. The ideas of society as a fair system of cooperation and citizens as free and equal may undergird somewhat different political conceptions of justice. The content of public reason is given by the family of reasonable political conceptions of justice.<sup>9</sup>

With this in mind, let us return to the tattooing case. When presented with a law prohibiting tattoos because they are degrading, a proponent of justice as fairness may condemn that law as inconsistent with the freedoms that are protected by the first principle of justice as fairness and privileged by the lexical priority of the first principle over the second. Other reasonable political conceptions of justice may assess the case in somewhat different terms, but they too will ultimately evaluate the case through the lens of the ideas of society as a fair system of cooperation and citizens as free and equal. And so Rawlsian public reason has the resources to condemn a law prohibiting tattoos on grounds of freedom rather than on grounds of reasonable disagreement.

7. If anything, the liberal principle of legitimacy is perhaps a bit stronger than the acceptability constraint since the liberal principle of legitimacy looks to what people may be reasonably be expected to endorse rather than merely what they could accept. But since this difference does not meaningfully alter any of the arguments at issue, I set it aside.

8. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, p. 137.

9. John Rawls, “The Idea of Public Reason Revisited,” in *Political Liberalism*, p. 450.

I agree with Weithman that Rawlsian political liberalism is, in this way, able to evade my original objection to political liberalism.<sup>10</sup> Rawlsian political liberalism can give the correct diagnosis of why a law prohibiting tattoos ought to be rejected. But I believe the Rawlsian strategy just moves the bump in the rug, so to speak. Instead of giving the wrong reason for rejecting a prohibition on tattoos, the view gives the wrong reason for treating citizens as free and equal.

Rawlsian political liberalism holds that we are entitled to act on a conception of justice that treats citizens as free and equal only if that conception of justice can be presented as freestanding. Any comprehensive doctrine that derives its commitment to treating citizens as free and equal from some view about the regard owed to others as, say, rational agents, self-conscious sentient beings, or children of God should take this to be a mistake.<sup>11</sup> These views, which I take to comprise most of the liberal tradition, do not take the appropriateness of treating citizens as free and equal to depend on whether that idea can be incorporated into a view built only from ideas available in democratic political culture. Rather, they take treating their fellow citizens this way to be what they owe them in virtue of the kind of being that they are.

This disconnect is especially troubling with respect to issues that Rawls describes as posing “problems of extension” for justice as fairness. These are cases in which the idea of society as a fair system of

10. There are three main differences between my reading of Rawls and Weithman. First, Weithman does not take the liberal principle of legitimacy to be a version of the acceptability constraint. I find this rather puzzling, but it turns out to make no difference to Weithman's overall argument, since his main contention is that the tattooing law ought not be evaluated by the acceptability constraint, and I agree. Second, Weithman does not suggest that the aim of presenting justice as fairness as a political conception of justice is satisfying the liberal principle of legitimacy. But since he seems to agree that this presentation is meant to be responsive to the presence of reasonable disagreement, the upshot is the same. Finally, Weithman suggests that the parties in the original position would decide on a list of public reasons, or a more specific criterion for generating a list of public reasons. I understand the content of public reason somewhat differently, that is, as given by the family of reasonable political conceptions of justice. But since we agree that the content of public reason is not given by a direct application of the acceptability constraint, this difference does not have any further implications for the issue at hand.

11. For a helpful discussion of the way different traditions treat the ideas of freedom and equality, see John Skorupski, “Rawls, Liberalism, and Democracy,” *Ethics* 128 (2017): 173–98.

cooperation does not have straightforward application. Under this heading, Rawls asks: what are our duties to future generations, other states, those who are temporarily or permanently disabled, nonhuman animals, and the rest of nature? He answers, "While we would like to eventually answer all these questions, I very much doubt whether that is possible within the scope of justice as fairness as a political conception."<sup>12</sup> His discussion suggests doubt in particular about the possibility of extending justice as fairness to give an account of some of our duties to people who are disabled and all of our duties to nonhuman animals and the rest of nature.<sup>13</sup>

What are we to make of this problem? Rawls suggests that these issues might fall outside the scope of justice or that they might be cases in which justice as fairness is simply wrong. But one might think that what these cases really show is that the ideas implicit in democratic political culture are too shallow to address all of the issues that may be properly regarded as issues of justice.<sup>14</sup> Consider how the richer conceptions of society and persons that undergird the views mentioned above might address the problems of extension. The Kantian might argue that we owe it to fellow rational agents to unite with them in global political institutions. The utilitarian might argue that we owe it to fellow sentient beings to protect them from being raised and slaughtered in factory farms. The theist might argue that we owe it to fellow children of God to provide for them if they are disabled. And each of these views will have reasons for holding that these duties either are or

12. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, p. 21.

13. In his discussion of public reason, Rawls describes political values that might be brought to bear on questions regarding our treatment of animals. He acknowledges that some people will regard these values as beside the point, and he suggests that since the treatment of animals is not a constitutional essential or matter of basic justice, it is an issue on which "citizens can vote their nonpolitical values and try to convince other citizens accordingly." Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, pp. 245–46. But I suspect that utilitarians and others whose views accord animals moral status might disagree about whether the treatment of animals is a matter of basic justice.

14. This is a familiar concern about Rawlsian public reason, and it is often raised with respect to the issue of abortion. For a discussion of how Rawlsian public reason handles that issue, see Samuel Freeman, "Public Reason and Political Justification," in *Justice and the Social Contract: Essays on Rawlsian Political Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 215–57.

are not coercively enforceable by political institutions. There is no reason to think that this reasoning can be adequately presented solely in terms of the ideas of society and citizens available in democratic political culture. Adherents of these views therefore have good reason to reject filtering their views through this lens.

When the acceptability constraint is applied to particular laws, it wrongly assesses them in terms of reasonable disagreement rather than in terms of freedom. When the acceptability constraint is applied to conceptions of justice, it wrongly conditions the appropriateness of acting on them on whether the ideas on which they are based bear a certain relationship to democratic political culture. Whether they do or not is orthogonal to the more straightforward and intuitive reasons for affirming them. And conditioning the appropriateness of acting on them on this additional criterion is something that those with the more straightforward reasons ought to reject.

### *B. The Contrast with Perfectionism*

This dialectic plays out in a similar way when we move to my argument that the Kantian view provides a more robust rejection of perfectionism than does political liberalism. In that discussion, I consider specific programs that might be implemented on perfectionist grounds, like music lessons funded through a voluntary state lottery. I argue that the reason for rejecting such programs is not that they rely on a controversial conception of the good, but rather that they go beyond the purposes for which the state may legitimately act. Weithman argues that Rawls “thinks the aim of political arrangements is to enable citizens to live as free equals. If the provision of music lessons does not further that aim, then Rawls can maintain that their provision is outside the remit of government, just as the Kantian does.”<sup>15</sup>

Just as before, I grant that since the Rawlsian applies the acceptability constraint to conceptions of justice rather than to particular laws, Weithman is correct about the resources the Rawlsian has in order to treat this kind of case. The Rawlsian may indeed argue that the music

15. Weithman, pp. 397–412.

program is beyond the limits of the legitimate aims of state action.<sup>16</sup> But perfectionists might challenge the conceptions of society and citizens that underlie this view of legitimate state action. As we have seen, Rawlsian political liberalism does not argue for these conceptions of society and citizens but instead draws them out of democratic political culture. And any argument it might give would seem to run afoul of the liberal principle of legitimacy. For this reason, Rawlsian political liberalism lacks the resources to respond to a perfectionist challenge to the ideas of society and citizens that it treats as bases for the conceptions of justice that may inform legitimate state action. The Kantian view, in contrast, has the resources for this kind of engagement with perfectionists since it offers arguments for why citizens should have certain kinds of freedom.

### *C. A Divisive Political Culture*

I argue that political liberalism encourages a divisive political culture by distinguishing between reasonable and unreasonable people and treating the latter as unworthy of engagement. Weithman responds that Rawlsian political liberalism avoids this objection via two distinctions: (1) the distinction between the public political forum, in which only public reasons should be invoked, and the background culture, in which comprehensive doctrines may be regularly discussed and debated; and (2) the distinction between an unreasonable person and an unreasonable view or consideration.

Consider first the distinction between the public political forum, which is constituted by the discourse of government officials and those conducting political campaigns, and the background culture, in which

16. Weithman also suggests that the Rawlsian view is at an advantage when compared with the Kantian view because Rawls leaves open the possibility of an exchange branch in the government that regulates the provision of optional public goods according to Wicksell's unanimity criterion. And Weithman claims that "it is hard to see what is objectionable about the government's going beyond its limited purposes if the Wicksell criterion is met." Weithman, pp. 397–412. To this, the Kantian may ask whether it is appropriate to saddle all citizens with duties of oversight for the exchange branch itself, which Rawls holds may be established if "a sufficiently large number of citizens find the marginal benefits of public goods greater than that of goods available through the market." John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 249.

“endless political discussions of ideas and doctrines are commonplace everyday.”<sup>17</sup> Weithman suggests that on the Rawlsian view, citizens do not typically participate in the public political forum, and the ideal of public reason, therefore, has limited import for them. For this reason, their discussions with their fellow citizens need not be shaped by the distinction between the reasonable and the unreasonable.

There are two reasons why this distinction does not help answer the divisiveness objection. First, it is not significantly less alienating to have the views of one’s preferred candidate for public office dismissed as unreasonable than it is to have one’s own identical views dismissed as such. Second, I am not convinced that average citizens are as removed from the public political forum as Weithman suggests. Rawls claims that “citizens fulfill their duty of civility and support the idea of public reason by doing what they can to hold government officials to it.”<sup>18</sup> Can one be said to be holding one’s officials to the idea of public reason if one publicly advocates for them or their platforms on the basis of considerations that go beyond public reason? It is hard to see how so. While citizens rarely have the power to vote directly for laws that bear on constitutional essentials, many citizens quite often engage in political advocacy regarding such issues. And when they do so, it seems that the Rawlsian view should also view them as governed by the ideal of public reason. Not to do so would involve overlooking the way in which the role of citizen is itself an office in a democratic society.<sup>19</sup> If this is right, then when citizens engage in political advocacy by, say, posting on social media, publicly appending comments to articles on the Internet, or participating in rallies and marches, they are also governed by the ideal of public reason on the Rawlsian view. And so they

17. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, p. 383.

18. Rawls, “The Idea of Public Reason Revisited,” p. 445.

19. In discussing the status of candidates for office and their managers, Rawls notes: “Here we face the question of where to draw the line between candidates and those who manage their campaigns and other politically engaged citizens generally. We settle this matter by making candidates and those who run their campaigns responsible for what is said and done on the candidates’ behalf.” Rawls, “The Idea of Public Reason Revisited,” p. 443. I am not quite sure how to interpret this claim. Perhaps this means that although politically active citizens need not view themselves as governed by the ideal of public reason, candidates for public office should disavow their advocacy to the extent that it draws on considerations that are not a part of public reason. If so, that hardly helps with the divisiveness objection.

should be committed to carrying out their political advocacy in the terms available in public reason, or with a promissory note to offer public reasons in the future.

Consider next the distinction between an unreasonable person and an unreasonable view or consideration. I believe Weithman overestimates the extent to which the original objection depends on classifying people, rather than views or considerations, as unreasonable. He suggests that Rawls's view requires that one engage with one's fellow citizens extensively before it may be appropriate to regard an interlocutor as unreasonable. That may be so, but the view is clearly committed to holding that certain kinds of considerations, like religious considerations, are inappropriate to introduce in political advocacy unless they are backed up by public reasons. Of course, the Kantian view also holds that invoking considerations like the will of God in political decision making is a mistake. But the Kantian view differs from Rawlsian political liberalism in an important respect. To the extent that Rawlsian political liberalism says anything at all about why freedom and equality are appropriate starting points, it says only that these ideas are implicit in democratic political culture. To be sure, individual citizens may and often will have further reasons for endorsing these ideas that are drawn from their comprehensive doctrines. And they may have occasion to give these reasons to their fellow citizens in the course of discussion in the background culture. But when they engage in political advocacy, they may take these ideas as unargued-for starting points. This reticence about the grounds of the values of freedom and equality is problematic because it treats the point of disagreement with illiberal views as beyond the realm of the political. And it is difficult to see how an illiberal person could see these starting points as anything other than question begging. In this way, even if citizens who are guided by the ideal of public reason only distinguish between reasonable and unreasonable considerations, it is not hard to see why someone who does not accept this distinction might regard her views as not having received a fair hearing. And this is what I worry is unnecessarily divisive.<sup>20</sup>

20. For an extended treatment of how one ought to respond to the differing viewpoints of one's fellow citizens, see Japa Pallikkathayil, "Disagreement and the Duties of Citizenship," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, in "The Nature and Implications of Disagreement," special issue (forthcoming).

## II. FROM KANTIANISM TO RAWLSIAN POLITICAL LIBERALISM?

I have claimed that the Kantian state aims to establish mutual independence. Weithman argues that mutual independence requires a certain kind of autonomy. Then he claims that citizens can act autonomously on principles of justice only if they judge that maintaining and acting from the desire to regulate their actions according to those principles is consistent with their good.<sup>21</sup> He concludes that the principles of justice one endorses must be consistent with the reasonable conceptions of the good that the people who are subject to those principles accept.<sup>22</sup> And this makes the justification of principles of justice perspective-dependent in precisely the way political liberalism claims and that I have argued Kantianism rejects. So, Weithman concludes that the Kantian should endorse political liberalism after all.

I am going to begin by identifying a problem with Weithman's argument for the claim that mutual independence requires autonomy. As I understand it, that argument proceeds as follows:

- (1) Mutual independence is a condition in which each person "can be free to live her life as she sees fit consistently with everyone else doing so as well."<sup>23</sup>
- (2) Being free to live one's life as one sees fit consistently with everyone else doing so as well requires the secure establishment of liberal rights and democratic procedures.<sup>24</sup>
- (3) The secure establishment of liberal rights and democratic procedures requires that citizens have an effective desire to uphold them.
- (4) Citizens are free to live their lives as they see fit only if their effective desire to uphold liberal rights and democratic

21. Weithman, pp. 397–412.

22. Weithman holds that this consistency may result from, rather than being prior to, the principles' adoption and institutionalization. See Weithman, pp. 397–412.

23. Weithman, pp. 397–412, quoting the characterization of mutual independence I give in "Neither Perfectionism nor Political Liberalism," p. 177.

24. I claim that mutual independence requires the establishment of liberal rights and democratic procedures. Weithman adds to this that these rights and procedures must be secure. I have no objection to this addition. I discuss the import of this addition later in this section.

- procedures reflects a self-legislated principle enjoining respect for liberal rights and democratic procedures.<sup>25</sup>
- (5) Having the relevant effective desire constitutes a certain kind of autonomy.
  - (6) Therefore, “citizens can be mutually independent only if they are autonomous.”<sup>26</sup>

My main worry about this argument concerns (4). Premise (4) offers a gloss on what is involved in being free to live one’s life as one sees fit, a gloss that has a familiar Kantian ring to it: one is free to live one’s life as one sees fit only if one acts according to principles one gives oneself. Action to avoid punishment or in deference to tradition is not free in this sense. But Weithman’s argument misconstrues the place of this kind of freedom in the overall Kantian view.

On the Kantian view, independence, or “external freedom,” is a kind of interpersonal freedom. Being independent in the sense described in (1) of Weithman’s argument consists in directing oneself rather than being directed by other agents. In contrast, autonomy, or “internal freedom,” is a kind of intrapersonal freedom. Autonomy consists in directing oneself rather than being directed by one’s own inclinations. And one directs oneself in this way by acting on a principle one gives oneself, that is, the Categorical Imperative, which is both the moral law and the law of a free will. With this distinction in mind, consider

25. This premise is “free to live her life as she sees fit” only if she regulates her conduct by principles that are self-legislated drawn from the following passages: “Since mutual independence is a condition in which everyone is able to be free, it must be a condition in which everyone can *freely* regulate her pursuit of her good by her desire to honor the terms of cooperation. I shall therefore assume that the desire to honor the terms is not, at bottom, a desire to avoid punishment by the state. Rather, I shall suppose that the object of that desire is a principle enjoining respect for the system of ‘liberal rights and democratic procedures’ as determined by a legitimate constitution and by legitimate law.” Weithman, pp. 397–412. And: “Citizens who regulate the ‘advance[ment of] their aims’ and the ‘free play’ of their deliberative rationality by political principles do so freely only if those principles are ones they would give to themselves as free, equal, reasonable, and rational. If, on the other hand, they regulate their pursuit of their good by principles that can be defended only on the basis of tradition or authority, for example, then there is an important form of freedom that they lack. They lack that form of freedom even if they are doing what they want without hindrance. And so according to Rawls’s political liberalism, a member of society is ‘free to live her life as she sees fit’ only if she regulates her conduct by principles that are self-legislated.” Weithman, pp. 397–412.

26. Weithman, pp. 397–412.

someone who lives in a just state but obeys the law because she fears punishment. The Kantian view holds that this person is independent but not autonomous. Living in a just state affords her all the interpersonal freedom to which she is entitled. But being interpersonally free in this way does not require that she have an autonomous rather than a heteronomous will. That is, independence does not require that citizens obey the law because they accept it as a manifestation of requirements imposed on them by their own reason rather than because they fear punishment or unreflectively follow tradition. Thus, the problem with (4) is that it introduces an equivocation regarding the kind of freedom that is at issue.

Nonetheless, one might wonder whether the Kantian should be concerned if many people who are raised in a society that secures mutual independence do not come to affirm this requirement. Although the threat of punishment might be enough to keep people from violating the law, there would be no internal mechanism in such a society to prevent the law itself from slipping or lurching away from the aim of securing mutual independence. So, even if mutual independence does not require autonomy as a conceptual matter, it might require autonomy in order for political institutions to be secure or stable over time.

The Kantian view's identification of the moral law with the principles of practical reason leads it to be more sanguine about the prospects of eventual convergence on the Kantian view than Rawls thought plausible. But let me accept the inevitability of allegiance to different comprehensive doctrines for the sake of argument. This allowance will also have the advantage of making the argument that follows one that could be appropriated by non-Kantian comprehensive doctrines that are not as optimistic about the prospects of convergence on their own view.

Consider, then, this reply to the worry about the security or stability of political institutions in the face of inevitable pluralism. Something much weaker than full-blown Kantian autonomy suffices for reasonably secure political institutions. Genuine and not merely strategic commitment to those institutions would suffice even if it were motivated by allegiance to some non-Kantian comprehensive doctrine. Weithman suggests that this kind of genuine commitment is possible only if citizens judge that upholding such institutions is consistent with

their good.<sup>27</sup> Even if we suppose that is so, upholding certain political institutions can be regarded as consistent with one's good even if the justifications for the institutions that are enshrined in public documents and political discourse are given in terms that one rejects as mistaken. For example, people might take having certain inalienable rights to be consistent with their good even if public documents and discourse take these rights to be endowed by a Creator that they do not believe in. For this reason, it is unclear why a concern about the stability of liberal political institutions would lead one to think that public documents and political discourse need to be purged of such contentious starting points. As long as people have sufficient reason internal to their own comprehensive doctrines to affirm such institutions, there is no reason to think that they would reject them if they were publicly defended in different terms.

For this reason, a concern about the stability of political institutions alone does not require moving beyond the terms available in one's comprehensive doctrine. But the Rawlsian might object that this strategy fails to take seriously the way in which principles of justice are supposed to provide "an enduring public basis for justifying the distribution of the benefits and burdens of social cooperation."<sup>28</sup> A good faith effort to provide such a public basis cannot be premised on considerations that one's fellow citizens do not recognize.

I suggest, however, that this response underestimates the way in which citizens ought not be identified with their conceptions of the good or comprehensive doctrines. As Rawls acknowledges, "persons' conceptions of the good are not fixed but form and develop as they mature, and may change more or less radically over the course of their life."<sup>29</sup> Given this, there is no reason that the Kantian who is committed to establishing mutual independence and the theist who is committed to following the will of God cannot both be attempting to provide public justification to their fellow citizens when they invoke those very ideas. They recognize that many of their fellow citizens will reject the terms in which these justifications are offered, but there is an

27. This strikes me as a potentially controversial claim. But I accept it for the sake of argument.

28. Weithman, pp. 397–412

29. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, p. 20.

important sense in which acceptance is an open possibility. Of course, the Rawlsian takes public justification to require the possibility of acceptance in a stronger sense. But this just reflects the Rawlsian commitment to a version of the acceptability constraint. And so invoking that commitment at this stage in the dialectic would be question begging.

To sum up, I began by arguing, contra Weithman, that the Kantian does not take mutual independence to require autonomy. I then turned to consider two other Rawlsian themes that Weithman's discussion touches upon: the problem of stability in the face of inevitable pluralism and the status of principles of justice as providing public justification. I argued that the worry about stability can be answered even if public documents and political discourse continue to be framed in terms of comprehensive doctrines. And this framing does not require that citizens ignore the role of principles of justice in providing public justification. For these reasons, I believe the Kantian view can resist the pull of Rawlsian political liberalism.