

## 1: Public Philosophy – Michael J. Sandel | Harvard University Press

*moral argument and liberal toleration of the State.” 7 The Court’s greater tendency, however, has been to view privacy in voluntarist terms, as protecting “the ability independently to.*

Should insulting religion be banned? The reason the idea is still debated in the twenty-first century is that it has been reframed as a debate within liberalism rather than against it. The arguments set forward by groups such as the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation nowadays have a liberal sound to them: Freedom from harm; Anti-discrimination; State neutrality; and Tolerance. But, in fact, they are not liberal at all. They do not respect individuals, nor are they compatible with a free society. Freedom from harm The argument: Insulting a religion harms its followers because it is an assault on something people care about deeply. Restrictions on harming others are therefore not illiberal, but follow from core liberal principles. The mere existence of harm is not a sufficient reason to create a legal ban. We live in a crowded world with complicated interactions that often have unintended consequences on third parties. If I drive to work I may make everyone else slightly later; if I invent a better car engine I may ruin my competitors and put many thousands of people out of work while providing new jobs for others. There are very good practical reasons to develop a legal framework of rules for adjudicating the conflicts that come with social living. But such a system has to acknowledge that banning harm to others is a foolish and illiberal goal. Foolish, because one cannot have a thriving society, or even much of a society at all, without people bumping into each other. Offense is a particularly problematic harm because it is so subjective: Bans on subjective harm give every private individual an unaccountable veto power over what everyone else is allowed to do, i. We would have a society of dictators whose power over others is mirrored by their own lack of power to do what they want. Illiberal, because it does not reflect the core commitment of liberalism, which is not the avoidance of harm or even the promotion of aggregate happiness but the promotion of individual autonomy, maximising our freedom to live our own lives for ourselves. As Kant would have it, others can give themselves ends goals and values just like you, and therefore that somewhat transcendental capacity should be respected in others too. Second, these rights should be evaluated in terms of their fundamental purpose. Specific rights associated with liberalism - of conscience, property, speech, association, equality before the law and so on - all follow from a foundational commitment to respect the individual autonomy of all, which is our ability to govern our lives, including our moral and religious lives, by rules we set ourselves. When there appears to be a conflict between rights, as in this case between freedom of speech and freedom of religion, it is to this core liberal commitment that we should refer. Once we do so, we can see that not all harms are equal. Harms to your autonomy, your ability to govern your own life, are more significant than harms to your happiness or self-esteem. For instance, it may be true that the existence of gay marriage or even gay people is deeply outrageous and disgusting for very large numbers of people. Rather, it is banning gay marriage that clearly undermines individual autonomy, since it prevents many people from living the kind of lives they have reason to value surprisingly enough, in radically conventional domestic arrangements. If you think it is your business and get upset about it, that is your problem and not their fault. Likewise, on the face of it, autonomy is not threatened by blasphemy. The only infringement of autonomy in play is the demand to censor those found insulting. Third, even if one only considers freedom of religion, one will still be unable to justify a ban on religious defamation. To be understood as a liberal right, freedom of religion must be construed as requiring freedom of religion for everyone - that is, reciprocal respect for the freedom of religion of other people. This is because religious defamation basically means blasphemy, but blasphemy is defined relative to a particular religious group. In a society with freedom of religion, there will be a diversity of religious groups with contradictory beliefs. There will also be internal diversity within each official group. Because individuals are free to take up any of these, freedom of religion automatically produces believers with contradictory beliefs - namely, heretics. One cannot say what constitutes religious defamation without deciding which religious denomination deserves the most respect, which is a political decision. The other side of that coin is disrespect for the freedom of religion of heretics, and their oppression in the name of the religious sensitivities of the politically dominant sect. And

this is in fact how blasphemy laws are always used. A liberal society protects its members from persecution by state or non-state actors. That includes systematic attacks on aspects of their identity intended to induce fear or to undermine their equal status as citizens or even as human beings. Many attacks on religion are in fact attacks on the people associated with those beliefs, often an ethnic minority. In France for example, and similarly elsewhere in Western Europe, mockery of Islam serves as a way of questioning and undermining the Frenchness of citizens of North African descent even though most are not especially religious. Protection against discrimination is a more nuanced and promising argument for restricting freedom of expression about religions. There are differences in how a liberal society should treat in law and social opprobrium such different expressions of ideas about the holocaust as Nazi cartoons posted through the letterbox of a Jewish family; the same cartoons published in a mainstream newspaper; political speeches questioning the holocaust; and academic papers doing the same in reputable history journals. Some of these may be clearly intended to undermine the equal status of a whole group by striking deliberately and viciously at features that distinguish them from other citizens. Since citizens require social standing as well as formal legal equality to exercise their rights properly - for example, to have their interests and opinions fairly heard by the political system or just to go about their normal business in public without discrimination and humiliation - there is indeed a strong case that such "hate speech" is in conflict with liberalism. This might apply to cases of politically directed hate-mongering, such as by Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, or those Republican Tea Partiers who defined the "Ground-zero" mosque as a "command center for terrorism. But notice that the reason this seems more plausible than the subjective offense argument is also what makes it harder to use to justify a general law against blasphemy. Evidence of feeling like a victim is not sufficient here. What is needed is objective - testable - evidence that the social standing of some group of people has in fact been deliberately attacked in some significant way. Merely having your beliefs criticised what do headscarves have to do with the Quran? The world map of outrage has little overlap with the world map of vulnerable Muslim minorities. The self-publishing character of the internet, combined with efficient search engines like Google, produces the novel effect that nearly anything one puts there can be found, stripped of its context, by the very person you would least like to have see it. Anyone who wishes to can easily find something that offends them to the very core of their being on the internet. The corollary of this is that such offensive self-expression cannot really function as "hate speech" in the traditional sense. People are not subjected to it in inescapable ways, such as on their televisions or through their letter boxes. Instead, they must deliberately and consciously search for it. Nor is it readily linked to a political or social bullying campaign against a minority. I find it difficult to sympathise with the outrage that some people make themselves feel about stuff on the internet, or to see how a Youtube video that offends you is necessarily an attack on your equality. State neutrality The argument: The liberal state is supposed to ensure equal protection and equal opportunity to all in living according to their own conceptions of the good. Permitting blasphemy is like supplying weapons to your favourite side in a war. This argument is confused about the character of liberal neutrality. Principle neutrality means assessing all sides in a dispute objectively and neutrally according to the same principle. Operational neutrality means refusing to take sides in any dispute. Clearly these are quite different and one cannot have both. To make this clearer, consider the television show, The Newsroom. The central theme is whether journalism is about objectivity informing people about important facts or balance providing "both sides" of every story. The Newsroom takes an ethical stand: Likewise, liberalism is not about balance. It does not consist either in abstaining from moral judgement or judging that all beliefs or value-systems are equally good. To the contrary, liberals believe that liberalism - respecting and supporting individual autonomy - is best. You are free to practise Satanism, for example, or that one that involves covering yourself in sacrificial chicken blood. On other subjects, liberalism is far from silent. Positively, liberal states should guarantee a generally valuable set of opportunities and rights equally to all citizens such as education and legal rights , with which we can each construct an approach to life that we believe is a good one. Those seeking to ban blasphemy argue that the liberal state should not only positively guarantee everyone the freedom to practice their religion but be operationally neutral about the content of their beliefs. They therefore demand tailored packages of rights and freedoms for people who believe their religious beliefs have special requirements. For example, supposedly all 1. Therefore the state, in

order to respect the equal right of Muslims to practise their religion, should ban depictions of Mohammed. People have dignity, ideas do not. Needless to say, the liberal state is not your mother. The liberal state is a product of the Enlightenment. It is supposed to treat us like grown ups, not children who need humouring. Aside from anything else, some religions consider proselytising a sacred duty: I would even include some atheist fundamentalists like Richard Dawkins in that category. So it seems to me that the demand to ban blasphemy is not really a demand for neutrality in either sense, but for special treatment of some particular religions. The justification seems based on mysterious claims by people whose authority to speak for all those people is equally mysterious, first about what that religion considers sacred, and second about the special significance of this in the lives of all its adherents. A liberal society is a society, not merely a collection of individuals with rights who permit others to also exist. Tolerance is the first virtue of such a society. For liberalism to work and flourish in the long term, people must take up a particular attitude of mutual respect and recognition towards each other. The general problem with this argument is that it conflates the personal moral virtue of accommodation with the political virtue of toleration. They are quite distinct: Between strangers, like fellow commuters, its requirements are somewhat minimal and reciprocal. But such attentive politeness niceness is not the business of the state to prescribe and enforce! Tolerance as niceness is not acceptable as a political principle, not only because niceness is superficial and nebulous, but also because it is insidious and totalitarian. One cannot be commanded to "love thy neighbour" and still live in a society of free people. A properly liberal polity is not a community modelled on the family. It is not concerned with managing the intimate relationships between people in order to keep everyone feeling happy and equally loved.

## 2: Relativism and Tolerance

*Moral Argument and Liberal Toleration: Abortion and Homosexuality What Is HeinOnline? With comprehensive coverage of government documents and more than 2, journals from inception on hundreds of subjects such as political science, criminal justice, and human rights, HeinOnline is an affordable option for colleges and universities.*

So, the notion of toleration necessarily incorporates the three following elements: Is the forbearance of what one finds objectionable a strong enough normative ideal when it comes to establishing what we owe to each other in circumstances of moral disagreement? A recent line of debate concerns the kinds of relation that the ideal of toleration is apt to inform: Whatever response is given to this question, limits to toleration must be established. Liberals tend to think that reference to the harm principle should work as a limit for toleration: Such questions acquire importance as the domain of toleration extends from the realm of religious conflicts, out of which it originated in the 16th and 17th centuries, to include a number of culture and ethics-related issues: What is the appropriate response to such cultural practices as female circumcision? Should neutral institutions prohibit the exhibition of religious symbols in public spaces? I am indebted also to two anonymous reviewers and to Stefani Wexler for their helpful suggestions. Introductory Works Most introductory works offer a discussion of the necessary conditions for relations of toleration to obtain. Forst calls condition 1 the objection component and condition 3 the acceptance component of toleration and adds what the author calls the rejection component, which qualifies the limits of toleration. Cohen , Galeotti , King , and McKinnon offer similar characterizations. These works contain also discussions of the different grounds for the justification of toleration see Grounds for Toleration and of some paradoxes to which appeals to toleration may give rise as the so-called paradox of the tolerant racist, see Paradoxes of Toleration as a Moral Virtue. McKinnon offers also some case-based discussion of contemporary issues of toleration see Exemplary Cases of Toleration , whereas Forst presents a history of the concept see Classical Texts. Respect, Tolerance, and Space: A Conceptual Map provides an online glossary, including definitions of toleration and such cognate concepts as respect. Walzer discusses various interpretations of toleration ranging from the resigned acceptance of differences for the sake of peace to the enthusiastic promotion of diversity, thus offering a useful map for understanding the various connotations the idea of toleration may take. Although most philosophers employ the terms toleration and tolerance interchangeably, Oberdiek distinguishes them by using tolerance to mean a virtue and toleration a practice. Contains introductory definitions of the concepts of tolerance and respect and some theoretically engaged accounts of those concepts with regard to issues concerning the allocation of public space. Edited by Edward N. A substantial section is devoted to the history of the concept. The article is followed by a rich bibliography, which, however, includes only works published before Edited by Catriona McKinnon, " Oxford University Press, Basic introduction to the roots of the idea of toleration and to the recent developments of the debate revolving around it. The article contains also a case study concerning same-sex marriage see also Exemplary Cases of Toleration. Introductory text for those who approach the topic for the first time. Discusses both the history of the idea and some challenges its justification faces in contemporary democracies. Between Forbearance and Acceptance. Offers a philosophical history of toleration and provides a liberal argument in defense of this idea. Best used as a reference for postgraduate courses engaging with philosophical and theoretical challenges to the moral relevance of toleration. Yale University Press, Users without a subscription are not able to see the full content on this page. Please subscribe or login. How to Subscribe Oxford Bibliographies Online is available by subscription and perpetual access to institutions. For more information or to contact an Oxford Sales Representative click here.

## 3: Toleration in Normative Theories - Bibliography - PhilPapers

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Free-speech liberals, on the other hand, increasingly find themselves besieged as the places they once thought citadels of free expression—our colleges and universities—sometimes seem to care more about psychological safety and comfort than the rough and tumble of opposing ideas. Whatever happened to principled toleration, both ask? And herein lies the change that underlies, I think, the dilemmas for both the moral conservative and free-speech liberal: For the last few decades have witnessed a sea-change in the way a broad swathe of scholars and intellectuals think about the social and political response to moral pluralism. Traditionally—at least for the past few hundred years—the standard response to pluralism has been toleration, by which we generally mean being willing to put up with something we find morally noxious on account of some other, more important, good. Locke, in his Letter on Toleration, argues for toleration among most Protestant churches because it helps secure civic concord and best respects the nature and limits of government. It has been a principle of American public life—certainly not observed consistently in practice—that the proper response to moral disagreement is to allow others their views, though within certain limits and with the caveat that toleration does not imply an abstention from offering serious, even polemical, critiques. We might ask, though, why Locke found it necessary to include in his Letter the various religious arguments for toleration? A mistake both theologically and sociologically, it seems to me. Or, to use the language I offered above, provided that when you tolerate some noxious practice or belief, you are always, inevitably tolerating with an eye toward some other good you interested in securing. When you tolerate your irascible relative at family gatherings, you do so because the good of familial peace is worth tolerating for. So what does this have to do with the ostracism of moral conservatives and the retreat of free-speech liberals? In relatively recent debates over toleration, there has developed a view that says toleration is simply not enough. In tolerating others, we implicitly and sometimes explicitly communicate that what they do or believe is, in our view, morally disreputable. Instead of toleration, the argument goes, we should instead offer one another mutual respect or positive regard or, and this is the key move, recognition. And the reason, broadly speaking, we must do so is because the goods we thought we could secure via toleration are not enough. They still leave those being tolerated the object of social opprobrium and thus at some real disadvantage—or worse. Hence, it is not enough for gays and lesbians to achieve a rough degree of legal and political equality. Nor is it enough for tender college students to hear criticisms that go to the heart of their own sense of identity. Unless their moral lives are, in some real way, recognized and affirmed not only by public or university authorities and unless their fellow citizens or students or speakers can be counted on to do the same, real, substantive equality will remain elusive. But this makes for the obvious question: Given a certain range of moral and religious pluralism, it is principally and practically impossible to extend recognition to all or even most, especially once recognition extends into our everyday social lives. Recognition is, or at least can be, a zero-sum game. And so what is lurking behind the purported argument for recognition—and toleration, for that matter—is a set of moral judgments about what lives are in fact worth recognizing or tolerating, and here is where the misunderstandings of moral conservatives and free-speech liberals will continue to lead to loss after loss. It is not enough to merely beg for toleration on the grounds of tradition or conscience or some-such. Nor is it enough to suggest, as Mill did, that it is worth our while to hear scandalous or provocative views. For when our latter day inquisitors deny the requests for recognition or toleration, the reason is that the moral and psychological harms they suppose themselves to be receiving stem from what they view as morally problematic views of the world. It is the sheer existence or at least their own awareness of these terrible people and their ideas that seem to function as a standing rebuke to their own moral self-conceptions—and thus those terrible others must be marginalized and even run out of impolite company. The implication here is obvious, if not altogether comforting: They will need to do the more laborious, painstaking work of making the case that the lives or practices they hold dear have real positive value to them, to convince our morally skeptical neighbors that a life lived in obedience to some great good or even God! I confess that I have no

great confidence that success can be found in such an enterprise, but I think it really is our only option.

## 4: Moral Argument and Liberal Toleration: Abortion and Homosexuality

*Political Philosophy. Tolerance, Liberalism, and Community. Kenneth Henley Florida International University.*  
**ABSTRACT:** *The liberal principle of tolerance limits the use of coercion by a commitment to the broadest possible toleration of rival religious and moral conceptions of the worthy way of life.*

The diversity of liberalism can be gleaned from the numerous adjectives that liberal thinkers and movements have attached to the very term "liberalism", including classical , egalitarian , economic , social , welfare state , ethical , humanist , deontological , perfectionist , democratic and institutional , to name a few. At its very root, liberalism is a philosophy about the meaning of humanity and society. Political philosopher John Gray identified the common strands in liberal thought as being individualist, egalitarian, meliorist and universalist. The individualist element avers the ethical primacy of the human being against the pressures of social collectivism , the egalitarian element assigns the same moral worth and status to all individuals, the meliorist element asserts that successive generations can improve their sociopolitical arrangements and the universalist element affirms the moral unity of the human species and marginalises local cultural differences. The moral and political suppositions of liberalism have been based on traditions such as natural rights and utilitarian theory , although sometimes liberals even requested support from scientific and religious circles. These ideas were first drawn together and systematized as a distinct ideology by the English philosopher John Locke , generally regarded as the father of modern liberalism. Employing the idea of a state of nature—a hypothetical war-like scenario prior to the state—he constructed the idea of a social contract that individuals enter into to guarantee their security and in so doing form the State, concluding that only an absolute sovereign would be fully able to sustain such a peace. Hobbes had developed the concept of the social contract, according to which individuals in the anarchic and brutal state of nature came together and voluntarily ceded some of their individual rights to an established state authority, which would create laws to regulate social interactions. Whereas Hobbes advocated a strong monarchical authority the Leviathan , Locke developed the then radical notion that government acquires consent from the governed which has to be constantly present for the government to remain legitimate. He concluded that the people have a right to overthrow a tyrant. By placing life, liberty and property as the supreme value of law and authority, Locke formulated the basis of liberalism based on social contract theory. To these early enlightenment thinkers, securing the most essential amenities of life—liberty and private property among them—required the formation of a "sovereign" authority with universal jurisdiction. Once humans moved out of their natural state and formed societies, Locke argued as follows: And this is that, and that only, which did or could give beginning to any lawful government in the world". One political scientist described this new thinking as follows: In the First Treatise, Locke aimed his guns first and foremost at one of the doyens of 17th century English conservative philosophy: Reinforcing his respect for consensus, Locke argued that "conjugal society is made up by a voluntary compact between men and women". For Locke, this created a natural right in the liberty of conscience, which he argued must therefore remain protected from any government authority. Three arguments are central: His central argument was that the individual is capable of using reason to distinguish right from wrong. To be able to exercise this right, everyone must have unlimited access to the ideas of his fellow men in " a free and open encounter " and this will allow the good arguments to prevail. In a natural state of affairs, liberals argued, humans were driven by the instincts of survival and self-preservation and the only way to escape from such a dangerous existence was to form a common and supreme power capable of arbitrating between competing human desires. Modern liberals claim that formal or official guarantees of individual rights are irrelevant when individuals lack the material means to benefit from those rights and call for a greater role for government in the administration of economic affairs. As heirs of the Enlightenment, liberals believed that any given social and political order emanated from human interactions , not from divine will. From the 17th century until the 19th century, liberals from Adam Smith to John Stuart Mill conceptualised liberty as the absence of interference from government and from other individuals, claiming that all people should have the freedom to develop their own unique abilities and capacities without being sabotaged by others. Classical liberals were committed to individualism,

liberty and equal rights. Writers such as John Bright and Richard Cobden opposed both aristocratic privilege and property, which they saw as an impediment to the development of a class of yeoman farmers. This new kind of liberty became known as positive liberty to distinguish it from the prior negative version and it was first developed by British philosopher Thomas Hill Green. Green rejected the idea that humans were driven solely by self-interest, emphasising instead the complex circumstances that are involved in the evolution of our moral character. If it were ever reasonable to wish that the usage of words had been other than it has been [ In a few years, this New Liberalism had become the essential social and political programme of the Liberal Party in Britain [64] and it would encircle much of the world in the 20th century. In addition to examining negative and positive liberty, liberals have tried to understand the proper relationship between liberty and democracy. Highlighting the confusion over the first principle, Voltaire commented that "equality is at once the most natural and at times the most chimeral of things". American philosopher John Rawls emphasised the need to ensure not only equality under the law, but also the equal distribution of material resources that individuals required to develop their aspirations in life.

## 5: Toleration (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

By Michael J. Sandel, Published on 05/31/

The Concept of Toleration and its Paradoxes It is necessary to differentiate between a general concept and more specific conceptions of toleration see also Forst The former is marked by the following characteristics. First, it is essential for the concept of toleration that the tolerated beliefs or practices are considered to be objectionable and in an important sense wrong or bad. If this objection component cf. In light of these reasons, it would be wrong not to tolerate what is wrong, to mention a well-known paradox of toleration discussed below. The said practices or beliefs are wrong, but not intolerably wrong. Third, the limits of toleration need to be specified. They lie at the point where there are reasons for rejection that are stronger than the reasons for acceptance which still leaves open the question of the appropriate means of a possible intervention ; call this the rejection component. All three of those reasons can be of one and the same kindâ€”religious, for exampleâ€”yet they can also be of diverse kinds moral, religious, pragmatic, to mention a few possibilities; cf. Newey , 32â€”34 and Cohen Furthermore, it needs to be stressed that there are two boundaries involved in this interpretation of the concept of toleration: There are thus three, not just two normative realms in a context of toleration. It is, however, wrong to conclude from this that the tolerant need to be in a position to effectively prohibit or interfere with the tolerated practices, for a minority that does not have this power may very well be tolerant in holding the view that if it had such power, it would not use it to suppress other parties cf. Based on these characteristics, we can identify three paradoxes of toleration that are much discussed in philosophical analyses of the concept, and each one refers to one of the components mentioned above. First, there is the paradox of the tolerant racist, which concerns the objection component. Hence, seen from a moral perspective, the demand that the racist should be tolerant has a major flaw: It thus turns an unacceptable prejudice into an ethical judgment. From this it follows that the reasons for objection must be reasonable in a minimal sense; they cannot be generally shareable, of course, but they must also not rest on irrational prejudice and hatred. The racist, therefore, can neither exemplify the virtue of tolerance nor should he be asked to be tolerant; what is necessary is that he overcome his racist beliefs. This shows that there are cases in which tolerance is not the solution to intolerance. Second, we encounter the paradox of moral tolerance, which arises in connection with the acceptance component for various analyses of this paradox, see Ebbinghaus , Raphael , Mendus , Horton Third, there is the paradox of drawing the limits, which concerns the rejection component. This paradox is inherent in the idea that toleration is a matter of reciprocity and that therefore those who are intolerant need not and cannot be tolerated, an idea we find in most of the classical texts on toleration. In a deconstructivist reading, this leads to a fatal conclusion for the concept of toleration cf. Tolerance can only be a virtue if this distinction can be made, and it presupposes that the limits of toleration can be drawn in a non-arbitrary, justifiable way. The discussion so far implies that toleration is a normatively dependent concept. This means that by itself it cannot provide the substantive reasons for objection, acceptance, and rejection. It needs further, independent normative resources in order to have a certain substance, content, and limitsâ€”and in order to be regarded as something good at all. In itself, therefore, toleration is not a virtue or value; it can only be a value if backed by the right normative reasons. Four Conceptions of Toleration The following discussion of four conceptions of toleration is not to be understood as the reconstruction of a linear historical succession. Rather, these are different, historically developed understandings of what toleration consists in that can all be present in society at the same time, so that conflicts about the meaning of toleration may also be understood as conflicts between these conceptions cf. The first one I call the permission conception. Toleration then means that the authority gives qualified permission to the minority to live according to their beliefs on condition that the minority accepts the dominant position of the authority or majority. The permission conception is a classic one that we find in many historical writings and in instances of a politics of toleration such as the Edict of Nantes in and thatâ€”to a considerable extentâ€”still informs our understanding of the term. Toleration is thus understood as *permissio negativa mali*: It is this conception that Goethe , , transl. To tolerate means to insult. What is different, however, is the relationship between the subjects and the objects of toleration. For now the

situation is not one of an authority or majority in relation to a minority, but one of groups that are roughly equal in power, and who see that for the sake of social peace and the pursuit of their own interests mutual toleration is the best of all possible alternatives the Augsburg Peace Treaty of is a historical example. They prefer peaceful coexistence to conflict and agree to a reciprocal compromise, to a certain *modus vivendi*. The relation of tolerance is no longer vertical but horizontal: This may not lead to a stable social situation in which trust can develop, for once the constellation of power changes, the more powerful group may no longer see any reasons for being tolerant cf. Rawls , 11, Fletcher Different from this, the third conception of tolerationâ€”the respect conceptionâ€”is one in which the tolerating parties respect one another in a more reciprocal sense cf. Weale , Scanlon Even though they differ fundamentally in their ethical beliefs about the good and true way of life and in their cultural practices, citizens recognize one another as moral-political equals in the sense that their common framework of social life shouldâ€”as far as fundamental questions of rights and liberties and the distribution of resources are concernedâ€”be guided by norms that all parties can equally accept and that do not favor one specific ethical or cultural community cf. Social and political equality and integration are thus seen to be compatible with cultural differenceâ€”within certain moral limits of reciprocity. In discussions of toleration, one finds alongside the conceptions mentioned thus far a fourth one which I call the esteem conception. This implies an even fuller, more demanding notion of mutual recognition between citizens than the respect conception does. As valuable as parts of the tolerated belief may be, it also has other parts that you find misguided, or wrong cf. Raz , Sandel To answer the question which of these conceptions should be the guiding one for a given society, two aspects are most important. The first one requires an assessment of the conflicts that require and allow for toleration, given the history and character of the groups involved; and the second requires an adequate and convincing normative justification of toleration in a given social context. It is important to keep in mind that the normatively dependent concept of toleration itself does not provide such a justification; this has to come from other normative resources. And the list of such resources, speaking both historically and systematically, is long. The History of Toleration In the course of the religious-political conflicts throughout Europe that followed the Reformation, toleration became one of the central concepts of political-philosophical discourse, yet its history reaches much further back into antiquity for the following, see esp. Forst , part 1; cf. In stoic writings, especially in Cicero, *tolerantia* is used as a term for a virtue of endurance, of suffering bad luck, pain and injustice of various kinds in a proper, steadfast manner. But already in early Christian discourse, the term is applied to the challenge of coping with religious difference and conflict. The works of Tertullian and Cyprianus are most important in that respect. Within the Christian framework, a number of arguments for toleration have been developed, based on charity and love for those who err, for example, or on the idea of the two kingdoms and of limited human authority in matters of religious truth, i. The most important and far-reaching justification of toleration, however, is the principle *credere non potest nisi volens*, which holds that only faith based on inner conviction is pleasing to God, and that such faith has to develop from within, without external compulsion. Conscience therefore must not be and cannot be forced to adopt a certain faith, even if it were the true one. Yet, Augustine who defends these arguments in his earlier writings, later when confronted with the danger of a schism between Roman Catholics and the so-called Donatists came to the conclusion that the same reasons of love, of the two kingdoms and of the freedom of conscience could also make intolerance and the use of force into a Christian duty, if it were the only way to save the soul of another esp. Augustine , letter Christian arguments thus both form the core of many modern justifications of toleration and yet are janus-faced, always bound by the superior aim to serve the true faith. Similar to Augustine, Thomas Aquinas later developed a number of reasons for limited and conditional toleration, drawing especially strong limits against tolerating any form of heresy. The question of peaceful coexistence of different faithsâ€”Christian, Jewish and Muslimâ€”was much discussed in the Middle Ages, especially in the 12th century. Abailard and Raimundus Lullus wrote inter-religious dialogues searching for ways of defending the truth of Christian faith while also seeing some truthâ€”religious or at least ethicalâ€”in other religions. In Judaism and Islam, this was mirrored by writers such as Maimonides or Ibn Rushd Averroes , whose defense of philosophical truth-searching against religious dogma is arguably the most innovative of the period see esp. Still, the search for common elements is a

central, increasingly important topic in toleration discourses. The traditional arguments of free conscience and of the two kingdoms were radicalized in this period. The protestant humanist Sebastian Castellio attacks the intolerance of both Catholic and Calvinist practices and argues for the freedom of conscience and reason as prerequisites of true faith. In this period, decisive elements of early modern toleration discourse were formed: In his *Six Books of a Commonweal*, he develops a purely political justification of toleration, following the thought of the so-called Politiques, whose main concern was the stability of the state. For them, the preservation of political sovereignty took primacy over the preservation of religious unity, and toleration was recommended as a superior policy in a situation of religious plurality and strife. This, however, does not amount to the late modern idea of a fully secular state with general religious liberty. The agreement that the participants in the conversation find is based on respect for the others and on the insight that religious differences, even though they can be meaningfully discussed, cannot be resolved in a philosophical discourse by means of reason alone. Religious plurality is seen here as an enduring predicament of finite and historically situated human beings, not as a state to be overcome by the victory of the one and only true faith. Marked by bitter religious conflicts, the 17th century brought forth a number of toleration theories, among them three paradigmatic classics: In his historical critique of biblical religions Spinoza locates their core in the virtues of justice and love and separates it from both contested religious dogmas and from the philosophical search for truth. The state has the task of realizing peace and justice, thus it has the right to regulate the external exercise of religion. In his elaborate argument against the use of force in matters of religion, Bayle does not primarily take recourse to the idea that religious conscience must not and cannot be forced, for he was aware of the powerful Augustinian arguments against both points cf. Forst and Kilcullen. And such principles of moral respect and of reciprocity cannot be trumped by religious truths, according to Bayle, for reasonable religious faith is aware that ultimately it is based on personal faith and trust, not on apprehensions of objective truth. This has often been seen as a skeptical argument, yet this is not what Bayle intended; what he suggested, rather, was that the truths of religion are of a different epistemological character than truths arrived at by the use of reason alone. Connecting moral and epistemological arguments in this way, Bayle was the first thinker to try to develop a universally valid argument for toleration, one that implied universal toleration of persons of different faiths as well as of those seen as lacking any faith. In important respects, this is a more radical theory than the much more popular and influential one developed by Locke, who distinguishes between state and church in an early liberal perspective of natural individual rights. Hence there is a God-given, inalienable right to the free exercise of religion. Churches are no more than voluntary associations without any right to use force within a legitimate political order based on the consent of the governed. Thinkers of the French Enlightenment argued for toleration on various grounds and, as in Bodin, there was a difference between a focus on political stability and a focus on religious coexistence. In his *On the Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu argues for the toleration of different religions for the purpose of preserving political unity and peace, yet he warns that there is a limit to the acceptance of new religions or changes to the dominant one, given the connection between a constitution and the morality and habits of a people. In his *Persian Letters*, however, he had developed a more comprehensive theory of religious pluralism. In his parable of the rings which goes back to medieval precursors in the play *Nathan the Wise*, G. Lessing offers a powerful image for the peaceful competition of established religions that both underlines their common ancestry as well as their differences due to multiple historical traditions of faith. Since there is no objective proof as to their truth for the time being, they are called upon to deliver such proof by acting morally and harmoniously until the end of time. Mill offers three main arguments for toleration. Toleration towards opinions is justified by the utilitarian consideration that not just true, but also false opinions lead to productive social learning processes. The story of toleration would have to be continued after Mill up to the present, yet this short overview might suffice to draw attention to the long and complex history of the concept and to the many forms it took as well as the different justifications offered for it.

### 6: Liberalism and the Freedom to Insult Religion - ABC Religion & Ethics

*Connecting moral and epistemological arguments in this way, Bayle was the first thinker to try to develop a universally valid argument for toleration, one that implied universal toleration of persons of different faiths as well as of those seen as lacking any faith.*

Relativism and Tolerance Tolerance -- the ultimate obligation of the relativist? Toleration is preached by every politically correct educator and politician. And it is a centerpiece of the values of political liberalism. By political liberalism I do not refer to "liberal democrats". I refer to the orthodox value of American and Western European ideology of self-government, or government by representation. America is the epitome of western political ideals because we are a society of societies -- we do not share an ethnicity, a race, a religion, even a history. The only thing that binds Americans together is a commitment to this particular political structure devised by Thomas Jefferson and the rest. France is France because everyone is French, speaks French, and drinks cabernet sauvignon. England is England because everyone is English, is Protestant, speaks English with that great accent, and drinks tea. America is America because a bunch of otherwise really different folks think that the best way to live is by organizing under a constitutional democracy. By definition, then, we are a tolerant people. Or rather, if we are not tolerant, then we are failing to be Americans. Tolerance is, again, one of the crown jewels of American culture. The reason why we believe it is so important to be tolerant is because we are so profoundly aware of our own freedom. We then translate that respect for freedom, a respect which silently streams through our American veins, into a moral relativism. A political presupposition becomes the consequence of a metaethical commitment. Let me make this argument in another way: Relativism seems to be obviously true to many people. This recognition of moral freedom is the only absolute value that relativists adhere to. Tolerance is NOT a value of relativism. Perhaps I should say it this way: Or rather, if you are a relativist, it is not inconsistent with your relativism to be intolerant of those who disagree with you. Again, a relativism does not lead logically to being tolerant of other cultures, and other moral perspectives, and b it always threatens to result in intolerance. If you think that everyone should be tolerant of other opinions and beliefs and practices, then you are not a relativist. New York; Harcourt Publishers If morality simply is relative to each culture then if the culture does not have a principle of tolerance, its members have no obligation to be tolerant From a relativistic point of view there is no more reason to be tolerant than to be intolerant, and neither stance is objectively morally better than the other. Not only do relativists fail to offer a basis for criticizing those who are intolerant, but they cannot rationally criticize anyone who espouses what they might regard as a heinous principle. If, as seems to be the case, valid criticism supposes an objective or impartial standard, relativists cannot morally criticize anyone outside their own culture. If [cultural relativism] is accepted, racism, genocide of unpopular minorities, oppression of the poor, slavery, and even the advocacy of war for its own sake are as equally moral as their opposites. And if a subculture decided that starting a nuclear war was somehow morally acceptable, we could not morally criticize those people. These are serious problems for relativism

### 7: "Moral Argument and Liberal Toleration: Abortion and Homosexuality" by Michael J. Sandel

*In the 19th Century, the idea of toleration was developed further in line with the liberal, enlightenment idea that moral autonomy is essential to human flourishing. The most famous argument for toleration in the 19th Century was made by John Stuart Mill in On Liberty ().*

Liberalism, toleration and diversity Andrew Heywood The growing diversity of modern society, affecting matters of personal morality as well as religious principles and cultural practices, is often associated with the advance of liberalism and the spread of toleration. However, liberalism offers only a qualified justification for diversity, which emphasises the virtues of toleration but also its limits. Introduction Modern societies have become increasingly diverse in a variety of ways. Since the s, attitudes to personal morality, in areas such as sexuality, marriage, drug-taking and religious observance, have changed profoundly. More recently, trends towards multiculturalism have seen the spread of moral, religious and ethnic diversity, perhaps ending for ever the idea that nations are based on a single culture. Such trends have provoked ideological debate and argument, much of which has pitted liberalism against conservatism. While liberals are usually portrayed as supporters of toleration and diversity, conservatives are seen as defenders of authoritative values and a common culture. Such an approach threatens to misrepresent liberalism, and to blur the distinction between toleration and diversity. It also ignores important differences within liberalism itself. What is toleration, and why have liberals supported it? What are liberals not prepared to tolerate? And how far can liberals accommodate diversity while still remaining liberal? Toleration is a much misunderstood political value. Toleration, however, refers to a particular form of inaction, based on moral reasoning and a specific set of circumstances. In particular, toleration must be distinguished from permissiveness, blind indifference and willing indulgence. Toleration means forbearance, a willingness to accept forms of behaviour or beliefs of which one disapproves - or simply dislikes. Toleration, in other words, is not morally neutral: The French writer Voltaire memorably expressed such a position in declaring: A battered woman, for instance, who stays with her abusive partner out of fear can hardly be said to tolerate his behaviour. Critics of toleration therefore often present it as a failure of moral consciousness, even a cowardly refusal to stand up for what one believes in. Liberals, needless to say, reject this criticism, arguing that they do stand up for what they believe in, and what they believe in is toleration. Within liberal ideology, toleration has been justified in at least three different ways: The earliest case for toleration was based on rationalism. Such arguments can be traced back to seventeenth-century justifications for religious toleration, as advanced by writers such as John Milton and John Locke. Religious truth can only be established by the individual for himself or herself: Rational individuals should therefore be left to decide their own beliefs and determine their own actions. This position is further upheld by the liberal assumption that most forms of intolerance spring from ignorance and social prejudice. Liberals, for instance, tend to dismiss racial intolerance e. Islamophobia as simple examples of bigotry. Intolerance therefore usually crumbles in the face of rational analysis. The second, and classic, basis for toleration is autonomy, the vision of human beings as independent and self-determining creatures. This view was expressed in perhaps the most famous defence of toleration, J. For Mill, autonomy was an essential condition for any form of personal or moral development. It therefore followed that intolerance, restricting the range of individual choice, can only debase and corrupt the individual. He extolled the virtues of individuality emphasising the uniqueness of the human individual and even eccentricity. The third justification for toleration is that it benefits society as well as the individual. If society is to progress, good ideas have to displace bad ones and truth has to conquer falsehood. Nevertheless, as with other liberals, Mill accepted that debate, discussion and argument would be continuous because no final or absolute truth can ever be established. Limits of toleration How far does liberal toleration extend? Toleration only provides a limited and specific justification for diversity. This can be seen in at least three different ways: The most basic limit on toleration is that it extends only to views, values and social practices that are themselves tolerant, that is, ideas and actions that are compatible with individual freedom and autonomy. For instance, liberals may be unwilling to endorse practices such as female circumcision, forced and, possibly, arranged marriages and

female dress codes, however much the groups concerned may argue that these are crucial to the maintenance of their cultural identity. More generally, the emphasis on autonomy means that liberals will usually place individual rights above the alleged rights of cultural, religious or ethnic groups. This especially applies when there are doubts about whether group membership is voluntary. The second basis for limiting toleration is to uphold a bedrock of shared civic allegiances and political values. Unlike conservatives, liberals do not assume that societies are only stable if they are based on shared values and a common culture. In that way, they see moral and cultural diversity operating within the context of a shared citizenship. This is why many liberals reacted critically to the idea, raised by the Archbishop of Canterbury in February, that the operation of Sharia courts alongside formal court processes in the UK should be regarded as unavoidable. For liberals, such a move would weaken the civic and legal identity of society. Liberals would typically argue that, if Sharia courts are to be accepted in the UK, they should be clearly subordinate to the formal court system and comply with other legal provisions, notably the Human Rights Act. The third basis for toleration to be constrained is that liberal democracy is taken to be the sole legitimate political system. Its virtue is that it alone ensures that government is based on the consent of the people, and that it provides guarantees for personal freedom and toleration. Liberals may therefore be willing to ban fascist or militant fundamentalist groups that aspire to overthrow liberal democracy in the name of a single source of unchallengeable authority. In practice, liberals may be reluctant to impose such bans for fear that the groups concerned might go underground and become stronger, but such a position is based on pragmatism rather than principle and is not a manifestation of toleration. Liberalism and pluralism However, particularly since the 1970s, liberal thinkers have sought ways of embracing wider diversity. This has usually involved attempts to demonstrate that liberalism is neutral, in that it somehow stands above moral debate and argument. Such a stance of neutrality has been upheld in two main ways. This, then, enables liberalism to coexist with a wide diversity of political, moral and cultural beliefs. The alternative argument in favour of neutrality is based on the idea of value pluralism, which is associated most clearly with Isaiah Berlin. Value pluralism suggests, in short, that people are bound to disagree about the ultimate ends of life, as it is impossible to demonstrate the superiority of one moral system over another. As values conflict, the human predicament is inevitably characterised by moral conflict. In this view, liberal beliefs, such as support for autonomy, toleration and democracy, have no greater moral authority than illiberal or intolerant beliefs. Can liberalism be neutral? Attempts to reconcile liberalism with pluralism run into problems over the idea of moral neutrality. Can liberals really stand above moral debate and argument and remain liberal? While liberalism undoubtedly favours openness, debate and self-determination, it is also characterised by a powerful moral thrust. The same applies to Berlin, who remained a liberal to the extent that he believed it is only within a society that respects individual liberty that value pluralism can be contained. However, one of the problems with his work was that he failed to demonstrate how liberal and illiberal beliefs can coexist harmoniously within the same society. The simple fact is that value pluralism, once accepted by liberalism, is difficult to contain within a liberal framework. This is where liberalism and pluralism depart. For liberals, diversity is endorsed but only when it is construed within a framework of toleration and personal autonomy. Not only do liberalism and pluralism offer different approaches to diversity, but the rivalry between them has become one of the central ideological battlegrounds in modern societies. Box 1 Some key liberal thinkers John Locke An English philosopher and politician, Locke championed the cornerstone liberal idea that government arises out of the agreement, or consent, of the governed, outlined in the theory of the social contract. In this view, the central purpose of government is to protect God-given, natural rights - the rights to life, liberty and property. He straddled the classical and modern liberal tradition in opposing interventionism and stressing the importance of individuality and personal development. Isaiah Berlin A Riga-born, UK philosopher and historian of ideas, Berlin developed a form of pluralist liberalism that was based on the anti-perfectionist belief that conflicts of value are an intrinsic, irremovable element in human life. Political arrangements should therefore aim to allow the greatest scope for people to pursue their differing ends. His egalitarian form of liberalism has made a profound contribution to the modern liberal and social democratic political traditions. Box 2 What is pluralism? Pluralism, in its broadest sense, is a belief in or commitment to diversity or multiplicity, the existence of many things. As a descriptive term, pluralism may

denote the existence of party competition political pluralism , a multiplicity of ethical values moral or value pluralism , a variety of cultural beliefs cultural pluralism and so on. As a normative term, it suggests that diversity is healthy and desirable, usually because it safeguards individual liberty and promotes debate, argument and understanding. More narrowly, the term pluralism is used as a theory of the distribution of political power. As such, it holds that power is widely and evenly dispersed in society, not concentrated in the hands of an elite or ruling class. *Studies in Political Thought*, Routledge. *An Introduction*, Palgrave Macmillan. Having read the article, make a bullet-pointed list in answer to the following short-answer question: Why have liberals supported toleration and diversity?

## 8: Liberalism - Wikipedia

*Offers a philosophical history of toleration and provides a liberal argument in defense of this idea. Best used as a reference for postgraduate courses engaging with philosophical and theoretical challenges to the moral relevance of toleration.*

References and Further Reading 1. Ancient Greek terms, which may also have influenced philosophical thinking on toleration, include: This ordinary way of thinking is useful for understanding the idea of toleration and the virtue of tolerance: It would be odd to say, for example, that someone has a high tolerance for pleasure. With this in mind, we can formulate a general definition of toleration that involves three interrelated conditions. When an agent tolerates something: The first condition requires a negative judgment, which can be anything from disapproval to disgust. Judgment here is meant to be a broad concept that can include emotions, dispositions, tastes, and reasoned evaluations. This negative judgment inclines the agent toward a negative action toward the thing that is perceived as being negative. This broadly Stoic conception of judgment is a common assumption in discussions of toleration. Defenders of toleration assume that we can, to a certain extent, voluntarily control the expression of our negative reactions by opposing them with different, countervailing, judgments. Although judgments and emotions are both thought to have motivating force, they can be resisted by some other judgment, habit or virtue. The entity toward which an agent has a negative judgment can be an event, an object, or a person, although with regard to tolerance as a moral and political disposition, the entity is usually thought to be a person. Although we speak of tolerating pain, for example, the moral and political emphasis is on tolerating some other person, a group of people, or their activities. The second condition states that the agent has the power to negate the entity in question. Toleration is concerned with resisting the temptation to actively negate the thing in question. To distinguish toleration from cowardice or weakness of will the agent must have some capacity to enact his negative judgment. Toleration occurs when the agent could actively negate or destroy the person or object in question, but chooses not to. The word negate is used here in a broad sense that allows for a variety of negative reactions. Negative actions can include: The continuum of negations is decidedly vague. It is not clear, for example, whether condemnation and avoidance are negations of the same sort as violent action. Despite the vagueness of the continuum of negative activities, the focal point of the second criterion is the power to negate: The third condition states that the agent deliberately refrains from exercising his power to negate. Tolerant agents deliberately choose not to negate those things they view negatively. Tolerant restraint of the negative judgment is supposed to be free and deliberate: Good reasons for toleration are plural. Each of these provides us with a reason for thinking that it is good not to negate the thing in question. As mentioned already, there also may be other non-tolerant reasons for refraining from negation: Although there are many reasons to be tolerant, traditional discussions have emphasized respect for autonomy and pedagogical concerns. Underlying both of these approaches is often a form of self-conscious philosophical modesty that is linked to the value of respect for autonomy. As John Stuart Mill and others have argued, individuals ought to be left to pursue their own good in their own way in part because each individual knows himself and his own needs and interests best. This view does, however, leave us with a lingering problem as toleration can easily slip toward moral skepticism and relativism. It is important to note then that toleration is a positive value that is not based upon total moral skepticism. Proponents of toleration think that toleration is good not because they are unsure of their moral values but, rather, because toleration fits within a scheme of moral values that includes values such as autonomy, peace, cooperation, and other values that are thought to be good for human flourishing. Throughout the early Platonic dialogues, Socrates tolerantly allows his interlocutors to pursue the truth wherever this pursuit might lead. And he encourages his interlocutors to offer refutations so that the truth might be revealed. The Euthyphro concludes, for example, with Socrates allowing Euthyphro to proceed in the prosecution of a questionable court case. In the Gorgias at a Socrates describes himself in terms that establish a link between philosophical method and a form of toleration. Socrates says, And what kind of man am I? One of those who would gladly be refuted if anything I say is not true, and would gladly refute another who says what is not

true, but would be no less happy to be refuted myself than to refute, for I consider that a greater benefit, inasmuch as it is a greater boon to be delivered from the worst of evils oneself than to deliver another. For Socrates, then, the pursuit of truth is linked to an open mind, although of course this form of dialogical toleration is supposed to lead to a unitary vision of the truth. One can see a more developed form of tolerance celebrated in the Stoicism of Epictetus C. The Stoic idea is that we should focus on those things we can control—our own opinions and behaviors—while ignoring those things we cannot control, especially the opinions and behaviors of others. The Stoic idea is linked to resignation and apathy, as is clear in the case of Epictetus, whose social position—raised as a Roman slave—might explain his advice about bearing and forbearing. Of course, the problem here is that slavish forbearance is not the same as tolerance: With the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, however, tolerance is seen as a virtue of power. Tolerance might be linked to other virtues of power such as mercy and benevolence, as suggested, for example by Seneca. However, it is important to note that the Stoic approach to tolerance was not explicitly linked to a general idea about political respect for autonomy and freedom of conscience, as it is in the modern liberal tradition. Moreover, Roman political life was not nearly as tolerant as modern political life. Religious traditions provide further historical background for the idea of toleration. Christian tolerance is linked to other virtues such as charity and self-sacrifice. Furthermore, it seems to go beyond tolerance toward a self-abnegating type of love and acceptance. It should be noted that other religious traditions also contain resources for developing toleration. For example, Buddhist compassion can be linked to the idea of toleration. Indeed, in the third century B. Likewise, in the 16th Century C. Despite these antecedents, toleration does not become a serious subject of philosophical and political concern in Europe until the 16th and 17th Centuries. During the Renaissance and Reformation of the 15th and 16th Centuries, humanists such as Erasmus , De Las Casas , and Montaigne asserted the autonomy of human reason against the dogmatism of the Church. Although religious authorities reacted with the formation of the Inquisition and the Index of Forbidden Books, by the 17th Century philosophers were seriously considering the question of toleration. The 17th Century Following the divisions created by the Lutheran Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, Europe was decimated by war and violence fomented in the name of religion, which culminated in the Thirty Years War Through events such as these scholars became acutely aware of the destructive power of intolerance and sought to limit this destructive force by re-examining the biblical roots of toleration and by re-considering the relation between religious belief and political power. Additional influences on the cultural landscape of Europe during this time include the struggle to define sovereignty and to "purify" religion in Britain during the British Civil Wars , as well as increased information about cultural differences with the beginning of global exploration. Among the thinkers of this period, those who defended tolerance were Milton , Bayle , Spinoza , and Locke One of the worries of the humanist thinkers of the Reformation was whether it was possible to have infallible knowledge of the Divine Will such that one could justify the persecution of heretics. This concern with human fallibility lies at the heart of what will be described subsequently as "epistemological toleration. In this vein, Spinoza concluded his Theological-Political Treatise with an argument for freedom of thought. It is not surprising that Spinoza should have written this treatise, for he was himself a product of a tolerant society: Indeed, the 17th Century saw the rise of toleration in practice in certain parts of Europe, perhaps as a result of increased trade and social mobility. This emphasis on the difference between thought and action is crucial for subsequent discussions of toleration in Locke, Mill, and Kant. He articulated a view of toleration based on the epistemological claim that it is impossible for the state to coerce genuine religious belief. He argued that the state should refrain from interfering in the religious beliefs of its subjects, except when these religious beliefs lead to behaviors or attitudes that run counter to the security of the state. This exception allowed him to conclude that the state need not tolerate Catholics who were loyal to a foreign authority or atheists whose lack of religious conviction left them entirely untrustworthy. The 18th Century In the 18th Century, discussion of toleration was tied to the problem of skepticism and to a more sustained critique of absolutism in politics. Voltaire , who expressed his admiration for the development of religious tolerance in England in his Philosophical Letters , was extremely worried about the tendency of religion to become violent and intolerant. Moreover, he suffered under the intolerant hands of the French authorities: Religious tolerance forms the

theme of his *Treatise on Tolerance*, which argues vigorously for tolerance even though it retains a bias toward Christianity. Since none of us has perfect knowledge, and since we are all weak, inconsistent, liable to fickleness and error, we should pardon one another for our failings. Immanuel Kant, in response to skeptics such as Voltaire and Hume, tried to avoid skepticism while focusing on the limits of human knowledge and the limits of political power. In his essay, "What is Enlightenment?" Thus a religious belief that demands a contravention of morality such as the burning of a heretic can never be justified. Bridging the gap between the Old World and the New World, the writings of Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson express a theory of toleration that is tied directly to political practice. Not only were they critical of unrestrained political power but they were also committed to an ecumenical approach to religious belief known as deism. Paine makes it clear in his *Rights of Man* that toleration for religious diversity is essential because political and ecclesiastical authorities do not have the capacity to adjudicate matters of conscience. If he believes not as thou believest, it is a proof that thou believest not as he believeth, and there is no earthly power can determine between you. Collectively these amendments serve to restrain political power. Specifically, the First Amendment states that there can be no law, which prohibits freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and freedom to petition to the government. Subsequent developments in U. S. history

**The 19th Century** In the 19th Century, the idea of toleration was developed further in line with the liberal, enlightenment idea that moral autonomy is essential to human flourishing. Mill argues here that the only proper limit of liberty is harm: Mill also vigorously argues that freedom of thought is essential for the development of knowledge. In the 19th Century and into the early 20th Century, religious toleration was also a subject of consideration for thinkers such as Soren Kierkegaard, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and William James, who emphasized the subjective nature of religious faith. For example, in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, James argued that religious experience was diverse and not subject to a definitive interpretation.

**The 20th Century** In the 20th Century, toleration has become an important component of what is now known as liberal theory. The bloody history of the 20th Century has led many to believe that toleration is needed to end political and religious violence. It has been criticized by Herbert Marcuse and others such as Iris Young who worry that toleration and its ideal of state neutrality is merely another hegemonic Western ideology. Toleration has been the explicit subject of many recent works in political philosophy by Susan Mendus, John Horton, Preston King, and Bernard Williams. Much of the current discussion focuses on responding to John Rawls, whose theory of "political liberalism" conceives of toleration as a pragmatic response to the fact of diversity see "Political Toleration" below. A recurring question in the current debate is whether there can be a more substantive commitment to toleration that does not lead to the paradoxical consequence that the tolerant must tolerate those who are intolerant.

## 9: Toleration | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

*Main text. This text draws on political philosophy in order to argue for a legal right to accommodation. The moral integrity arguments should be supplemented by the requirement to protect minority rights in liberal democracies.*

The liberal principle of tolerance limits the use of coercion by a commitment to the broadest possible toleration of rival religious and moral conceptions of the worthy way of life. While accepting the communitarian insight that moral thought is necessarily rooted in a social self with conceptions of the good, I argue that this does not undermine liberal tolerance. There is no thickly detailed way of life so embedded in our self-conceptions that liberal neutrality is blocked at the level of reflection. This holds true for us in virtue of the socially acquired reflective self found in the pluralist modern world. I reject Michael J. The view of community most consistent with our situation is a simple causal conception: Any attempt to call us to some thicker, stronger conception of community fails to speak to us in our modernity. Liberalism includes many views on many topics. I will confine my attention to the liberal principle of tolerance: The state is thus to be neutral in the religious and moral wars that rage over the point of human life and the detailed ways of life worthy of human beings; but, of course, the state must keep the peace between one individual and another and between competing factions. In exercising this role, sometimes fine distinctions will need to be made, and there is room for worry that in the guise of peace-keeping the state will really work to promote a favored vision of the worthy way of life. Still, this liberal principle tells us what to worry about in such controversies, though its abstractness means that by itself it cannot deal with difficult issues. However, the principle of tolerance does not even abstractly address questions about property rights and the distribution of wealth, so here the liberal tradition includes opposing approaches. The principle of tolerance is, if not the only thing liberals share, at least a touchstone of liberalism. Tolerance can be defended pragmatically, as a mode of living together justified simply by its success. Both autonomy-based approaches and welfare-based approaches are found. I think that the approach of H. Hart is most helpful, for it proceeds critically but without appealing to some one grand foundational theory. He then argues that in cases such as private homosexual acts between consenting adults there is no plausible justification in critical morality for coercion and its attendant misery, since there is no one to be protected, and "the attribution of value to mere conforming behaviour, in abstraction from both motive and consequences, belongs not to morality but to taboo. Liberal neutrality in controversies about the worthy life is here justified by an argument that does not claim moral neutrality about the justification of coercion. So from this viewpoint, there is only misunderstanding in communitarian attacks on the principle of tolerance as inconsistently based on moral commitments. Other communitarian criticisms of the liberal principle of tolerance take many forms and depend upon a variety of appeals to differing conceptions of community. I will deal only with what might be called the appeal to the sources of reflection, as found in Michael J. Sandel<sup>3</sup> and with qualifications in Charles Taylor. And so, the argument goes, there is a deep confusion in the liberal account of tolerance, and the neutrality of the liberal regime to competing conceptions of the worthy life must be specious. I think this communitarian point about moral thought includes an important insight: And I cannot think about actions and institutions conceived apart from the language and world I share with others. Sandel urges, moral thought is itself embedded in families, political communities, and groups: But I do not think that this insight undermines the liberal principle that the state should be neutral toward competing conceptions of the worthy life. The communitarian faces a dilemma: The reflective self cannot at the same time be faced with the problems of modernity and be so closed that liberality threatens disintegration. In our pluralist community, the conceptions of the worthy life that are constitutive of the reflective self are themselves thin enough or the constituting is tentative enough to allow for acceptance of liberal neutrality in the polity without danger to the stability of the reflective self. These commitments are precisely the sort that establish the limits of liberal tolerance: There are other commitments that a majority within the pluralist community share, and that are unlikely to be shaken during reflection, but that we need not see as enforceable despite our continued allegiance: This kind of refusal of toleration can be seen now in the case of pornography, for instance. But for those in the larger pluralist culture, such issues can have nothing to

do with maintaining the self that forms the base for reflection. This would, perhaps, not be true in our reflective context if we inhabited a strong community, united by many strands of commitment to a finely detailed and thick conception of the worthy life as a necessarily shared set of practices. Someone in the larger pluralist society can consider pornography morally degrading and even include this as part of his self-conception, but he need not have a commitment to living in a society in which there is no pornography; if he does have this communitarian ideal, it would be bizarre for it to be deeply embedded in his self-conception, since he has not been reared into such expectations of living in a strong community sharing detailed practices. It is, for instance, plausible that for the Amish and for Hasidic Jews the reflective self is grounded on commitments to such a thick and detailed conception of a communally shared life that liberal tolerance within the community is unthinkable. This would fit with the Amish tendency to split into ever smaller groups divided by what seem to outsiders insignificant details of social practice. There are limits to possible reflection in every community, and some communities might be incapable of liberalism, even in the modern age, because they are not of the modern age. Despite their evident vitality and even prevalence, liberal forms of sociality are rejected by communitarians, who seem to demand that we establish cohesive communities with shared, detailed conceptions of the worthy life. Sandel has argued that in deciding whether there is a privacy right to consensual adult homosexual conduct, we must address the substantive moral question of the value of homosexual intimacy. Sandel proposes that the nation as a whole form a view of the moral value of homosexual intimacy, rather than allowing various groups and individuals to form separate views. The attempt to forge such a community-wide moral view would itself violate our self-understanding. But although there is in a pluralist, liberal society no national community in the strong sense, there are communities of various degrees of strength within the nation. What role can these communities and their beliefs play in philosophical reflection in the larger society? Many of the strongest communities seek no role in the reflective life of the larger society. The Amish, for instance, enter into discourse with the larger society only to protect their autonomy, not to transform "the world. Their ability to address the larger society effectively is, however, limited by the points of contact their shared thick conceptions have with the thinner conceptions shared more broadly. And generally the larger the community the nearer it is to the thinness surrounding it. Apart from such technical gerrymandering, nothing forbids our speaking of the entire pluralist society as a community. For instance, Ronald Dworkin has urged that the sharing of a legal system leads to the personification of the community expressing its principles in its law. But the Dworkinian conception of community is constructivist: There is still perhaps a real appeal to community, since the practices and texts will have been created collectively or at least created by a large number of people. So though the interpretation and theory construction are individualist, the grist for the interpretive mill comes from many not one. Besides this constructivist conception of what it is for the whole society to be a community, there is a causal conception that all of us constitute a community by living together. This is the notion of community that makes the most sense in the larger pluralist society. We are all members of the same community to the extent that we inhabit the same world of causes, physical and social. The mutual responsibilities of membership in this wider community vary with the kinds of impact we have upon each other, and also depend upon premises contested within the liberal tradition, such as the opposing views of laissez faire liberals and welfare liberals. But the liberal tradition is united on the principle of tolerance and on an account of community that allows for political neutrality in controversies about the worthy life. Though other conceptions of community may be layered on top of it, the causal conception seems to be basic to a society of tolerance. On this conception, the only difference between the community of a city and the community of a nation-state is one of extent. In times of disaster, such as floods or hurricanes, the language of community is used in exactly this simple way. And the oddness of speaking of the community of the pluralist nation-state may have no deeper root than the fact that disasters and other causal processes tend to be more limited or more extensive geographically than such political entities. But then perhaps shared liability to suffering is something deep, and natural disasters reveal a deep communal connectedness after all. Why not then speak of the global community? It is easier to imagine a disaster or a benefit affecting all human beings than one affecting precisely all members of a particular nation-state. The exception used to be war, for it did, before the nuclear age, unite nations as such in the

prospect of disaster; this may still be so for limited wars. And war is a great sustainer of community feeling. The emotional roots of this tribal unity in battle may go very deep into human nature. Community through sharing a common fate will differ in scope depending upon all sorts of causal factors. Auden saw that, in a world of global mutual dependency, the old boundaries of communal feeling no longer make sense, but rather than seeing everybody as a brother or sister we are tempted "to regard everybody else on earth not even as an enemy, but as a faceless algebraical cipher. In the pluralist democracies, this means disengagement from the larger society and energetic partisanship within ethnic and religious communities. For the forging of a shared conception of how and why to live must fail in such societies. For most of us, the appeal to the sources of reflection will reinforce liberal tolerance, not undermine it. We find that our reflective selves are modern, in just the way Auden articulated though perhaps with some longing for an imagined past. This modernity is the reflective source built upon by liberals in their plea for tolerance. If there are sometimes good reasons to doubt that tolerance should be victorious, they can have no basis in an appeal to an illiberal self most of us simply do not recognize. Larmore, *Patterns of Moral Complexity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, , pp. Vintage Books, , p. Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, , pp. However, Taylor makes an important distinction between political principles and morality, and writes of liberal neutrality in political thought: But it is quite possible to be strongly in favour of a morality based on a notion of the good but lean to some procedural formula when it comes to the principles of politics. There is a lot to be said for this, precisely for the sake of certain substantive goods, e. The political issue is, indeed, quite distinct from that of the nature of moral theory. Ideal or Ideology, Toronto: Sandel, "Moral Argument and Liberal Toleration: Abortion and Homosexuality," 77 *California Law Review* , Paideia logo design by Janet L.

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