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Qualifying Cosmopolitanism? Solidarity, Criticism, and Michael Walzer's 'View from the Cave'[1]

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For some, cosmopolitanism is a deeply troubling, even dangerous, ethical position. An '*embedded cosmopolitan*' variation on this position would strive to take seriously the apprehensions of these critics by eschewing the impartialist perspective to which it is conventionally tied. Specifically, this proposed alternative would adopt a modified version of the particularist moral starting point espoused by so-called 'communitarian' political theorists. In order to retain its ethical cosmopolitan credentials, such a stance would have to achieve a moral purview that left no-one, whether compatriot or foreigner, ally or enemy, beyond either concern or comprehension. Trying to construct this qualified cosmopolitanism is a difficult and daunting task. By analysing the various attempts of the American political philosopher Michael Walzer to reconcile a radically situated account of morality (his 'view from the cave') with an inclusive and cross-culturally critical moral purview, this article aims to map the most promising route towards an embedded cosmopolitan position. At the same time, it endeavours to pay due attention to a much broader range of Walzer's writings than is generally acknowledged within the study of international relations.
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Ethical cosmopolitanism is a position that is at once the object of sustained scepticism and critique and the preferred approach to addressing questions of justice and obligation in international relations. Its perceived strengths are, arguably, indispensable if one wants to retain the possibility of talking about ethical questions at the global level. It promises to acknowledge the equal moral standing of all human beings, wherever they are and whatever their allegiances and affiliations. Moreover, it offers an ostensibly neutral perspective from which to evaluate the practices and politics not only of the communities to which we belong, but also of those that we stand outside. Yet, its alleged weaknesses are intensely worrying. It is charged with neglecting the profound importance of local ties and loyalties, of community and culture, of particularity and passion, in shaping our values and defining who we are. It is

also accused of invoking a critical standard behind which subjective interests masquerade as objective truths and slouch towards coercion in response to difference. The underlying question that motivates the subsequent discussion, then, is whether it is conceivable to somehow qualify the standard ethical cosmopolitan perspective so that it allays the apprehensions of its critics and sceptics — without forfeiting its claim to an inclusive and critical moral purview.

This is a tall order. Quite simply, the inclusive and critical moral purview of an ethical cosmopolitan position is generally understood to rely on just those assumptions that its opponents identify as untenable. Before attempting to sketch this fraught relationship, however, it might prove useful to say something about what an ethical cosmopolitan position does and does not entail.

Ethical cosmopolitanism demands that the domain of those who 'count' when one is deliberating over questions of justice and duty is co-terminous with no particular set of attachments or loyalties. Moreover, the degree to which the interests of these others are taken into consideration is subject to neither modification nor exception across such ties. As a label for a broad category of positions that encompasses different variations on how this inclusive purview is to be both conceived and realized, ethical cosmopolitanism remains agnostic as to the precise political arrangements with which its underlying assumptions are most compatible. An ethical cosmopolitan position might be deemed congruous with the existence of discrete, sovereign states, may be thought to demand the political redefinition of state borders, or may be understood to require the creation of a single world state. (This is why the distinction between *ethical* and *political* cosmopolitanism — the latter being a position that advocates the elimination or radical transformation of state borders — is useful, even if some theorists would maintain that it is unnecessary.)[2] What unites these ethical cosmopolitan positions is an adamant denial that cultural, national, religious and ideological divides can demarcate a class of 'outsiders', or a group to whom duties are not owed, to whom considerations of justice (however understood) need not be extended, and with whom solidarity is not shared. This is a laudable commitment. Indeed, for most critics of ethical cosmopolitanism, it is not this inclusive ideal that is problematic. Rather, it is the *route* to inclusion (and the realities that are seen to be cast aside, ignored and obscured along the way) that generates grave concern. Ethical cosmopolitanism, its detractors maintain, is at best unviable and, at worst, deeply pernicious.

This antagonism stems from the association of ethical cosmopolitanism with a perspective that is located outside all particular ties and local contexts, which the moral agent must adopt when deliberating over questions of global ethics. Such an impartialist stance is imagined in a range of ways. Each is criticized for

treating the particularity of one's life as merely contingently given, rather than morally constitutive, and for suggesting that one can, even temporarily, leave it behind and achieve an objective point of view. Anti-impartialist critics — including so-called 'communitarian' political theorists — lament that such a move posits a fantastically detached and dispassionate account of the individual moral agent. They counter that moral reasoning is necessarily embedded within particular memberships and practices. In the words of Alasdair MacIntyre (1981/1985, 220), one's own particular social identity and historical role necessarily define one's 'moral starting point'. To abstract from these would be to render oneself incapable of ethical deliberation.

Such a challenge has damning repercussions if the capacity for inclusion that defines ethical cosmopolitanism is, indeed, wedded to an impartialist perspective. In short, the impossibility of impartiality in moral reasoning would then sound the death knell for ethical cosmopolitanism. Its toll might be heard to reverberate all the more powerfully if one considers what is often understood to be the parochial nature of those particularist positions that would replace an impartialist stance. A particularist moral starting point is vulnerable to the charge that it is more conducive to a xenophobic and blinkered worldview than to one that could hope to address global ethical questions. Seen in this light, one might be willing to gamble that the promise of inclusion offered by an impartialist route to cosmopolitanism is worth the price of its concomitant shortcomings. Or is there an option that avoids this apparent trade-off?

In order to reserve some conceptual space for the possibility of an alternative, qualified cosmopolitanism — a cosmopolitanism that would sustain an account of moral agency, judgement and value as radically situated in particularist associations — I will refer to the perceived point of opposition for the challenge outlined above as 'impartialist cosmopolitanism'. An alternative cosmopolitan position would eschew impartiality in moral reasoning and appeal instead to a particularist moral starting point. It would, at the same time, remain inclusive and self-critical enough to take seriously the moral standing of those beyond hearth and home, neighbourhood and nation. I will label this proposed alternative 'embedded cosmopolitanism'. A central aim of this article is to evaluate one possible variation on an embedded cosmopolitan perspective — a variation extracted from the work of the American political philosopher, Michael Walzer.

Across a career that spans more than 40 years, Walzer has written on questions of, *inter alia,* democracy, obligation, social criticism, distributive justice and war. (Among scholars in the discipline of International Relations (IR), he is best — and, unfortunately, often exclusively — known for his seminal work in this final category.) Despite the broad range of his academic inquiries, Walzer's work can be read as an on-going dialogue on the dual

problem of embracing an anti-impartialist position without excluding distant strangers and striving for a critical perspective without neglecting particularity and difference. In Walzer's own words (1994a, 29), 'a particularism that excludes wider loyalties invites immoral conduct, but so does a cosmopolitanism that overrides narrower loyalties. Both are dangerous; the argument needs to be cast in different terms.' In this article, I will endeavour to identify these terms, analyse their coherence, and evaluate their aptitude for defining an alternative, embedded cosmopolitan approach to international politics.

Specifically, I will begin by providing an account of Walzer's 'communitarianism' and briefly rehearsing the obstacles that such a perspective encounters when confronted with global ethical questions. Next, I will uncover in Walzer's work three (not necessarily compatible) moves carefully choreographed to avoid these obstacles. The final of these three moves — one that I will argue relies on the possibility of transnational empathetic attachments — seems to bring Walzer nearest to what I have described as an embedded cosmopolitan position. I will question the degree to which the resulting position remains faithful to an anti-impartialist philosophy while achieving a critical, inclusive moral purview. In conclusion, I will argue that a significant weakness in Walzer's work lies in the understanding of the community upon which he depends in defining his moral starting point and suggest that a robust embedded cosmopolitanism — that is internally coherent and accurately reflects our moral experience — would require that this understanding be rethought.

It is important to emphasize that the purpose of this article is neither to test Walzer's work against an existing, fully conceived alternative to impartialist cosmopolitanism, nor to construct and illustrate such an ideal. (The former goal would fail to acknowledge the critical contribution of Walzer's deliberations in *informing* this alternative; the latter is pursued elsewhere (Erskine, 2000, 2002, 2007).) Rather, this article explores how Walzer's attempt to navigate a route towards a self-reflective and inclusive particularism reveals the parameters within which an embedded cosmopolitan position might be most effectively articulated.[3] An ancillary aim is to suggest the value of a comprehensive analysis of Walzer's writings — something that has been neglected within IR.

The Nature and Scope of Michael Walzer's Communitarianism

The logical place to begin an account of the 'different terms' in which Walzer casts the argument between cosmopolitans and their anti-impartialist critics is with his avowed moral starting point. Although there are many significant points of contrast between the philosophies of Walzer and MacIntyre, like

MacIntyre, Walzer asserts that moral reasoning must be rooted in particularity. Indeed, their agreement on some core assumptions concerning where we must stand when we engage in moral deliberation has meant that they have generally been placed within the same 'communitarian' camp.

A number of different movements in contemporary ethical thought reject the notion that moral reasoning must entail abstraction from particular loyalties and attachments and argue instead that the only viable moral perspective is one that appeals to particular social, historical, and affective commitments. Communitarianism, the censure of liberalism that returned to force in the 1980s, represents one such movement. Identified by the claim that morality is constituted by the traditions and affiliations of the community, the group of political theorists whose respective positions have been aggregated under this label include Walzer (1983a, 1987, 2004b), MacIntyre (1981/1985), Michael Sandel (1982) and Charles Taylor (1985a, 1985b).

It is necessary to offer two caveats at this point. First, communitarianism, which consists of a diverse amalgamation of positions, is generally an ascribed classification and not a term of self-description. Second, the body of thought to which I am referring here constitutes one side of a debate waged within political theory. This is an important point for the IR scholar. When the term 'communitarianism' is appropriated within normative IR theory it tends to undergo a transformation that distinguishes it markedly from its namesake in political philosophy. Whereas there is a general assumption within normative IR theory that communitarianism connotes a position according to which the morally constitutive community is synonymous with the state (Brown, 1994, 173), the theorists assigned the label within political philosophy — including Walzer — support no such assumption. While elaborating on this point is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this article, one of the reasons that Walzer's work suggests promise for charting a course to an embedded cosmopolitan perspective is that Walzer clearly distinguishes between the community (within which his particularist starting point is located) and the state.[4] This distinction is fundamental to an embedded cosmopolitan perspective inspired by communitarian commitments because it allows for an understanding of the morally constitutive community that need be neither strictly delimited nor defined in terms of a determinant group of 'outsiders'.

Despite sharing a moral starting point with other so-called communitarian political theorists, Walzer is not easily categorized. Any attempt to label him a communitarian, even given the caveats offered above, must be undertaken with caution. This is especially true if one considers the adamant eschewal of conservatism in his pluralist values, his staunch democratic socialist convictions, and his espousal of a universal 'minimal morality' (with reference to which both cross-cultural solidarity and criticism are conceivable) — positions that might seem to run contrary to the theoretical implications of

communitarianism as it is often understood. Moreover, although communitarianism is most accurately described as a critique of liberalism, Walzer is strongly committed to liberal values: he is explicit in his aim to 'correct' rather than abandon the liberal project (Walzer, 1990b, 2004b). (On this point, Walzer's position is miles from MacIntyre's vehement anti-liberalism.) Nevertheless, both Walzer's particularist perspective, first fully articulated in his 1983 work, *Spheres of Justice,* and the position, evident throughout his work, that communities are the bearers of values, indicate a strong and pervasive communitarian philosophy. This philosophy is most vividly introduced through Walzer's allusion to Plato's metaphorical cave.

A 'View from the Cave'

In an elaborate metaphor written over two millennia ago, Plato (assuming the voice of Socrates) uses the image of a cave to describe a tortuous state of existence. He asks us to imagine an underground chamber in which men have been imprisoned since childhood, with their legs and necks bound and rendered immobile to ensure a restricted range of sight. Behind these prisoners burns a fire; between the fire and the prisoners is a road — carefully concealed by a wall — along which other men travel, talking and carrying an array of objects. As these objects protrude above the wall, the light from the fire behind them casts a procession of diverse, seemingly autonomous, shadows within the cave. The coerced audience to such a strange display has no way of determining their source or deciphering their meaning. 'An odd picture and an odd sort of prisoner,' Glaucon aptly replies to Socrates' narration (Plato, 1987 *Republic*, 514–5; 317). Yet, this oddity illustrates an understanding of philosophy that is compatible with a whole tradition of Western thought. It is necessary for the prisoner to complete the painful ascent from the cave into daylight, and adjust to the brilliance of the sun as *the* source of truth, in order to acquire the capacity for rational deliberation. Only then can the emancipated person recognize the apparent reality of the subterranean shapes as a mere trick of vision. In firm opposition to this allegorical stance, Walzer rejects an external vantage point for his moral theorising:

> I don't claim to have achieved any great distance from the social world in which I live. One way to begin the philosophical enterprise — perhaps the original way — is to walk out of the cave, leave the city, climb the mountain, fashion for oneself (what can never be fashioned for ordinary men and women) an objective and universal standpoint…

Instead, Walzer prefaces his work with the adamant anti-impartialist resolution that, 'I mean to stand in the cave, in the city, on the ground' (Walzer, 1983a, xiv).

Importantly, Walzer's commitment to the cave responds to the perceived shortcomings of a range of perspectives — a detail that his frequent and often fleeting allusion to Plato's allegory threatens to obscure. He is not merely offering an alternative to the Platonist notion of transcendent moral truth. His site of opposition also includes the type of perspective that does not claim access to 'truth', but, more modestly, understands itself as the point beyond all particularity to which one temporarily abstracts in order to deliberate without bias.[5] Both require, in Walzer's language, that one 'leave the cave', and Walzer's forceful description of his preferred starting point is useful for this reason. For Walzer, requisite to moral deliberation is loyalty to the cave and to the shared beliefs of those with whom he inhabits it. His cave represents neither moral ignorance, nor intellectual illusion, nor distorting bias. On the contrary, Walzer cautions that if one aspires to a detached, impersonal standpoint — in other words, if one attempts to abandon the cave — then 'one describes the terrain of everyday life from far away, so that it loses its particular contours'. It is in the interpretation of these particular contours that Walzer argues moral decisions can be made. According to this formulation, morality is *situated, embedded,* or, in Walzer's words, 'radically particularist' (Walzer, 1983a, xiv).

Walzer's adherence to this radically particularist, 'view from the cave' morality has important implications for the positions that he champions when confronted with questions of, for example, distributive justice and social criticism. In *Spheres of Justice*, Walzer presents a theory of social justice that relies upon the deciphering of 'shared understandings', or local meanings, that are given to goods to be distributed in society. In other words, he claims to forego any appeal to universal principles of justice. Rather, Walzer maintains that 'in matters of morality, argument simply is the appeal to common meanings' (Walzer, 1983a, 29). His account of social criticism also displays a commitment to an embedded perspective. In *Interpretation and Social Criticism,* delivered as the 1985 Tanner Lectures on Human Values and published in 1987, even Walzer's description of critical distance disclaims an impartialist approach. For Walzer, a critical stance does not entail that one be removed (however temporarily) from the particular set of circumstances within which a practice is being questioned. 'A little to the side, but not outside,' Walzer details, 'critical distance is measured in inches.' (Walzer, 1987, 61). Once again, importance is placed on established norms: 'What we do when we argue is to give an account of the actually existing morality.' (Walzer, 1987, 21). According to Walzer, we derive our moral culture from within the cave, and, in order to either understand or criticize this culture, the cave is where we must remain.

Walzer's 'view from the cave' morality is developed and applied across a range of his writings (including, but not limited to, Walzer, 1981, 1983a, b, 1987, 1989/2002, 1993b, 1994b). It does not, however, represent his only

expression of a strong commitment to the significance of the community. Some of Walzer's writing prior to *Spheres of Justice,* specifically aspects of his work on the ethics of war, assumes a distinct mode of ethical deliberation, one that is deeply indebted to a notion of human rights and reveals a clear, if occasionally lapsing, impartialist cosmopolitan persuasion (Walzer, 1977/1992; Erskine, 2000, 580–2). Nevertheless, it should be noted that a concurrent loyalty to the idea of the community as a possessor of value is discernible even in these writings (for example, Walzer, 1977/1992, 254). In order for Walzer to provide a coherent example of an embedded cosmopolitan position, he would have to remain loyal to his 'view from the cave' while simultaneously achieving the inclusive purview that allows him to speak of obligations that extend across communities — as well as enemy lines — in this earlier work on war.

The Limits of a 'View from the Cave' in a Global Setting

Realizing this synthesis is, however, far from straightforward. The same features of Walzer's thought that secure his place in the mixed company of those assigned the communitarian label translate uneasily into discussions of ethics beyond the domestic realm. Indeed, moral perspectives that are resolutely situated in particular relationships and practices are criticized for being both exclusive and conservative. There is reason for this. A demand for an ethical perspective that would recognize the 'embeddedness' of our moral experience might be understood to require that we give priority to those with whom we share this experience — whether they be co-nationals or fellow believers in the faith. Such a perspective can also be accused of precluding a critical measure by which local values can be challenged (and revised) and strictly delimited group solidarities can avoid blind acquiescence. Both sets of criticism are made in direct response to Walzer's 'view from the cave'.

According to the first line of criticism, a commitment to the shared understandings of the community fosters prejudice and intolerance towards those 'strangers' and 'foreigners' whose understandings we neither share nor value. This suspicion might be thought vindicated when one is faced with Walzer's treatment of the distribution of membership in *Spheres of Justice*. In the context of this argument, Walzer makes a stark distinction between 'members' and 'strangers'. He presents distributive justice as presupposing a 'bounded world', an 'established group', and a 'fixed population' (Walzer, 1983a, 31). Moreover, he intermittently assumes a correlation between the community within which meanings and values are deciphered and the state. Alluding to Walzer's position on membership, Onora O'Neill concludes that, '[t]hose who see boundaries as the limits of justificatory reasoning will not take seriously…the predicaments of those who are excluded' (O'Neill, 2000, 169).

Indeed, she maintains that Walzer's apparent acceptance of boundaries as morally constitutive effectively 'pre-empts answers to questions of global justice' (O'Neill, 2000, 150n).

Attention to the range of Walzer's work indicates that he intends a sharp distinction between the state and the community or communities that underlie it. (Indeed, he has expressed doubt that the state can be considered a community at all, and, in his earlier writings, focuses on the greater moral significance of belonging to sub-state groups such as congregations, clubs, and trade unions (Walzer, 1970, 3–23).) It is clear that he means to retain this conceptual distinction even when he treats 'community' synonymously with 'political community' (Walzer, 1977/1992, 89; 1980, 210; 2004a, 49). This is a feature of Walzer's work that is often overlooked by his critics — including those who provide a misdirected attack of his alleged 'statism' in *Just and Unjust Wars* (for example, Wasserstrom, 1978; Beitz, 1979). It is also one that I have suggested bodes well for the construction of an embedded cosmopolitan approach to global ethics. Yet, in the case of Walzer's discussion of membership, where the potentially exclusive implications of his blurring of 'community' and 'political community' are placed in sharp relief, the distinction offers limited comfort. With respect to this example of membership, Walzer is ready (for the most part) to give those with shared understandings pride of place — and to define them as a strictly bounded, determinate group. This presents a problematic point from which to argue for an inclusive moral purview.

The second line of criticism faced by the 'view from the cave' — that such a perspective is conservative — further contributes to the perception of Walzer's position as necessarily parochial. In addition to demanding that communities not represent boundaries that determine the relative moral weight of 'insiders' and 'outsiders', an inclusive 'view from the cave' would require that the shared understandings of the particular community be open to reflection, negotiation and revision. Acknowledging legitimate alternatives to prevailing practices and policies is a way of ensuring that the values of those outside the community are not beyond comprehension. As Walzer's 'view from the cave' precludes an external criterion for such evaluation, this would require internal review. However, Ronald Dworkin, for one, is deeply sceptical of this possibility. In a prominent debate with Walzer, Dworkin argues that by aiming to uncover the 'meanings that we share' we are doing no more than looking at a reflection of ourselves and uncritically accepting what we see. Walzer's theory of social justice, Dworkin chastises, 'promises a society at peace with its own traditions' (Dworkin, 1983, 4). Indeed, Dworkin's portrayal of Walzer's social critic is reminiscent of Plato's description of the inhabitants of the cave. Dworkin sees these critics as attributing meaning and moral value without question to the images before them. Like Plato's prisoners, they naively trust their own

delimited perceptions, at once rationalizing and apologizing for what are no more than shadows.

For Walzer, morality is located in the shared understandings of particular communities. Moreover, these communities, while distinct from the state, seem to be both bounded, and, in a marked shift from his much earlier writings, often take the form of political associations that are closely correlated with state borders. However, of significance to the search for an example of an embedded cosmopolitan position, and contrary to O'Neill's assessment, Walzer is unwilling either to accept boundaries as the *limits* of justificatory reasoning or to eschew questions of global justice. Indeed, he strives to defend his position against both sets of criticism sketched above. It is possible that this unwillingness, in conjunction with his commitment to a 'view from the cave' and the particular way that this cave is conceived, cannot yield a position that is internally coherent. Nevertheless, Walzer's attempts to construct a position that is radically particularist without being parochial is extremely instructive. It is to these attempts that I will now turn.

Towards an Embedded Cosmopolitanism? Radical Particularism, Solidarity and Criticism

Walzer's communitarianism faces serious charges. He stands accused of championing a relativist ethic, or an ethic that is rendered undecipherable when transmitted beyond its specific context (O'Neill, 2000, 169; Fishkin, 1984, 760; Dworkin, 1983, 6). Of course, a position that claims a particularist starting point must differ in important ways from a conventional cosmopolitan stance. By questioning the degree to which Walzer's 'view from the cave' might support an embedded cosmopolitan position, I am not expecting it to achieve either the guaranteed universal inclusion or the effortless cross-cultural critical capacity claimed by impartialist cosmopolitanism. If attainable at all, these are sacrificed when one rejects impartiality in moral reasoning. Yet, an embedded cosmopolitan perspective would require that one's scope of ethical concern — or the area within which claims to moral duty, solidarity, and loyalty to 'fellow moral agents' provide intelligible and compelling appeals — is not limited to any particular community or group of communities. This, in turn, means that one must have a way of both recognizing the equal moral standing of those beyond any particular community to which one belongs and maintaining a critical perspective from which to challenge those local understandings that would impede such recognition.

Worryingly, as noted above, a particularist ethical perspective faces charges that, if true, would threaten to preclude these possibilities. One can extract from Walzer's work three different types of defense against these objections:

the interpretation and 'connected criticism' of situated values, the invocation of universal rights and minimalist constraints (which exist independently of situated values), and the appeal to what I will describe as empathy as a means of aspiring to cross-cultural inclusion from within the cave.

Connected Criticism

In response to Walzer's radical particularism, James Fishkin (1984, 760) argues that 'we require trans-cultural criteria for the alteration and permissible manipulation of moral cultures. But such criteria would require that we 'leave the cave' and abstract from the vagaries of our particular culture.' Walzer disagrees. He denies that his refusal to detach himself from the internal rules, conventions and ideals of the community precludes either criticism or reform. Some communitarian political theorists, such as Taylor (1989, chaps. 3–5, 513n), MacIntyre (as interpreted by Stern, 1994, 151–153), and Walzer (1987) take exception to the charge that a particularist position lacks critical force. Rejecting an impartialist stance from which to engage in moral judgement, they appeal to the notion of internal criticism — often referred to as an 'interpretive' approach. Such an approach envisages a perspective within the community from which inconsistencies in its practices and espoused norms might be scrutinized. A crucial, and daring, element of Walzer's interpretive approach is his view that shared understandings may be *latent* within the community in question.

On the one hand, this notion of latent, shared understandings means that the potential for challenging community practices and principles is indeed delimited by existing beliefs and commitments. For example, if we hope to champion egalitarian principles (principles to which Walzer is deeply committed), we must already enjoy the type of society that would support them: 'If such a society isn't already here — hidden, as it were, in concepts and categories — we will never know it concretely or realize it in fact.' (Walzer, 1983a, xiv) On the other hand, this means that current practices might be at odds with our (latent) internal ideals — and are thereby open to criticism and, indeed, negotiation and revision. One might, for example, discover that one belongs to a society in which torture (in certain circumstances and against certain types of enemy) is practised, or at least condoned through measures such as 'extraordinary rendition'. Presumably, Dworkin would argue that the enslavement of Walzer's conception of justice to the *status quo* would mean that no argument against such a practice could be made that would be consistent with his 'view from the cave'. Yet the logic of Walzer's position does not concede this conclusion. It would, rather, require one to interpret the shared understandings of one's community. If careful study of the internal rules, maxims and ideals of this moral culture show that such a practice is a

contravention rather than a manifestation of these understandings, then a statement like, '[t]he values of this country are such that torture is not part of our soul,' (Bush, 2004) might be the basis for internal criticism and reform (rather than a statement of denial, ignorance or blatant hypocrisy).

For Walzer, moral culture is not fixed. Instead, he recognizes the shared beliefs that are found within the cave as existing in 'the shadow of contingent and uncertain truths.' (Walzer, 1989, xix–xx). Social criticism, Walzer argues, is able to expose internal tensions and contradictions. Indeed, he suggests that we can 'mark off better from worse arguments, deep and inclusive accounts of our social life from shallow and partisan accounts.' (Walzer, 1983b, 43). This is an important response — one that effectively counters Dworkin's claim that Walzer simply assumes a society at peace with its own traditions. Yet, it cannot silence all criticism. A sceptic might contend that an interpretive approach would allow that positive reform according to one internal standard might, nonetheless, constitute regression for another: internal criticism 'may worsen and narrow a tradition, both in terms of external standards and in terms of others of its internal standards' (O'Neill, 1996, 137–8). Here, my proposed link between self-reflection and a greater sense of solidarity with those outside the community is called into question. If our latent understandings do not support a tolerant and receptive approach to difference, interpretation and renewal might involve the reinforcement rather than rejection of values that would fuel enmity and foster incomprehension towards 'outsiders'.

For an interpretive approach to even take account of the wide range of perspectives and values that we encounter in international politics, one might argue that we would have to assume a *global* community of latent, shared understandings — and this very range would, presumably, belie the existence of such an entity. As Walzer concedes — perhaps less adamantly in his most recent work (Walzer, 2004b, 133–4) — 'were we to take the globe as our setting, we would have to imagine what does not yet exist: a community that included men and women everywhere. We would have to invent a common set of meanings for these people' (Walzer, 1983a, 29; see also Walzer, 1994a, 29). Connected criticism responds to some of the challenges faced by Walzer's position, but, by itself, takes us little distance towards an embedded cosmopolitan position.

A Minimal and Universal Moral Framework

Wholly unconvinced by Walzer's interpretive approach, John Dunn judges that, '[t]o be self-critical is no doubt more edifying than to be complacent; but in political theory it hardly carries the clout of Plato's theory of the Forms' (Dunn, 1983, 453). Despite his professed loyalty to the cave, Walzer seems inclined to agree. Although he argues that morality must be interpreted from

within the community, in *Interpretation and Social Criticism* Walzer casually notes that some requirements of justice are applicable to *all* communities. Prohibitions against 'murder, deception, betrayal and gross cruelty' constitute 'a kind of minimal and universal moral code' (Walzer, 1987, 24). Acknowledging the necessity of a similar departure from the cave (and suggesting that he would be inclined to offer more than an internal criticism of the example of torture that I posed above), Walzer reiterates in a subsequent defense of *Spheres of Justice* that, 'I am unsure that morality works, as it were, from the outside except when it serves as a minimalist constraint' on universal wrongs such as 'murder, torture and enslavement' (Walzer, 1995, 293).[6]

Upon making these qualifications to his particularist morality, Walzer does, however, distinguish between such universal moral prohibitions and a fully formed moral culture. He argues that these restrictions 'provide a framework for any possible (moral) life, but only a framework, with all the substantive details still to be filled in before anyone could actually live one way rather than another.' His characterization of a minimalist code emphasizes the importance of individual moral cultures that are 'specifications and elaborations of the code, variations on it' (Walzer, 1987, 25; see also 1987, 93).[7] Walzer thereby addresses, and curbs, the relativist risks of his particularist theory. Where there is a 'minimal and universal code', criticism between communities, between cultures, and between states (not simply critical interpretation from within them) is possible. Significantly, this response allows for the derivation of an ethical position that is distinct from the interpretation of values inherent in the community. These prohibitions depend instead on a universalist position *from which* particular communities elaborate their own moral cultures.

Although this concession in Walzer's work provides a strong reply to charges of moral relativism, it does not bring Walzer any closer to an embedded cosmopolitan perspective. Granted, he champions both a particularist moral starting point and claims an inclusive, cross-culturally critical perspective. However, in meeting this latter criterion of embedded cosmopolitanism, he supplements his 'view from the cave' with a stance that abstracts from the ethical particularism that defines it. This is a move that embedded cosmopolitanism cannot make. Indeed, the assumption that one has access to a perspective above and beyond all particular communities and contexts, from which a universal, moral code can be derived (and from which the ethical commitments of particular cultures might be judged) is exactly that which engenders scepticism among many critics of conventional cosmopolitan positions. These critics are wary of any privileged position from which one might assert, for example, that '[m]oral truth is the same in every culture, in every time, and in every place' (Bush, 2002), and then go on to base policies and condemn deviations on the understanding that one's own beliefs meld seamlessly with this universal code. Such a proposed non-partisan viewpoint,

they warn, simply reflects the commitments of those with power. This is also a move that might prompt one to question the theoretical coherence of Walzer's work. Importantly, it is not simply the case that Walzer has articulated impartialist and radically particularist positions, respectively, in discrete works. Were this the case, one might surmise that he has simply rethought the foundations of moral argument, adopted another framework, changed his mind. Yet, the most intriguing, perplexing, and potentially undermining aspect of Walzer's work is that he tenaciously asserts that his moral world-view includes both sources of value — and, moreover, intimates a hierarchy of principles and dilemmas according to which only some warrant appeal to moral reasoning that is independent of community understandings (Walzer, 1983a, xv, 250n; discussed in Erskine 2007).

It is only in *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad,* published in 1994, that Walzer considers what might be an *exclusively* particularist source of values. This consideration neither offers the relativist resignation that these values cannot travel, nor avoids this resignation by positing a separate, supplementary sphere of impartialist moral deliberation.

A Particularist Source of Minimalist Constraints

'Minimal morality is very important', Walzer maintains, 'both for the sake of criticism and for the sake of solidarity' (1994b, 16). By proposing a radically revised conception of the source of this morality, Walzer provides an alternative to the fragmented ethical framework described above. Suggesting that we can remain in our local communities and, yet, make universal claims based on our particular shared understandings, he also develops an argument that seems, at first glance, to hold promise for bringing us closer to an embedded cosmopolitan position.

In *Thick and Thin,* Walzer reverses his account of the relationship between a 'universal moral code' and the particular moral cultures rehearsed in *Interpretation and Social Criticism*. This reversal is significant in understanding Walzer's attempt to reconcile his 'view from the cave' with universal ethical claims. In the language of his revised position, he distinguishes between 'moral maximalism', a framework that is local, 'thick', and derived from a particular historical, cultural, religious and political orientation, and 'moral minimalism', a framework that is universal, 'thin' and capable of establishing correspondence between communities (Walzer, 1994b). The distinction between a single, crude set of universal prohibitions and a plurality of particular moral cultures 'with judgement, value, the goodness of persons and things realized in detail' (Walzer, 1987, 25) is consistent with his earlier account. However, whereas Walzer had previously described these particular moral cultures as *elaborations* of the universal code, in *Thick and Thin* particular moral cultures are the *source*

of universal standards. With characteristic candour, Walzer rejects his former position as follows:

> [p]hilosophers most often describe it [the dualism of a thick and a thin morality] in terms of a (thin) set of universal principles adapted (thickly) to these or those circumstances. I have in the past suggested the image of a core morality differently elaborated in different cultures. The idea of elaboration is better than adaptation, it seems to me, because it suggests a process less circumstantial and constrained, more creative: governed as much by ideal as by practical considerations...But both of these descriptions suggest mistakenly that the starting point for the development of morality is the same in every case.

Instead, Walzer argues, 'morality is thick from the beginning, culturally integrated, fully resonant, and it reveals itself thinly only on specific occasions, when moral language is turned to specific purposes' (Walzer, 1994b, 4). Any moral standard that is universal in scope necessarily arises from a particularist starting point.

I will draw on two colourful metaphors that Walzer employs in *Thick and Thin* in order to illustrate how this extension from particular moral culture to universal ethical standards might work. The first metaphor serves to explain the process by which a moral perspective that is embedded in a particular community can also be outward looking and inclusive. Walzer refers to this process as 'vicarious endorsement'. The second, an interesting reversal of Platonic Forms, examines the nature of the resulting universal claims. These claims remain embedded in local networks of meaning. Walzer's argument proceeds as follows.

At certain 'universal moments', while securely situated in our own political community, we observe people in trouble who are propounding standards and guidelines that are rooted in their own experience, envisioned from their unique perspective, and expressed in their own moral language. At these instances, we both recognize and endorse their claims. For Walzer, 1989 provided such a universal moment. He describes people marching in the streets of Prague, carrying signs that read 'Truth' and 'Justice'. Despite being steeped in his own culture and circumstances, and removed from the context of the demonstrators, Walzer declares, 'I could have walked comfortably in their midst. I could have carried their signs'. (Walzer, 1994b, 1). 'Truth' and 'Justice' are not abstract concepts that we are able to hold in common because the shared understandings of our respective communities hark back to a common morality. 'Rather,' explains Walzer, 'we recognize the occasion; we imaginatively join the march; our endorsement is more vicarious than detached and speculative.' (Walzer, 1994b, 7). This metaphor is inherently 'dualist': while we participate vicariously in the parades of others, 'we also have our own parade'

(Walzer, 1994b, 8). How we achieve a universal moral language (that allows us to march in the parades of distant strangers) from a particularist starting point is illustrated by Walzer's second metaphor.

In *Thick and Thin,* Walzer provides a vital link between his maximalist insistence on maintaining a 'view from the cave' and the adamant rejection of moral relativism in his minimalist claims. In order to explain the nature of these minimalist claims, he quotes George Orwell's maxim that 'there's a statue inside every block of stone' (Walzer, 1994b, xi). Walzer makes a parallel assertion that 'there are the makings of a thin and universalist morality inside every thick and particularist morality,' and then drastically qualifies this comparison. The relationship between a thin morality and a thick morality differs from the relationship that Orwell (1950) presents between the statue and the stone: 'they are differently formed and differently related.' (Walzer, 1994b, xi).

> We have in fact no knowledge of the stone; we begin with the finished statue; maximalist in style, ancient, carved by many hands. And then, in a moment of crisis, we hastily construct an abstract version, a stick figure, a cartoon, that only alludes to the complexity of the original.

In other words, if one were to take this imagery back to Walzer's earlier articulation of universal moral prohibitions, Walzer *had* intimated that a single moral code, or block of stone, provides the core, or raw material, for the diversity of moral cultures that we encounter in the world. By this account, the stone is elaborated, or carved, into these individual cultures, which emerge over time like separate, intricate statues. His subsequent formulation is entirely different. There is no primordial stone, only a plurality of statues — each of which represents the moral starting point for a particular group of people. (More consistent with both of Walzer's accounts than his description above, they are never 'finished' but are, rather, perpetual works in progress.) At a 'universal moment', all we can hope to do is to sketch a representation of these statues that somehow illustrates those features that they have in common. Walzer thereby argues that the resulting 'minimal morality' is both derivative of, and subordinate to, the original maximalism. In doing so, he seems, *prima facie,* to take us in an embedded cosmopolitan direction.

Discrete Communities, Empathetic Attachments and Universal Moments

An embedded cosmopolitan position would reject an impartialist moral starting point while remaining inclusive and critical enough to ensure that the equal moral standing of no individual is necessarily beyond comprehension.

However, how to achieve this combination without relying upon internally inconsistent theoretical postulates is a difficult problem. Walzer's exposition of 'thick' and 'thin' moralities provides instructive deliberation and a proposed solution. Nevertheless, four concerns arise from Walzer's account that are important in terms of both analysing the scope of his 'view from the cave', and, more generally, identifying the parameters of a qualified ethical cosmopolitanism.

One concern involves the first of Walzer's two steps to achieving a moral minimum. Before establishing a stick-figure representation of our common beliefs, we must, standing in our own caves, recognize and 'vicariously endorse' the claims of others. This first step is one of empathy. Walzer's reliance on empathetic attachment carries the problem that moral consideration 'between caves' is thereby motivated by *imaginative* (and not real) associations. This notion of empathetic attachment is vulnerable to the invocation of hidden agendas for 'granting' moral concern. As Kathy Ferguson cautions, 'empathy can readily be recruited into a gesture of appropriation (as in 'I know what you mean' when I really don't know at all)' (Ferguson, 1993, 33).[8] Empathy thus conceived is more akin to an imperialist venture of the particular community than to a means of achieving what I have called embedded cosmopolitanism.[9]

A second quandary brings us again to the image of the cave. Walzer's claim that he retains the embedded perspective that I have identified as characteristic of his 'view from the cave' morality, even while adopting an ethical cosmopolitan purview, can be questioned. A possibility that cannot be overlooked is that Walzer's attempt to enter discussions of transnational justice from an embedded perspective relies on covert appeals to the abstract and impartialist reasoning that he claims to reject. Although he would have risked obscuring his argument with a mixed metaphor, it would have been interesting had Walzer pursued his allusion to Plato's metaphorical cave in *Thick and Thin*. Does Walzer allow himself to leave the cave at universal moments? This would mean that the situated moral perspective requisite to a communitarian starting point faces abandonment when questions of value that claim a universal scope are raised. Whether Walzer depends on this transcendence is uncertain. It is obvious that he attempts to avoid it when he describes that we vicariously endorse the parades of others, *while having our own parades*. Elsewhere, he warns against transcending particularist identities and, instead, proposes that they be 'refocused' (Walzer, 1993a, 60).

A third problem is that if Walzer's uncovering of a minimalist universal moral code — one identified through a process of vicarious endorsement carried out by moral agents as they are situated within their own communities — does allow an embedded ethical perspective to be critical, inclusive, and

comprehensible beyond the state and beyond the political community, this is a precarious universal code. A particularist moral starting point becomes fused with an inclusive scope of ethical concern, yet this connection is tenuous and intermittent. It is dependent upon a sense of identification — an imagined bond that momentarily overcomes apathy and somehow prevails over potential emotional extensions that are every bit as powerful as empathy, and perhaps more deeply felt, such as fear, contempt, and animosity. In Walzer's words, this identification requires a 'universal moment'. If such global epiphanies are few and far between, the 'view from the cave' will at times be hopelessly parochial and susceptible to relativism.

A final, and equally unsettling, point of concern is that even when a (fleeting) 'universal moment' does occur, there is a risk that its achievement relies upon a perceived opposition that might prevent it from being truly universal in scope. Walzer explains that his 'universal moment' 'is the product of historical conjuncture, not of philosophical "in the beginning".' This is how it must be if it is to claim a particularist source of value (even if, as I have argued, the integrity of this claim might be challenged). Yet, in the absence of existing communal ties and 'thick' shared understandings beyond the cave, Walzer's vicarious endorsement requires a spark of recognition, or anger (certainly passion), that propels, even momentarily, one's sight and sentiments beyond the cave. Walzer speaks of 'a personal or social crisis, or a political confrontation' (1994b, 3). What fuels feelings of empathy during such crises? Walzer suggests that '[w]hat unites us at such a time is more the sense of a common enemy than the commitment to a common culture.' (Walzer, 1994b, 18). He might simply be envisaging this common enemy in terms of 'tyranny', 'oppression', or 'corruption'. Yet, he can just as easily be read as referring to a group of others against whom we see ourselves united in our pursuit of justice or emancipation. It is, perhaps, true that without a common culture or some sort of transcultural connection (between caves), even momentary concord demands a common foe. The condemnation of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US would seem to come very close to what Walzer describes, albeit problematically, as a 'universal moment' — not only in the prominence of principles that others could vicariously endorse (such as the protection of 'innocents' from organized violence), and in the readily available (if rather ambiguously labelled) point of opposition implied in the ensuing call to a 'war on terror', but also in the exclusions necessarily entailed by this opposition. As Walzer acknowledges, such a moment of unity tends to rely on the perception of a common 'enemy'. However, it is hard to imagine that a resulting moral minimum can constitute a 'historical conjuncture' that could be said to have also arisen from the maximal morality of those who we would place in this category.

Conclusion

In a world in which 'enemies' (both self-declared and appointed) abound and empathy is not the only emotion likely to colour one's contemplation of distant others, a global ethic that threatens to exclude adversaries and rely on emotional extensions lacks the potential for universal inclusion required of an ethical cosmopolitan position. Indeed, in attempting to mediate between a radically particularist account of moral judgement and value and a critical, inclusive moral purview, Walzer's notion of 'vicarious endorsement' encounters grave difficulties. This is why the careful negotiations that lead him to it are so useful. The points at which Walzer's work seems to stride towards an embedded cosmopolitan position, but then either stumbles or changes course, offer important insights into the requisite features, and potential pitfalls, of an ethical cosmopolitanism that would take seriously anti-impartialist claims. I will briefly revisit these pitfalls and suggest the assumptions that contribute to them. Finally, I will propose ways in which a viable embedded cosmopolitanism might avoid similar traps by embracing certain aspects of Walzer's 'view from the cave' — and radically reconsidering others.

There are two snares that Walzer comes across in trying to defend a critical and inclusive moral purview from his particularist starting point: the necessary exclusion of a determinate group of 'outsiders'; and, the covert appeal to just the type of impartialist stance that he claims to oppose. Moreover, his attempt to avoid one consistently seems to force him along a path towards the other. Standing in the 'cave' eschews impartiality in moral reasoning, but must leave some beyond the shared understandings that its walls contain; appealing, respectively, to a 'universal moral framework' (from which particular moral cultures are elaborated) and the idea of a 'universal moment' (that would allow discrete cultures, intermittently, to come together) promises a more inclusive purview, but at the cost of adopting a detached (and disclaimed) standpoint. It is conceivable that *any* ethical particularist position with inclusive aspirations must choose between the possibility of universal solidarity and theoretical coherence. (An embedded cosmopolitan position would then be unachievable.) However, it is also possible that the need to sacrifice one for the other is the result of how Walzer defines his anti-impartialist stance, rather than of his particularist commitments *per se*. This possibility warrants consideration.

Walzer's communitarian starting point provides a compelling account of ethical reasoning, the construction of values, and the moral agent for whom particular affiliations are inextricably bound to her capacity for deliberation. Yet the limits that Walzer places on his starting point are problematic and, I will suggest, unnecessary. Those pitfalls that Walzer encounters result from the way that he understands the community associated with his 'view from the cave'. Indeed, Walzer's vital distinction between the community and the state

can all too easily be obscured if the walls of the cave are tied to geo-political borders. This danger arises most prominently in Walzer's discussion of membership. Yet, further evidence that Walzer's figurative cave is strictly bounded can be observed in his consistent reference to a discrete body of self-contained shared understandings that the social critic is either 'within' or 'without'. Furthermore, while he does not explicitly invoke the metaphor of the cave in *Thick and Thin,* its features dictate the moves that he deems necessary to achieve a moral minimalism. The separate parades that he describes in this work function as a comparable (if more festive) image. Local parades never merge; marchers take part in a single procession (and from there can only imaginatively join another). The illustration changes but the assumptions remain constant. A viable theory of embedded cosmopolitanism requires that these assumptions be held up to scrutiny.

Walzer's image of the cave neglects important subtleties in both our moral and political experience. The communities that inform moral judgement are not singular, mutually exclusive, or always reducible to a specific location. Transnational solidarity demands more than the temporary and fickle surges of 'vicarious endorsement' that might extend from such entities; our criticism of the practices in which we participate and the associations to which we belong are not simply inward looking and self-referential within strict bounds. Walzer's insight that moral culture, even viewed from a particularist perspective, need not be considered fixed is an extremely valuable point for an embedded cosmopolitan position to adopt. His concomitant assumption that this culture is defined and interpreted within boundaries that *are* fixed is, however, problematic and in need of correction. The possibility of transnational criticism and solidarity might better be understood as indebted to particularist attachments that require an alternative understanding of community membership and a revised account of one's moral starting point to accurately describe.

One way of approaching such a redescription is to envisage the community in a way that is not necessarily spatially defined like Walzer's 'cave'. Inspiration for a revised understanding of community might be found in feminist challenges to communitarian political thought. A number of feminist theorists have observed that the acceptance of community as morally constitutive risks equating 'our' shared understandings with those entrenched traditions, roles, and structures that have excluded and oppressed women (Friedman, 1993, 231–55; Frazer and Lacey, 1993, 130–62; Greschner, 1989; Okin, 1989, 41–73; Young, 1990). Marilyn Friedman's challenge to the communitarian penchant for invoking associations with borders, set territories, and given memberships is particularly useful here. Sympathetic to the idea of the morally constitutive community, yet wary of the tendency to focus exclusively on 'government-based' communities associated with the state and

those 'communities of place' that have traditionally encompassed family, neighbourhood and church, she emphasises the variety of communities to which we belong beyond the often bounded ones into which we are born. Membership within these 'dislocated communities', she maintains, also contributes to one's moral starting point (Friedman, 1993, 240, 242–3, 254). Drawing on this insight, I propose that the communities that define us are best understood as multiple, multifarious, overlapping, and often territorially dispersed (Erskine 2002, 2007). One might be defined by membership within a particular neighbourhood, nation, and state, while, at the same time, and equally powerfully, as a member of Amnesty International, as a Christian or Muslim, feminist or socialist, and as part of a transnational professional community. A web of intersecting and overlapping morally relevant ties — with the moral agent radically situated in the centre — seems a more appropriate image of these communities than the model of separate caves.

This alternative image has important implications for reconciling an anti-impartialist stance with an inclusive, critical moral purview. A particularist moral starting point conceived in this way does not entail that being a member of any one community requires seeing a non-member of that particular community as situated in a completely distinct and separate network of meanings and practices — and thereby beyond concern and comprehension. From this position, even the 'enemy', defined as such with respect to one's allegiance to a single community constitutive of one's identity, need not be excluded from one's scope of ethical consideration. Solidarity across borders arises from respect for the ethical standing of fellow moral agents with whom one shares membership in any one of a multitude of particular, often transnational, territorial and non-territorial morally constitutive communities. Moreover, membership in these various communities grants the situated moral agent a critical edge that begins to answer the charge of conservatism made against those who champion particularist ethics. Here Walzer's notion of 'connected criticism' is extremely valuable — and achieves added purchase. One is not limited to a process of exposing contradictions in the espoused norms and practices of a solitary, bounded community. Instead, there is a possibility of revealing internal tensions across the multiplicity of communities to which one belongs. Indeed, this very multiplicity (where it exists) will militate against the acceptance of norms that advocate exclusion and enmity towards those outside any one community. Internal criticism becomes more securely linked to increased solidarity than in the articulation of 'connected criticism' analysed earlier in this discussion.

However, even this reconceptualized communitarian starting point potentially leaves some beyond its purview. The possibility of 'incompatible communities' threatens to severely delimit one's scope of ethical concern and impede effective criticism (Erskine, 2007). An embedded cosmopolitan position

cannot, as conceded above, promise the universal inclusion that its impartialist counterpart takes for granted. Nevertheless, by adopting this proposed starting point, it *can* avoid the traditional communitarian reliance on a determinate group of 'outsiders' — a reliance that necessarily precludes universal inclusion. Moreover, it avoids this limitation by acknowledging extensions of one's scope of ethical concern that are more enduring — and more faithful to anti-impartialist aims — than those facilitated by empathetic attachments. Finally, its premise that inclusion cannot be assumed, or quickly conjured in moments of crisis, but, rather, must be *achieved* through the purposive and incremental recognition of the diverse and overlapping communities that define us, should serve to encourage policies and practices that foster the creation and compatibility of such communities.

Lest this redefinition of the morally constitutive community be seen in complete opposition to Walzer's work, it should be emphasized that Walzer not only maps an instructive (if problematic) route in the general direction of embedded cosmopolitanism in *Thick and Thin,* but at various points throughout his writings, and particularly in his most recent book, offers arguments on which one might draw in constructing the sort of position envisaged here. His ongoing (although often obscured) recognition of the plurality of communities that have moral value, his discussion of the possibility of 'hyphenated identities' (Walzer, 2004b, 47-8, 134) and his acknowledgement of the 'multiple and overlapping memberships' that constitute civil society (Walzer, 2004b, 68–9), for example, gesture towards the type of starting point that I am proposing. Indeed, further development of his recent (as yet brief but suggestive) discussion of global egalitarianism (Walzer, 2004b, 131–40) could see the extension of these ideas in a way conducive to a critical, inclusive perspective that would side-step some of the concerns generated by the notion of 'vicarious endorsement'. (Frustratingly, however, in the current, embryonic form of this discussion, he continues to view the community most relevant to his concerns as defined by political borders, prescribing the 'empowerment' of states, which 'at their best, foster a shared political culture to which their members are strongly attached' (Walzer, 2004b, 138, 137).

Rethinking both the nature and the scope of an ethical perspective that locates itself in the community is an important project — one that finds both endorsement and preliminary shape in a comprehensive look at Walzer's work. Taking this project one step further by refusing to define the morally constitutive community in strictly spatial terms provides a stronger alliance between a communitarian moral starting point and an inclusive scope of ethical consideration than that (as yet) summoned by Walzer. Such an alliance allows one to challenge the impartialist assumptions underlying conventional ethical cosmopolitan positions, while remaining wary of the potential exclusionary implications of Walzer's communitarian allegiance to the cave. From here, a

robust, qualified cosmopolitanism — that would remain faithful to a particularist moral starting point without forfeiting the possibility of cross-cultural criticism and solidarity — is within reach.

Notes

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2 Among others, Charles R. Beitz (1994, 124–6) distinguishes between these two types of cosmopolitanism, labelling them 'moral' and 'institutional'.

3 In a previous article, I sketch an ideal account of an embedded cosmopolitan perspective and cite Walzer's work as moving in an embedded cosmopolitan direction, but as embodying serious limits that impede its progress (Erskine, 2002, 469). The current article represents an attempt to support these rather fleeting initial claims.

4 I explore this distinction in detail in *Embedded Cosmopolitanism* (Erskine, 2007, chapter 4).

5 Elsewhere, Walzer explicitly accommodates this distinction by drawing a line between 'paths in moral philosophy' that rely on 'discovery' and those that rely on 'invention'. He submits his 'view from the cave' as an alternative to both (Walzer, 1987).

6 These are not the only examples of Walzer's combining moral reasoning reliant on his 'view from the cave' with arguments that rely on a position outside it. He also interrupts his radically particularist deliberations in *Spheres of Justice* with an independent, impartialist ethical perspective in discussing two issues: the plight of immigrants and the prohibition on slavery. I address Walzer's treatment of each case in *Embedded Cosmopolitanism,* (Erskine, 2007, chapter 4).

7 Walzer explicates this notion of elaboration in *Nation and Universe* (1990a) and labels it 'reiterative universalism'.

8 It is interesting to note that in an appendix published twenty-four years before *Thick and Thin,* Walzer displays a similar commitment to empathetic understanding, but shows more regard for its potential shortcomings: 'Such imaginings are hard…and we must be suspicious whenever the result is a merely facile empathy or ''understanding''. For it is not just the feelings of others, but their situation, ideology, arguments, and choices, that must be imaginatively entered and intellectually joined.' (Walzer, 1970, 73).

9 I address this point briefly (Erskine, 2002, 585–7) in the context of Walzer's treatment of 'naked soldiers'.

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